

'CLIMATE CHANGE TO BLAME FOR DOUBLING OF DISASTERS'

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

Climate change is largely to blame for a near doubling of natural disasters in the past 20 years, the United Nations said on Monday.

The UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction said 7,348 major disaster events had occurred between 2000 and 2019, claiming 1.23 lives, affecting 4.2 billion people and costing the global economy some \$2.97 trillion.

The figure far outstrips the 4,212 major natural disasters recorded between 1980 and 1999, the UN office said in a new report entitled "The Human Cost of Disasters 2000-2019".

The sharp increase was largely attributable to a rise in climate-related disasters, including extreme weather events like floods, drought and storms, the report said.

Extreme heat is proving especially deadly.

"We are wilfully destructive," UNDRR chief Mami Mizutori told reporters. "That is the only conclusion one can come to when reviewing disaster events over the last 20 years."

She accused governments of not doing enough to prevent climate hazards and called for better preparation for looming disasters.

'Uphill battle'

"The odds are being stacked against us when we fail to act on science and early warnings to invest in prevention, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction," she said.

The report did not touch on biological hazards and disease-related disasters like the coronavirus pandemic. But Ms. Mizutori suggested coronavirus was "the latest proof that political and business leaders are yet to tune in to the world around them".

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