



**STATEMENT BY WMO SECRETARY-GENERAL PETTERI TAALAS
TO OPENING OF HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF COP 25
10 DECEMBER 2019**

Dear Ministers Schmidt and Ribera
Dear General Assembly President Mohammad-Bande
Dear Patricia, Ministers, Friends of Climate

Congratulations to the governments of Chile and Spain and UNFCCC for a very smooth transfer of the COP from Santiago to Madrid at a very short notice. A great success story.

WMO has recently published two climate statements. A United in Science report for the UN Climate Action summit and the Provisional Statement on the State of the Climate in 2019 for COP25. They are not good news.

Global warming continues.

The average global temperature has risen by about 1.1°C since the pre-industrial era and the ocean by half a degree. 220 million people suffered from heatwaves last year. We have started seeing growth in hunger once again after a period of decline. Now we have more than 800 million people suffering from lack of food.

The warming of the oceans has given more energy for tropical storms. Tropical cyclone Idai hit Mozambique as the strongest cyclone hitting the southern hemisphere in 100 years. Hurricane Dorian hit the Caribbean islands and the Bahamas lost 24 percent of its GDP in one day. Typhoon Hagibis hit Japan.

Precipitation patterns are changing, with drought and heavy rainfall events.

Severe fires are burning around Sydney. There is a lack of water at Victoria Falls, flooding in East Africa and some of southern Europe.

The Arctic continues to melt and we have seen a boost in the melting of Greenland ice sheet which contributes to sea level rise in the southern hemisphere.

Changes in the Arctic have an impact outside the Arctic in terms of cold patterns and heatwaves in the northern hemisphere.

We have broken records in the three main greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. CO₂ is the most important of these.

We are heading towards a temperature increase of 3 to 5 degrees Celsius by the end of century. If we use all fossil fuel resources, we will move towards 8 °C.

Currently only 15 percent of energy comes from renewable sources. 85 percent is from fossil fuels

We have means to solve this by basing our energy system on nuclear energy, hydropower and renewable sources.

There is a sense of urgency. We need transformation within 10-30 years of our energy, transport and industry.

We need wider responsibility among governments to bring the finance, trade and industry and transport sectors on board.

Given the political realities, mitigation is not an easy task. But it is crucially needed.

But there is also increasing global awareness, especially among the youth, and there is growing interest of private sector and several governments in solving the problem

It is a business opportunity, as evidenced through the attractiveness of e.g. solar and wind energy for investors

Finally speaking as a father of 5 children and soon of grandchildren, I would say that we should move from thinking of economic growth next year to longer term perspectives. For the sake of future generations.