Global Warming Hiatus To Be Investigated In Multidisciplinary Research Project

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After recent research pointed to data discrepancies as the cause of the global warming hiatus that many in the field debate, scientists from the U.K.'s National Oceanography Centre (NOC) are planning to investigate the issue and determine why the global warming trend varies from decade to decade. The NOC will work alongside researchers from nine other organizations, which marks the start of a major new multidisciplinary research project.

The NOC claims that a slowdown has been observed in the global warming of the Earth's surface over the last decade, although they note that despite this decrease, heat is still increasing in other parts of the climate system, such as the deep ocean.

The new project, called Securing Multidisciplinary Understanding and Prediction of Hiatus and Surge events (SMURPHS), will investigate the potential causes of this slowdown including volcanic activity, solar radiation and greenhouse gases, among others, and determine the impacts that each of these factors have on the variation in global warming.

NOC scientists previously observed that the absorption of heat by the North Atlantic, Tropical Pacific and Southern Oceans plays a key role in the recent global warming slowdown. In addition to the factors mentioned above, the team plans on continuing to investigate the role of the ocean in global warming variability

Global warming is viewed by most environmental scientists as one of the Earth's most important problems, but so far, effective policies to address it have had mixed results. The new study aims to uncover why the rate of surface warming varies so much by the decade and use the findings to better inform government policies regarding climate change adaptation.

Despite the global warming slowdown observed over the recent years, some claim that the "hiatus" has been broken by the weather phenomenon El Niño, pointing to the recent warm surge as evidence.

"El Niño, it's well-known, causes a bigger spike in atmospheric temperatures than in surface temperatures," said Chip Knappenberger, a climate scientist with the libertarian Cato Institute. "February's temperature rise is a perfect example of that. The temperature's in 2016 top out higher than the temperatures in 1998, due in part from differences in the nature of the events as well more greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere."