

## [Global heat melts Arctic and Antarctic sea ice to record lows – UN agency](#)

17 February 2017 – It should be winter on the Arctic pole – the northernmost point in the world – but the equivalent of heatwaves have passed over the region this season melting the sea ice volume to a record low in January, the United Nations meteorological agency said.

Temperatures in the Arctic are quite remarkable and very alarming, said David Carlson, Director of the World Climate Research Programme which is co-sponsored by the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council for Science.

Sea ice extent was the lowest on the 38-year-old satellite record for the month of January, both at the Arctic and Antarctic, according to data cited WMO from both the US National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) and Germany's Sea ice Portal operated by the Alfred-Wegener-Institut.

The Arctic sea ice extent averaged 13.38 million square kilometres in January, according to NSIDC. This is 260,000 square kilometers below the level in January 2016 – an area bigger than the size of the United Kingdom.

The recovery period for Arctic sea ice is normally in the winter, when it gains both in volume and extent. The recovery this winter has been fragile, at best, and there were some days in January when temperatures were actually above melting point, said Mr. Carlson.

This will have serious implications for Arctic sea ice extent in summer as well as for the global climate system. What happens at the Poles does not stay at the Poles.

In addition, the ice levels at the Antarctic are also at record lows, even thinner than expected for the summer season there.

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## [‘No time to lose’ as humanitarian catastrophe looms in Somalia – UN agencies](#)

17 February 2017 – Amid worsening of an already devastating drought in Somalia, United Nations agencies have underlined that only a massive and

immediate scale-up of humanitarian assistance can help the country avoid falling into another catastrophe.

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) some 6.2 million people – almost half the country's population – are either severely food insecure or in need of livelihood support.

Huge numbers of Somalis have come to the end of all their possible resources and are living hand-to-mouth, said Steven Lauwerier, the UNICEF Somalia Representative, underlining that there is only a small window of opportunity to arrest the looming humanitarian crisis and save lives.

The situation of children is particularly concerning: close to one million children are estimated to be malnourished this year, including 185,000 severely malnourished and in need of urgent lifesaving support. There are also grave fears that this number could increase to 270,000 over the coming months.

The ongoing drought and other shocks have left communities that have already been battered by decades of conflict with little to no resources to fall back on, the two UN agencies said in a joint news release.

Whole villages have lost their crops or seen their livestock die. The prices of water and locally produced food have risen dramatically, and thousands of people are on the move in search of food and water.

RELATED: Drought drives food price spike in East Africa, UN warns

The drought has also led to an increase in waterborne diseases with more than 4,000 cases of Acute Watery Diarrhoea/Cholera this year.

Humanitarian assistance has saved lives in the drought-affected north over the past year, but as the crisis spreads we have no time to lose, added WFP Country Director Laurent Bukera, noting that together with its partners, the UN agency is moving as quickly as possible to reach people with lifesaving support.

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The two agencies further noted that humanitarian access remains conqueringly limited in some drought-affected areas of the south, but that WFP and UNICEF are reinforcing their joint efforts to scale up the response in areas that are accessible, where millions of lives are at risk.

The agencies have been responding together to the drought by providing food and water vouchers to hundreds of thousands across the most affected areas of Somalia as well as nutrition assistance.

As additional resources are mobilised, the joint response will continue to expand in the most vulnerable regions.

However, with growing needs, more funds are needed. UNICEF and WFP together still require more than \$450 million to be able to provide urgent assistance required in the coming months.

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## [News story: When cities meet cities-UK Smart Cities Showcase in Taiwan](#)

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DIT Taiwan recruited a UK Smart Cities Trade Mission to exhibit at the Smart City Summit & Expo from 21 to 24 February 2017

The UK economy has already made the transition from an industrial economy to a post-industrial economy. Now it's leading the way in the transition from a post-industrial economy to a knowledge-based economy. UK companies are world leaders in Smart City products and services, and are keen to export these skills abroad to assist the rest of the world in improving their cities.

UK expertise in the Smart Cities sector includes:

- Urban design, planning and architecture
- Infrastructure, engineering and construction
- Data, software and analytics
- Project management, financing and real estate
- Public engagement and service design innovation

To demonstrate UK's smart city capabilities, DIT Taiwan recruited a UK Smart Cities Trade Mission to exhibit at the Smart City Summit & Expo from 21 to 24 February 2017

The trade delegation consists of 10 companies and two cities- Royal Borough of Greenwich and Peterborough with highlights on their smart city excellence.

- For delegates' information, please see: "UK Smart Cities Mission Brochure"[UK Smart Cities Mission Brochure](#) (PDF, 3.56MB, 18 pages)
- Location: UK Pavilion: J432

- Useful link: 2017 Smart City Summit & Expo:  
[http://smartcity.org.tw/index\\_en.php](http://smartcity.org.tw/index_en.php)
  - Useful link: UK-Taiwan Smart City Forum:  
[http://smartcity.org.tw/2017forum\\_detail.php?id=152](http://smartcity.org.tw/2017forum_detail.php?id=152)
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## [Museum, park to be constructed on ruins of ancient capital](#)



The the archaeological site of the capital of the Xia Dynasty (c. 21st century-16th century BC) in Erlitou in Henan Province in central China. [lyrb.com]

A museum and a park will be built on the ruins of the capital of the Xia Dynasty (c. 21st century-16th century BC), China's earliest dynasty, local cultural heritage authorities said on Thursday.

"Construction of the project will start in the first half of the year near the village of Erlitou in the city of Luoyang where more than 40,000 square meters of the ruins have been excavated since 1959," said Yu Jie, head of the

city's cultural heritage bureau.

Citing a plan passed by the provincial government, Yu said that the museum, with a planned building area of 30,000 square meters, will showcase about 40,000 items, such as excavated antiques, text and graphic documents related to the early dynasties, including the Xia and Shang (c. 16th century-11th century BC).

The most famous piece unearthed there is a 70-centimeter-long dragon formed from more than 2,000 pieces of turquoise. Chinese archaeologists dubbed the artifact the "Dragon of China", saying it was the earliest evidence of Chinese infatuation with dragons.

A cultural ruins park covering 41 hectares will also be built. It will protect and display the sites of the ancient city walls, palace and roads, as well as handicraft workshops of bronze casting and turquoise, and the sacrifice venue of the ruins.

"The park will also simulate scenes from more than 3,000 years ago by landscaping and building workshops based on the discoveries," Yu said.

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## [China open, active in technology cooperation](#)

China will continue to be open and active in its technological cooperation on the world stage, the Ministry of Science and Technology said on Thursday.

In June, Beijing will host the Eighth Clean Energy Ministerial, followed by the Fifth BRICS Science and Innovation Ministerial in July, said Ye Dongbai, the ministry's director of international cooperation.

In addition, dialogue on innovation and technology will be held with Russia, Germany, France, Italy, Israel and other countries this year to facilitate practical cooperation, Ye said.

"International cooperation in science and technology can increase China's global influence, promote breakthroughs in scientific and industrial bottlenecks, and create a friendly environment to facilitate economic reform," he said.

Beijing has established cooperative ties in science and technology with 158 countries and regions, inking 111 intergovernmental agreements, he added.

It has also joined more than 200 intergovernmental organizations dedicated to boosting such cooperation, as well as sending 146 technology diplomats to 71 Chinese embassies and consulates abroad.

China has become a major global research and development player, accounting for 20.4 percent of the world's total R&D spending last year, according to the Industrial Research Institute, a US nonprofit think tank for industrial management and innovation.

Last year, the country broke into the world's top-25 innovative economies, becoming the first middle-income country to do so, according to a report by the United Nation's World Intellectual Property Organization, INSEAD Business School and Cornell University.

"China should actively propose new ideas, new initiatives and new plans on the world stage, so that we can play a leading role in facilitating cooperation in global production and equipment manufacturing," Ye said.