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# World leaders told to act on climate before it's too late



(Erik Malm/PA)

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Lewis Smith, Environment Reporter, in Copenhagen

## [Full text of the statement from the International Scientific Conference on Climate Change](#)

The world is on the brink of dangerous climate change and immediate action is needed to avert it, scientists said yesterday, issuing one of the bleakest assessments yet of the state of the planet.

A [strongly worded communiqué](#) marking the end of a specially convened conference in Copenhagen concluded that climate change and its impacts match or exceed the worst fears expressed by the Nobel prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change two years ago.

The statement, issued on behalf of 2,500 scientists from 80 countries, will be passed to world leaders in the coming months. Their summary of what global warming is doing to the planet warned policymakers: "There is no excuse for inaction."

The demands and alerts contained in the statement were described as a defining moment in scientists' relations with political leaders, representing a shift away from their traditional role of merely offering advice to telling politicians to act.

Professor Katherine Richardson, of the University of Copenhagen, who organised the conference, said: "We need the politicians to realise what a risk they are taking on behalf of their constituents, the world and, even more importantly, future generations.

"All of the signals from the Earth system and the climate system show us that we are on a path that will have enormous and unacceptable consequences."

Findings from this week's conference, designed to identify changes in scientific understanding of climate change, will be presented to world leaders and policymakers who will converge on the Danish capital in December to try to agree an international deal on bringing greenhouse gas emissions under control.

Recent observations of climatic trends, the new statement said, showed that the worst-case trajectories highlighted by the

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2007 were being followed or exceeded on a range of measurements.

“There is a significant risk that many of the trends will accelerate, leading to an increasing risk of abrupt or irreversible climatic shifts,” it said.

Scientists called for rapid, sustained and effective mitigation programmes to bring down greenhouse gas emissions.

They were particularly concerned that any significant delay in reducing emissions would lead to a range of tipping points being reached that would make it significantly more difficult to reduce greenhouse gas levels.

There was also a warning for politicians involved in negotiations over targets designed to reduce emissions. It was an implicit rebuff to Silvio Berlusconi and other European leaders who attempted last year to reduce the EU commitment to cutting emissions.

Despite the gloom, the scientists said that the tools to beat climate change already existed and if vigorously and widely implemented they would enable governments to bring about low-carbon economies across the world.

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