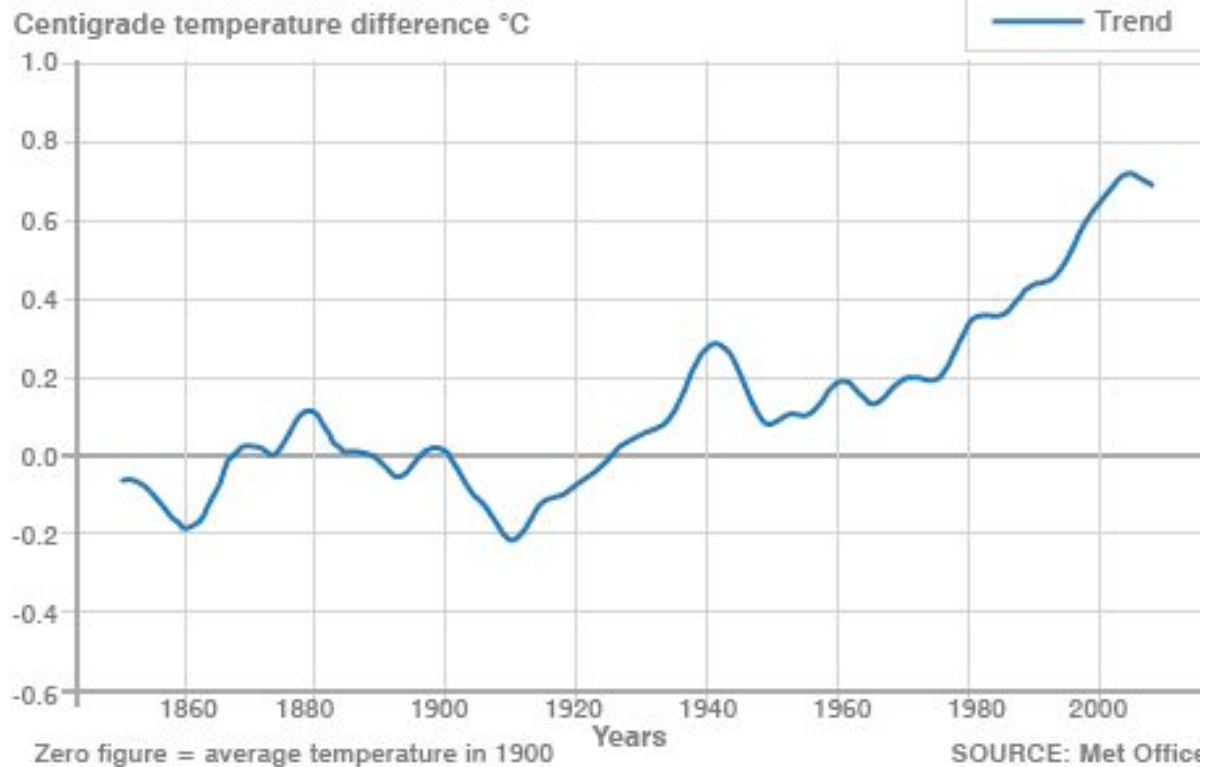


9 July 2009 21:21 UK

World powers accept warming limit

Global average near-surface temperatures changes 1850 - March 2009



Developed and developing nations have agreed that global temperatures should not rise more than 2°C above 1900 levels, a G8 summit declaration says.

That is the level above which, the UN says, the Earth's climate system would become dangerously unstable.

US President Barack Obama said the countries had made important strides in dealing with climate change.

But the G8 failed to persuade developing countries to accept targets of cutting emissions by 50% by 2050.

On Wednesday, the G8 agreed its own members would work towards 80% cuts by the same date.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said the G8 had not done enough and should also set 2020 targets.

He said that while the G8's Wednesday agreement was welcome, its leaders also needed to establish a strong and ambitious mid-term target for emissions cuts.

See how global temperatures have risen

The second day of the summit, in the Italian city of L'Aquila, opened its discussions to take in the so-called G5 nations - Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. Egypt is a special invitee.

In other developments:

- * The world's biggest economies have agreed to work to reach a global trade deal by 2010

- * Leaders of major developed and developing nations have agreed not to resort to competitive currency devaluations

- * In a joint statement, President Obama and UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown said the detention of British embassy staff by the Iranian authorities was unacceptable

Significant step

The latest declaration was issued by the Major Economies Forum, of 16 developed and developing nations - the G8, G5, Australia, South Korea and Indonesia - plus the European Union.

The group accounts for about 80% of the world's total greenhouse gas emissions.

Barack Obama said developed nations had a "historic responsibility to take the lead"

"We recognise the scientific view that the increase in global average temperature above pre-industrial levels ought not to exceed 2C," it said.

It added that the economies would work towards a global goal for substantially reducing emissions by 2050 between now and December, when the UN holds talks in Copenhagen on a successor to the Kyoto treaty.

President Obama, who chaired the meeting, said the countries had had a candid and open discussion about the growing threat of climate change and what must be done both individually and collectively to address it.

"I believe we've made some important strides forward as we move towards Copenhagen," he said.

"I don't think I have to emphasise that climate change is one of the defining challenges of our time. The science is clear and conclusive and the impacts can no longer be ignored."

Early agreement 'unlikely'

RK Pachauri, who chairs the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, praised the declaration's mention of the 2C limit but said more details were needed.

"It certainly doesn't give you a roadmap on how you should get there but at least

they've defined the destination," he told the BBC World Service Newshour programme.

G8 KEY ISSUES/TIMETABLE

THURSDAY: Climate Change

Brazil, China, India, Mexico, South Africa, Egypt join talks

1230 GMT - Junior G8

1300 GMT - Major Economies Forum meeting

FRIDAY: Development

0630 GMT - crisis' impact on Africa with African leaders attending

0830 GMT - food security

1100 GMT - final news conference

G8 members: Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, US

Deal highlights divisions

At a glance: summit agenda

Mr Berlusconi's G8 Party

Climate change around the world

Climate targets: Global pledges

Full text: Climate declaration

Mr Obama added that the United States, as a major polluter, had not met its responsibilities in the past, but those days were over.

But his scientific adviser, John Holdren, told the BBC it was unlikely that the US could come to any early agreement on tough reductions in emissions by 2020 proposed by the EU.

"If we had not wasted the last eight years, we could probably achieve that target," he said.

"But we did waste the last eight years and in consequence, it doesn't make a lot of sense for us to officially embrace a target that is not realistically within reach."

BBC environment analyst Roger Harrabin says the declaration is a significant step, with all big countries rich and poor agreeing there is a scientific limit on the amount we should warm the climate.

But there is still a huge way to go, he says, as developing nations like India will not sign up to any 2050 targets unless rich nations show more determination and offer more cash.

The G8 summit began in L'Aquila on Wednesday, with the first day largely taken up with discussion of the fragile state of the global economy.

The leaders also issued a statement reaffirming that they were "deeply concerned" by Iran's nuclear programme and condemning North Korea's recent nuclear test and missile launches.

African leaders will join the summit on Friday to push for a new initiative to fund farming in the developing world and tackle global hunger.