



26 May 2015 – Yesterday, the [17th session of the World Meteorological Congress](#) started in Geneva, opening with a 'tweet' from the International Space Station and a renewed appeal for “bold climate action” by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Congress, running until June 12, will discuss the strategic role of the [World Meteorological Organization](#) (WMO) in the [post-2015 new global agenda on sustainable development](#) and the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#)

It will also shape WMO’s contribution to the U.N. climate change negotiations taking place in Paris in December (COP21) which aim to reach a new agreement to cut greenhouse gas emissions and prevent climate change from reaching dangerous levels.

Appeal for bold climate action

A [tweet](#) from astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti on the International Space Station welcomed the opening of Congress.

In a video message for the opening event, Mr Ban stated: “We rely on you, the world's meteorologists to provide us with the scientific knowledge that leaders in government, business and society at large need to make informed choices.”

He continued, “As the global thermostat rises, meteorological services are more essential than ever. I look forward to working with you to advance bold climate action which will improve the lives of people and the health of our planet.”

WMO Secretary-General Michel Jarraud said “It is a pivotal year for action on behalf of future generations. We have more than a responsibility. We have a moral duty to take action to limit climate change. If we don't do it we will be judged by our children and our grandchildren.”

WMO's work on climate

The WMO is the UN system's authoritative voice on the state and behaviour of the Earth's atmosphere, its interaction with the [oceans](#) , the [climate](#) it produces and the resulting distribution of [water resources](#) .

During the Congress, progress in implementing the WMO-spearheaded [Global Framework for Climate Services](#) to improve the supply and use of climate services to help adaptation efforts will be considered.

Also discussed will be cross-cutting programmes to meet the needs of urban areas, which will be home to 70% of the world's population by 2050, risking exposure to multiple weather and water-related hazards and environmental stressors like pollution.

Looking ahead to COP21

Echoing the words of Mr Jarraud, 2015 is indeed a pivotal year, with climate being put centre-stage.

At the end of this year, [COP21](#) will be held. Also known as the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, the conference will, for the first time in over 20 years of UN negotiations, aim to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate.

To get a good understanding of why this is a crucial conference, UNRIC has prepared a new infographic, which you can consult [here](#).

More information

For more information on the Congress proceedings, consult [the dedicated website](#). For certain events, a [live webcast](#) is available.

To stay updated on WMO’s activities, programmes and projects, go to their [website](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).