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SPM

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Drafting Authors:
Lisa V. Alexander (Australia), Simon K. Allen (Switzerland/New Zealand), Nathaniel L. Bindoff (Australia), François-Marie Bréon (France), John A. Church (Australia), Ulrich Cubasch (Germany), Seita Emori (Japan), Piers Forster (UK), Pierre Friedlingstein (UK/Belgium), Nathan Gillett (Canada), Jonathan M. Gregory (UK), Dennis L. Hartmann (USA), Eystein Jansen (Norway), Ben Kirtman (USA), Reto Knutti (Switzerland), Krishna Kumar Kanikicharla (India), Peter Lemke (Germany), Jochem Marotzke (Germany), Valérie Masson-Delmotte (France), Gerald A. Meehl (USA), Igor I. Mokhov (Russian Federation), Shilong Piao (China), Gian-Kasper Plattner (Switzerland), Qin Dahe (China), Venkatachalam Ramaswamy (USA), David Randall (USA), Monika Rhein (Germany), Maisa Rojas (Chile), Christopher Sabine (USA), Drew Shindell (USA), Thomas F. Stocker (Switzerland), Lynne D. Talley (USA), David G. Vaughan (UK), Shang-Ping Xie (USA)

Draft Contributing Authors:
Myles R. Allen (UK), Olivier Boucher (France), Don Chambers (USA), Jens Hesselbjerg Christensen (Denmark), Philippe Ciais (France), Peter U. Clark (USA), Matthew Collins (UK), Josefino C. Comiso (USA), Viviane Vasconcellos de Menezes (Australia/Brazil), Richard A. Feely (USA), Thierry Fichefet (Belgium), Arlene M. Fiore (USA), Gregory Flato (Canada), Jan Fuglestvedt (Norway), Gabriele Hegerl (UK/Germany), Paul J. Hezel (Belgium/USA), Gregory C. Johnson (USA), Georg Kaser (Austria/Italy), Vladimir Kattsov (Russian Federation), John Kennedy (UK), Albert M. G. Klein Tank (Netherlands), Corinne Le Quéré (UK), Gunnar Myhre (Norway), Timothy Osborn (UK), Antony J. Payne (UK), Judith Perlwitz (USA), Scott Power (Australia), Michael Prather (USA), Stephen R. Rintoul (Australia), Joeri Rogelj (Switzerland/Belgium), Matilde Rusticucci (Argentina), Michael Schulz (Germany), Jan Sedláček (Switzerland), Peter A. Stott (UK), Rowan Sutton (UK), Peter W. Thorne (USA/Norway/UK), Donald Wuebbles (USA)

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A. Introduction

The Working Group I contribution to the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) considers new evidence of climate change based on many independent scientific analyses from observations of the climate system, paleoclimate archives, theoretical studies of climate processes and simulations using climate models. It builds upon the Working Group I contribution to the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), and incorporates subsequent new findings of research. As a component of the fifth assessment cycle, the IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX) is an important basis for information on changing weather and climate extremes.

This Summary for Policymakers (SPM) follows the structure of the Working Group I report. The narrative is supported by a series of overarching highlighted conclusions which, taken together, provide a concise summary. Main sections are introduced with a brief paragraph in italics which outlines the methodological basis of the assessment.

The degree of certainty in key findings in this assessment is based on the author teams' evaluations of underlying scientific understanding and is expressed as a qualitative level of confidence (from *very low* to *very high*) and, when possible, probabilistically with a quantified likelihood (from *exceptionally unlikely* to *virtually certain*). Confidence in the validity of a finding is based on the type, amount, quality, and consistency of evidence (e.g., data, mechanistic understanding, theory, models, expert judgment) and the degree of agreement[1]. Probabilistic estimates of quantified measures of uncertainty in a finding are based on statistical analysis of observations or model results, or both, and expert judgment[2]. Where appropriate, findings are also formulated as statements of fact without using uncertainty qualifiers. (See Chapter 1 and Box TS.1 for more details about the specific language the IPCC uses to communicate uncertainty).

The basis for substantive paragraphs in this Summary for Policymakers can be found in the chapter sections of the underlying report and in the Technical Summary. These references are given in curly brackets.

B. Observed Changes in the Climate System

Observations of the climate system are based on direct measurements and remote sensing from satellites and other platforms. Global-scale observations from the instrumental era began in the mid-19th century for temperature and other variables, with more comprehensive and diverse sets of observations available for the period 1950 onwards. Paleoclimate reconstructions extend some records back hundreds to millions of years. Together, they provide a comprehensive view of the variability and long-term changes in the atmosphere, the ocean, the cryosphere, and the land surface.

Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea level has risen, and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased (see Figures SPM.1, SPM.2, SPM.3 and SPM.4). {2.2, 2.4, 3.2, 3.7, 4.2–4.7, 5.2, 5.3, 5.5–5.6, 6.2, 13.2}

[1] In this Summary for Policymakers, the following summary terms are used to describe the available evidence: limited, medium, or robust; and for the degree of agreement: low, medium, or high. A level of confidence is expressed using five qualifiers: very low, low, medium, high, and very high, and typeset in italics, e.g., *medium confidence*. For a given evidence and agreement statement, different confidence levels can be assigned, but increasing levels of evidence and degrees of agreement are correlated with increasing confidence (see Chapter 1 and Box TS.1 for more details).

[2] In this Summary for Policymakers, the following terms have been used to indicate the assessed likelihood of an outcome or a result: virtually certain 99–100% probability, very likely 90–100%, likely 66–100%, about as likely as not 33–66%, unlikely 0–33%, very unlikely 0–10%, exceptionally unlikely 0–1%. Additional terms (extremely likely: 95–100%, more likely than not >50–100%, and extremely unlikely 0–5%) may also be used when appropriate. Assessed likelihood is typeset in italics, e.g., *very likely* (see Chapter 1 and Box TS.1 for more details).

B.1 Atmosphere

Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850 (see Figure SPM.1). In the Northern Hemisphere, 1983–2012 was *likely* the warmest 30-year period of the last 1400 years (*medium confidence*). {2.4, 5.3}

- The globally averaged combined land and ocean surface temperature data as calculated by a linear trend, show a warming of 0.85 [0.65 to 1.06] °C[3], over the period 1880 to 2012, when multiple independently produced datasets exist. The total increase between the average of the 1850–1900 period and the 2003–2012 period is 0.78 [0.72 to 0.85] °C, based on the single longest dataset available[4] (see Figure SPM.1). {2.4}

- For the longest period when calculation of regional trends is sufficiently complete (1901 to 2012), almost the entire globe has experienced surface warming (see Figure SPM.1). {2.4}

- In addition to robust multi-decadal warming, global mean surface temperature exhibits substantial decadal and interannual variability (see Figure SPM.1). Due to natural variability, trends based on short records are very sensitive to the beginning and end dates and do not in general reflect long-term climate trends. As one example, the rate of warming over the past 15 years (1998–2012; 0.05 [–0.05 to 0.15] °C per decade), which begins with a strong El Niño, is smaller than the rate calculated since 1951 (1951–2012; 0.12 [0.08 to 0.14] °C per decade)[5]. {2.4}

- Continental-scale surface temperature reconstructions show, with *high confidence*, multi-decadal periods during the Medieval Climate Anomaly (year 950 to 1250) that were in some regions as warm as in the late 20th century. These regional warm periods did not occur as coherently across regions as the warming in the late 20th century (*high confidence*). {5.5}

- It is *virtually certain* that globally the troposphere has warmed since the mid-20th century. More complete observations allow greater confidence in estimates of tropospheric temperature changes in the extratropical Northern Hemisphere than elsewhere. There is *medium confidence* in the rate of warming and its vertical structure in the Northern Hemisphere extra-tropical troposphere and *low confidence* elsewhere. {2.4}

- *Confidence* in precipitation change averaged over global land areas since 1901 is *low* prior to 1951 and *medium* afterwards. Averaged over the mid-latitude land areas of the Northern Hemisphere, precipitation has increased since 1901 (*medium confidence* before and *high confidence* after 1951). For other latitudes area-averaged long-term positive or negative trends have *low confidence* (see Figure SPM.2). {TS TFE.1, Figure 2; 2.5}

- Changes in many extreme weather and climate events have been observed since about 1950 (see Table SPM.1 for details). It is *very likely* that the number of cold days and nights has decreased and the number of warm days and nights has increased on the global scale[6]. It is *likely* that the frequency of heat waves has increased in large parts of Europe, Asia and Australia. There are *likely* more land regions where the number of heavy precipitation events has increased than where it has decreased. The frequency or intensity of heavy precipitation events has *likely* increased in North America and Europe. In other continents, *confidence* in changes in heavy precipitation events is at most *medium*. {2.6}

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[3] In the WGI contribution to the AR5, uncertainty is quantified using 90% uncertainty intervals unless otherwise stated. The 90% uncertainty interval, reported in square brackets, is expected to have a 90% likelihood of covering the value that is being estimated. Uncertainty intervals are not necessarily symmetric about the corresponding best estimate. A best estimate of that value is also given where available.

[4] Both methods presented in this bullet were also used in AR4. The first calculates the difference using a best fit linear trend of all points between 1880 and 2012. The second calculates the difference between averages for the two periods 1850–1900 and 2003–2012. Therefore, the resulting values and their 90% uncertainty intervals are not directly comparable. {2.4}

[5] Trends for 15-year periods starting in 1995, 1996, and 1997 are 0.13 [0.02 to 0.24] °C per decade, 0.14 [0.03 to 0.24] °C per decade, and, 0.07 [–0.02 to 0.18] °C per decade, respectively.

[6] See the Glossary for the definition of these terms: cold days/cold nights, warm days/warm nights, heat waves.

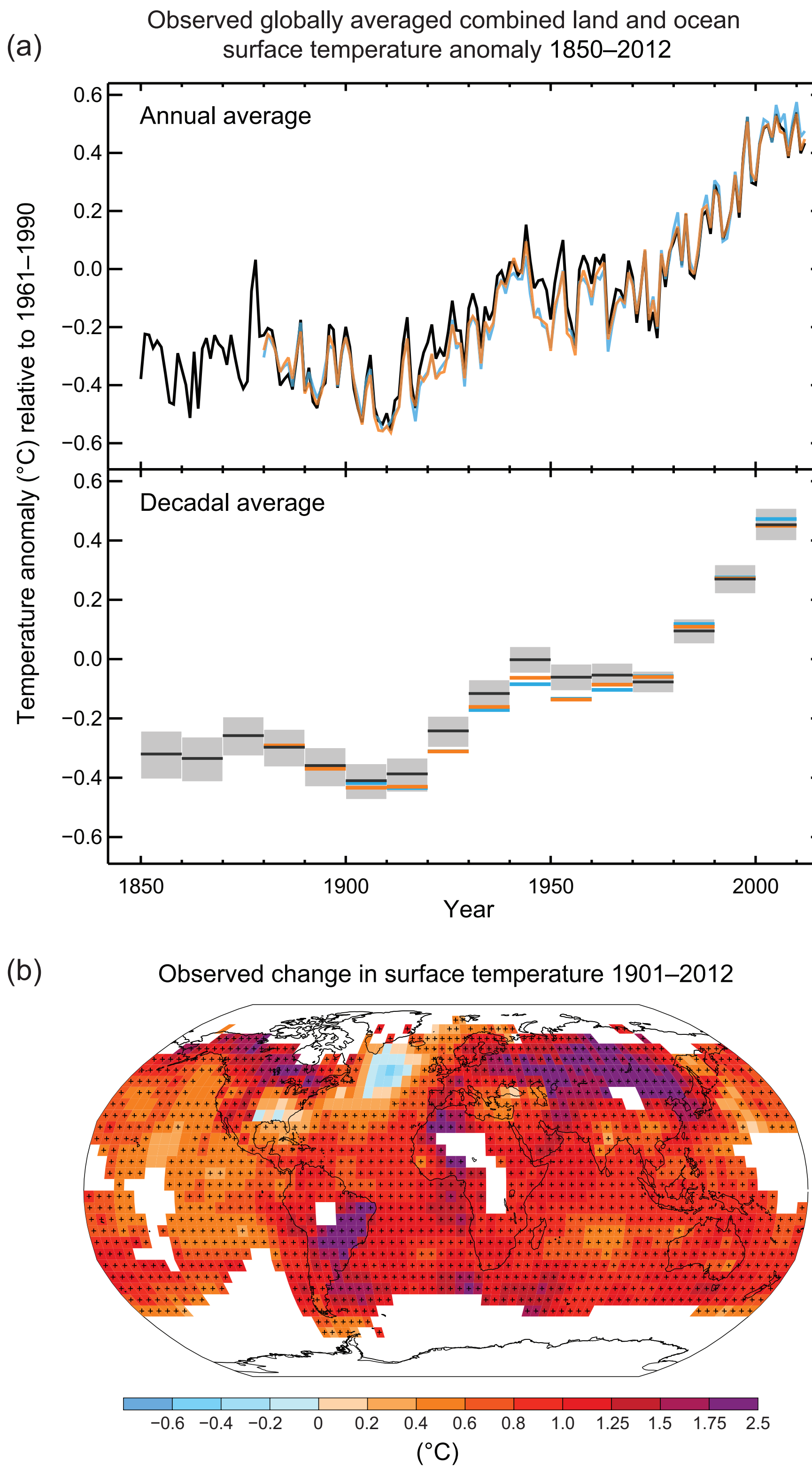

Figure SPM.1 | (a) Observed global mean combined land and ocean surface temperature anomalies, from 1850 to 2012 from three data sets. Top panel: annual mean values. Bottom panel: decadal mean values including the estimate of uncertainty for one dataset (black). Anomalies are relative to the mean of 1961–1990. (b) Map of the observed surface temperature change from 1901 to 2012 derived from temperature trends determined by linear regression from one dataset (orange line in panel a). Trends have been calculated where data availability permits a robust estimate (i.e., only for grid boxes with greater than 70% complete records and more than 20% data availability in the first and last 10% of the time period). Other areas are white. Grid boxes where the trend is significant at the 10% level are indicated by a + sign. For a listing of the datasets and further technical details see the Technical Summary Supplementary Material. {Figures 2.19–2.21; Figure TS.2}

Table SPM.1 | Extreme weather and climate events: Global-scale assessment of recent observed changes, human contribution to the changes, and projected further changes for the early (2016–2035) and late (2081–2100) 21st century. Bold indicates where the AR5 (black) provides a revised* global-scale assessment from the SREX (blue) or AR4 (red). Projections for early 21st century were not provided in previous assessment reports. Projections in the AR5 are relative to the reference period of 1986–2005, and use the new Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) scenarios (see Box SPM.1) unless otherwise specified. See the Glossary for definitions of extreme weather and climate events.

Phenomenon and direction of trend	Assessment that changes occurred (typically since 1950 unless otherwise indicated)	Assessment of a human contribution to observed changes	Likelihood of further changes: Early 21st century	Likelihood of further changes: Late 21st century
Warmer and/or fewer cold days and nights over most land areas	*Very likely* {2.6}	***Very likely*** {10.6}	*Likely* {11.3}	*Virtually certain* {12.4}
	Very likely *Very likely*	*Likely* *Likely*		*Virtually certain* *Virtually certain*
Warmer and/or more frequent hot days and nights over most land areas	*Very likely* {2.6}	***Very likely*** {10.6}	*Likely* {11.3}	*Virtually certain* {12.4}
	Very likely *Very likely*	*Likely* *Likely* (nights only)		*Virtually certain* *Virtually certain*
Warm spells/heat waves. Frequency and/or duration increases over most land areas	***Medium confidence*** on a global scale *Likely* in large parts of Europe, Asia and Australia {2.6}	***Likely***[a] {10.6}	Not formally assessed[b] {11.3}	*Very likely* {12.4}
	Medium confidence in many (but not all) regions *Likely*	Not formally assessed *More likely than not*		*Very likely* *Very likely*
Heavy precipitation events. Increase in the frequency, intensity, and/or amount of heavy precipitation	*Likely* more land areas with increases than decreases[c] {2.6}	***Medium confidence*** {7.6, 10.6}	*Likely* over many land areas {11.3}	***Very likely*** over most of the mid-latitude land masses and over wet tropical regions {12.4}
	Likely more land areas with increases than decreases *Likely* over most land areas	*Medium confidence* *More likely than not*		*Likely* over many areas *Very likely* over most land areas
Increases in intensity and/or duration of drought	***Low confidence*** on a global scale *Likely* changes in some regions[d] {2.6}	***Low confidence*** {10.6}	*Low confidence*[g] {11.3}	***Likely*** *(medium confidence)* on a regional to global scale[h] {12.4}
	Medium confidence in some regions *Likely* in many regions, since 1970[e]	*Medium confidence*[f] *More likely than not*		*Medium confidence* in some regions *Likely*[e]
Increases in intense tropical cyclone activity	***Low confidence*** in long term (centennial) changes *Virtually certain* in North Atlantic since 1970 {2.6}	***Low confidence***[i] {10.6}	*Low confidence* {11.3}	***More likely than not*** in the Western North Pacific and North Atlantic[j] {14.6}
	Low confidence *Likely* in some regions, since 1970	*Low confidence* *More likely than not*		*More likely than not* in some basins *Likely*
Increased incidence and/or magnitude of extreme high sea level	*Likely* (since 1970) {3.7}	***Likely***[k] {3.7}	*Likely*[l] {13.7}	***Very likely***[l] {13.7}
	Likely (late 20th century) *Likely*	*Likely*[k] *More likely than not*[k]		*Very likely*[m] *Likely*

* The direct comparison of assessment findings between reports is difficult. For some climate variables, different aspects have been assessed, and the revised guidance note on uncertainties has been used for the SREX and AR5. The availability of new information, improved scientific understanding, continued analyses of data and models, and specific differences in methodologies applied in the assessed studies, all contribute to revised assessment findings.

Notes:

[a] Attribution is based on available case studies. It is *likely* that human influence has more than doubled the probability of occurrence of some observed heat waves in some locations.

[b] Models project near-term increases in the duration, intensity and spatial extent of heat waves and warm spells.

[c] In most continents, *confidence* in trends is not higher than *medium* except in North America and Europe where there have been *likely* increases in either the frequency or intensity of heavy precipitation with some seasonal and/or regional variation. It is *very likely* that there have been increases in central North America.

[d] The frequency and intensity of drought has *likely* increased in the Mediterranean and West Africa, and *likely* decreased in central North America and north-west Australia.

[e] AR4 assessed the area affected by drought.

[f] SREX assessed *medium confidence* that anthropogenic influence had contributed to some changes in the drought patterns observed in the second half of the 20th century, based on its attributed impact on precipitation and temperature changes. SREX assessed *low confidence* in the attribution of changes in droughts at the level of single regions.

[g] There is *low confidence* in projected changes in soil moisture.

[h] Regional to global-scale projected decreases in soil moisture and increased agricultural drought are *likely (medium confidence)* in presently dry regions by the end of this century under the RCP8.5 scenario. Soil moisture drying in the Mediterranean, Southwest US and southern African regions is consistent with projected changes in Hadley circulation and increased surface temperatures, so there is *high confidence* in *likely* surface drying in these regions by the end of this century under the RCP8.5 scenario.

[i] There is *medium confidence* that a reduction in aerosol forcing over the North Atlantic has contributed at least in part to the observed increase in tropical cyclone activity since the 1970s in this region.

[j] Based on expert judgment and assessment of projections which use an SRES A1B (or similar) scenario.

[k] Attribution is based on the close relationship between observed changes in extreme and mean sea level.

[l] There is *high confidence* that this increase in extreme high sea level will primarily be the result of an increase in mean sea level. There is *low confidence* in region-specific projections of storminess and associated storm surges.

[m] SREX assessed it to be *very likely* that mean sea level rise will contribute to future upward trends in extreme coastal high water levels.

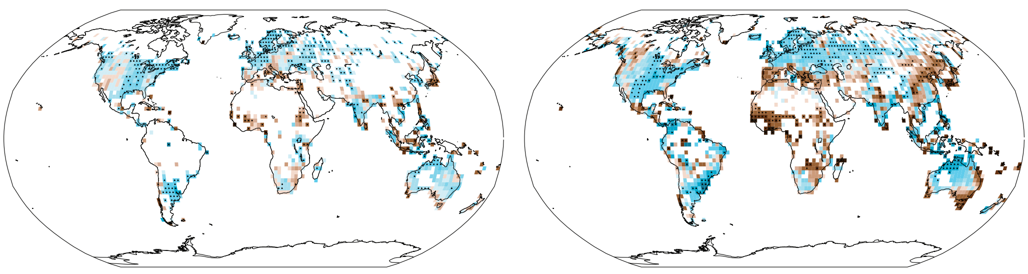

Figure SPM.2 | Maps of observed precipitation change from 1901 to 2010 and from 1951 to 2010 (trends in annual accumulation calculated using the same criteria as in Figure SPM.1) from one data set. For further technical details see the Technical Summary Supplementary Material. {TS TFE.1, Figure 2; Figure 2.29}

B.2 Ocean

Ocean warming dominates the increase in energy stored in the climate system, accounting for more than 90% of the energy accumulated between 1971 and 2010 (*high confidence*). It is *virtually certain* that the upper ocean (0–700 m) warmed from 1971 to 2010 (see Figure SPM.3), and it *likely* warmed between the 1870s and 1971. {3.2, Box 3.1}

- On a global scale, the ocean warming is largest near the surface, and the upper 75 m warmed by 0.11 [0.09 to 0.13] °C per decade over the period 1971 to 2010. Since AR4, instrumental biases in upper-ocean temperature records have been identified and reduced, enhancing confidence in the assessment of change. {3.2}

- It is *likely* that the ocean warmed between 700 and 2000 m from 1957 to 2009. Sufficient observations are available for the period 1992 to 2005 for a global assessment of temperature change below 2000 m. There were *likely* no significant observed temperature trends between 2000 and 3000 m for this period. It is *likely* that the ocean warmed from 3000 m to the bottom for this period, with the largest warming observed in the Southern Ocean. {3.2}

- More than 60% of the net energy increase in the climate system is stored in the upper ocean (0–700 m) during the relatively well-sampled 40-year period from 1971 to 2010, and about 30% is stored in the ocean below 700 m. The increase in upper ocean heat content during this time period estimated from a linear trend is *likely* 17 [15 to 19] × 10^{22} J [7] (see Figure SPM.3). {3.2, Box 3.1}

- It is *about as likely as not* that ocean heat content from 0–700 m increased more slowly during 2003 to 2010 than during 1993 to 2002 (see Figure SPM.3). Ocean heat uptake from 700–2000 m, where interannual variability is smaller, *likely* continued unabated from 1993 to 2009. {3.2, Box 9.2}

- It is *very likely* that regions of high salinity where evaporation dominates have become more saline, while regions of low salinity where precipitation dominates have become fresher since the 1950s. These regional trends in ocean salinity provide indirect evidence that evaporation and precipitation over the oceans have changed (*medium confidence*). {2.5, 3.3, 3.5}

- There is no observational evidence of a trend in the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), based on the decade-long record of the complete AMOC and longer records of individual AMOC components. {3.6}

[7] A constant supply of heat through the ocean surface at the rate of 1 W m^{-2} for 1 year would increase the ocean heat content by 1.1 × 10^{22} J.

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B.3 Cryosphere

Over the last two decades, the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have been losing mass, glaciers have continued to shrink almost worldwide, and Arctic sea ice and Northern Hemisphere spring snow cover have continued to decrease in extent (*high confidence*) (see Figure SPM.3). {4.2–4.7}

- The average rate of ice loss[8] from glaciers around the world, excluding glaciers on the periphery of the ice sheets[9], was *very likely* 226 [91 to 361] Gt yr^{-1} over the period 1971 to 2009, and *very likely* 275 [140 to 410] Gt yr^{-1} over the period 1993 to 2009[10]. {4.3}

- The average rate of ice loss from the Greenland ice sheet has *very likely* substantially increased from 34 [–6 to 74] Gt yr^{-1} over the period 1992 to 2001 to 215 [157 to 274] Gt yr^{-1} over the period 2002 to 2011. {4.4}

- The average rate of ice loss from the Antarctic ice sheet has *likely* increased from 30 [–37 to 97] Gt yr^{-1} over the period 1992–2001 to 147 [72 to 221] Gt yr^{-1} over the period 2002 to 2011. There is *very high confidence* that these losses are mainly from the northern Antarctic Peninsula and the Amundsen Sea sector of West Antarctica. {4.4}

- The annual mean Arctic sea ice extent decreased over the period 1979 to 2012 with a rate that was *very likely* in the range 3.5 to 4.1% per decade (range of 0.45 to 0.51 million km^2 per decade), and *very likely* in the range 9.4 to 13.6% per decade (range of 0.73 to 1.07 million km^2 per decade) for the summer sea ice minimum (perennial sea ice). The average decrease in decadal mean extent of Arctic sea ice has been most rapid in summer (*high confidence*); the spatial extent has decreased in every season, and in every successive decade since 1979 (*high confidence*) (see Figure SPM.3). There is *medium confidence* from reconstructions that over the past three decades, Arctic summer sea ice retreat was unprecedented and sea surface temperatures were anomalously high in at least the last 1,450 years. {4.2, 5.5}

- It is *very likely* that the annual mean Antarctic sea ice extent increased at a rate in the range of 1.2 to 1.8% per decade (range of 0.13 to 0.20 million km^2 per decade) between 1979 and 2012. There is *high confidence* that there are strong regional differences in this annual rate, with extent increasing in some regions and decreasing in others. {4.2}

- There is *very high confidence* that the extent of Northern Hemisphere snow cover has decreased since the mid-20th century (see Figure SPM.3). Northern Hemisphere snow cover extent decreased 1.6 [0.8 to 2.4] % per decade for March and April, and 11.7 [8.8 to 14.6] % per decade for June, over the 1967 to 2012 period. During this period, snow cover extent in the Northern Hemisphere did not show a statistically significant increase in any month. {4.5}

- There is *high confidence* that permafrost temperatures have increased in most regions since the early 1980s. Observed warming was up to 3°C in parts of Northern Alaska (early 1980s to mid-2000s) and up to 2°C in parts of the Russian European North (1971 to 2010). In the latter region, a considerable reduction in permafrost thickness and areal extent has been observed over the period 1975 to 2005 (*medium confidence*). {4.7}

- Multiple lines of evidence support very substantial Arctic warming since the mid-20th century. {Box 5.1, 10.3}

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[8] All references to 'ice loss' or 'mass loss' refer to net ice loss, i.e., accumulation minus melt and iceberg calving.

[9] For methodological reasons, this assessment of ice loss from the Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets includes change in the glaciers on the periphery. These peripheral glaciers are thus excluded from the values given for glaciers.

[10] 100 Gt yr^{-1} of ice loss is equivalent to about 0.28 mm yr^{-1} of global mean sea level rise.

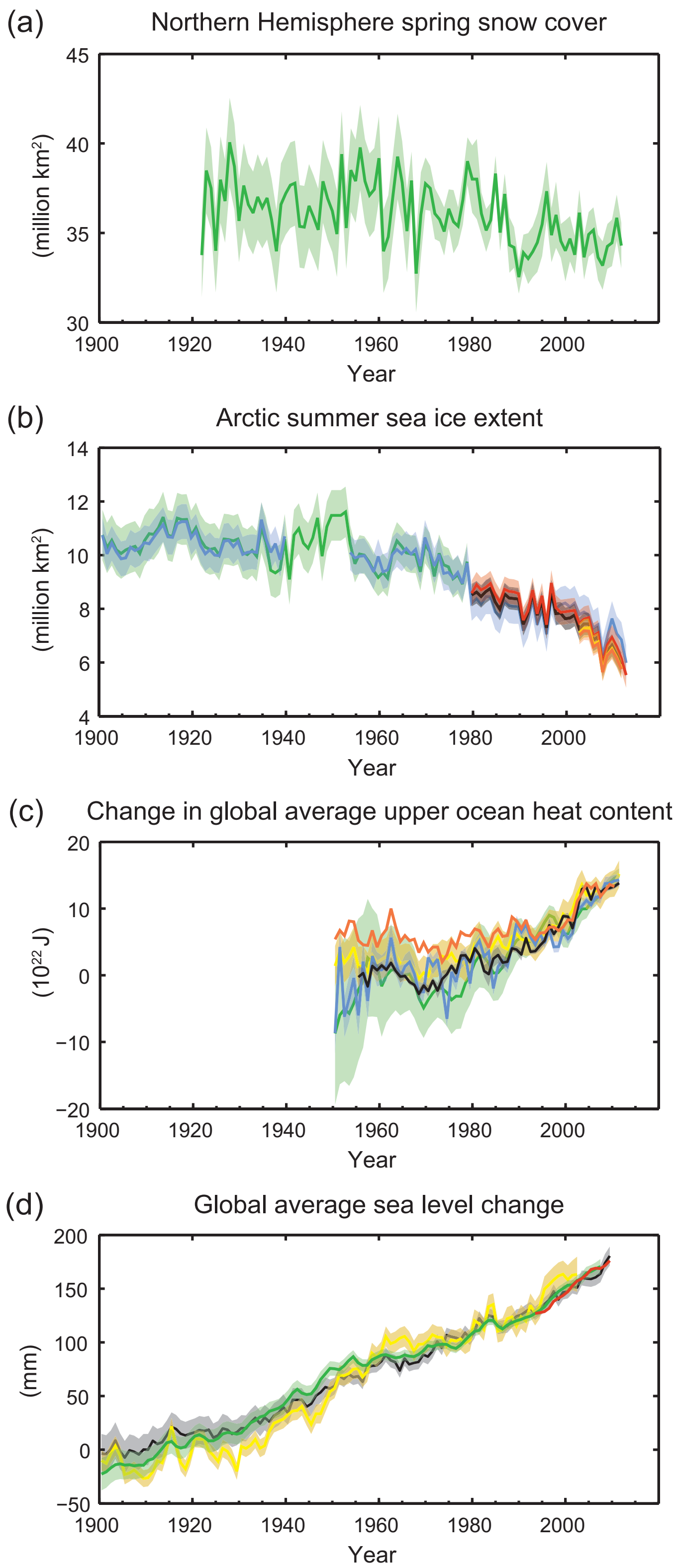

Figure SPM.3 | Multiple observed indicators of a changing global climate: (a) Extent of Northern Hemisphere March-April (spring) average snow cover; (b) extent of Arctic July-August-September (summer) average sea ice; (c) change in global mean upper ocean (0–700 m) heat content aligned to 2006–2010, and relative to the mean of all datasets for 1970; (d) global mean sea level relative to the 1900–1905 mean of the longest running dataset, and with all datasets aligned to have the same value in 1993, the first year of satellite altimetry data. All time-series (coloured lines indicating different data sets) show annual values, and where assessed, uncertainties are indicated by coloured shading. See Technical Summary Supplementary Material for a listing of the datasets. {Figures 3.2, 3.13, 4.19, and 4.3; FAQ 2.1, Figure 2; Figure TS.1}