



Climate of the 21st Century: Changes and Risks

Jose L. Lozan

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The climate of the 21st century will be substantially influenced by humankind. In this book, the reader will find information about future trends in air temperature, precipitation, sea level, mountain glaciers, large ice sheets, sea ice cover, permafrost, desertification and related variables that will influence plants and animals, agriculture, forestry, the availability of water, public health, and the urban climate. In addition, an overview is provided of the history of climate and of factors that cause it to change. Since the beginning of the industrial age, man has increasingly influenced the climate of the Earth, especially through the growing use of fossil fuels and the continued destruction of forests, The atmospheric content of carbon dioxide has already risen by 30% and threatens to double by the year 2035, if effective measures to reduce emissions are not taken. Further increasing the amount of atospheric carbon dioxide could cause temperatures to rise even more rapidly to values that have never existed in man's history. Some of the man-made changes predicted for the 21st century during the 1980s, such as warming, a rising sea level, and extended areas for some infectious diseases, can already be detected now at the beginning of the century; 1990, 1995, 1998, and 2000 were the warmest years of the 20th century. Displacement of cimatic zones will lead to social conflicts in the affected regions and result in migrations, such as the one that occurred some years ago in the Sahel, the consequences for the world economy, including water and food supplies for the world's population, cannot yet be adequately assessed. The people alive now will not be so greatly affected, but following generations will have to bear the main consequences. This compilation of findings by climate researchers and the results of climate impact investigations by over 100 experts gives the reader a comprehensive description and assessment of the climate problem.



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