

Press Release No. 44/2010

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Joint press release with the German National Meteorological Service (DWD)

Climate change: Average temperatures on the rise, more hot days

General warming trend forces early adaptation to extreme weather

Germany's National Meteorological Service, the Deutscher Wetterdienst, and the Federal Environment Agency believe the trend in weather records confirm the forecasts made by climate researchers. Extreme weather events with heavy precipitation or heat waves have increased tangibly in the past few decades, and it is likely that their occurrence and intensity will continue to rise. "The current flooding in Pakistan, the enduring heat waves in Russia and Japan, and floods in Saxony corroborate climate researchers' predictions about the greater frequency of extreme weather events. These events make it obvious how important it is to prepare for the consequences", says Jochen Flasbarth, President of the Federal Environment Agency. Although none of the extreme weather events is attributable to global climate change alone, there is a trend towards more such weather extremes.

The annual mean temperature in Germany increased by 1.1°C from 1881 to 2009. It could climb another 2 to 4°C by the end of the century. The rising temperatures are expected to trigger ever more and intense heat waves. Measurements taken at some of the Meteorological Service's stations have proven that the number of summer days (days with maximum temperatures of 25°C and above) has more than doubled since 1950. Prof. Dr. Gerhard Adrian, President of the Deutscher Wetterdienst, comments, "By mid-century we expect an additional 15 to 27 summer days per year in the Saxony-Anhalt and Brandenburg regions."

Public health has already suffered from the current heat waves, for example when office buildings have very large glass fronts, or air conditioning systems are too small. With regard to long-term investments in particular, standards and guidelines that govern the construction of buildings, roads or power plants should take greater consideration of future climate conditions. The public has learned what it can mean when air conditioning systems are not built to withstand the intense heat waves: note the example of the many ICE trains this past summer. The Federal Environment Agency and Deutscher Wetterdienst consults the Federal government on adaptation measures and on establishment of standards and technical regulations.

The Federal Environment Agency and the Deutsche Wetterdienst will devote even more attention in future to extreme weather events and their impact.

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Their joint conference *Forschung des Bundes zur Anpassung an den Klimawandel [Federal research on adaptation to climate change]*, held on 2-3 September in Dessau, seeks to answer the questions, "How will extreme weather events be distributed in future, and what impact will they have?" and "How can we react and what precautions can we take?"

Background: Germany's climate change adaptation strategy
Climate protection and adaptation to climate change are two sides of the same coin. The Federal Cabinet adopted Germany's adaptation strategy on 17 December 2008. The Federal government outlined possible climate consequences and immediate options for action in 15 areas and selected regions. The objective of the strategy is to prevent risks to the population, environment and economy as well as to take advantage of opportunities. The next step in implementation of the adaptation strategy is the Federal Government's 'adaptation action plan', scheduled for Summer 2011.

More information and links:

<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/klimaschutz-e/index.htm>

www.anpassung.net

www.dwd.de

Dessau-Roßlau, 2 September 2010

Deutscher Wetterdienst
Wetter und Klima aus einer Hand



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