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Headline: UN urges sincere commitment for climate change

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BOGOR: United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called for specific commitments and real action to fight climate change after speaking out about the severity of the climatic disruptions that have raged the planet.

"We must agree to a common direction of travel," the UN chief said at the joint hybrid press conference with Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization Petteri Taalas to launch the State of the Global Climate in 2020 Report.

"The United Nations is building a global coalition committed to net zero emissions—to cover all countries, cities, regions, businesses and financial institutions," said the top UN official, stressing the next 10 years "need to be a decade of transformation."

"Countries need to submit ambitious new NDCs — the nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement — which are their climate plans for the next 10 years," he added. "We need those commitments and plans to be backed up with concrete immediate action," said the secretary-general.

Referring to the report, Guterres said "it needs to be read by all leaders and decision-makers in the world" as this report shows that 2020 "was also another unprecedented year of extreme weather and climate disasters."

He said the cause is clear because climate disruption is "caused by human activities, human decisions and human folly." "The effects are disastrous," he said, adding 2020 was 1.2 degrees Celsius hotter than preindustrial times.

"We are getting dangerously close to the 1.5-degree Celsius limit set by the scientific community," he warned. "We are on the verge of the abyss," he continued. "The six years since 2015 have been the hottest on record," said the secretary-general.

The Paris Agreement on climate change promised to limit temperature rise to as close to 1.5 degrees Celsius as possible.

On specific data, Guterres said concentrations of the major greenhouse gases continued to climb. Carbon dioxide concentrations rose to a new high — 410.5 parts per million, which is a 148 percent increase above pre-industrial levels.

The number of tropical cyclones globally was above average in 2020. There were 98 named tropical storms, said the secretary-general.

"This was mostly driven by high activity in the North Atlantic, which had more than double the long-term average," he said. Xinhua