

Climate change will profoundly affect SA, says CSIR

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South Africa will experience twice the global average temperature rise caused by climate change, Bob Scholes, CSIR systems ecologist, told the Geological Society of South Africa's conference on South Africa Energy Production.



"Whereas the global temperature will rise by 3 degrees Celsius, in southern Africa the rise will be 6 degrees over the next fifty years.

"If we take the period 1961 to 1990 as our base line, then in Pretoria we had 5 days per year above 35 degrees Celsius, and this will increase to 30 days per year, while in northern Namibia it will be 180 days a year.

"The reason we use 35 degrees as a cut-off is because fertility and lactation in mammals drops sharply above that temperature, which is why in Egypt cows need to be kept in air-conditioned sheds to produce milk," Scholes said.

The forecasts in terms of rainfall were less robust with the models showing that the western areas would be drier while the eastern parts would be wetter.

"What is likely to happen is that we would have cut-off lows over the south eastern coast that result in mini-cyclones that cause extensive flooding," he added.

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