

2023/06/PR

IPCC Press Release

20 March 2023

Urgent climate action can secure a liveable future for all

INTERLAKEN, Switzerland, March 20, 2023 -- There are multiple, feasible and effective options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to human-caused climate change, and they are available now, said scientists in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released today.

“Mainstreaming effective and equitable climate action will not only reduce losses and damages for nature and people, it will also provide wider benefits,” said IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee. “This Synthesis Report underscores the urgency of taking more ambitious action and shows that, if we act now, we can still secure a liveable sustainable future for all.”

In 2018, IPCC highlighted the unprecedented scale of the challenge required to keep warming to 1.5°C. Five years later, that challenge has become even greater due to a continued increase in greenhouse gas emissions. The pace and scale of what has been done so far, and current plans, are insufficient to tackle climate change.

More than a century of burning fossil fuels as well as unequal and unsustainable energy and land use has led to global warming of 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels. This has resulted in more frequent and more intense extreme weather events that have caused increasingly dangerous impacts on nature and people in every region of the world.

Every increment of warming results in rapidly escalating hazards. More intense heatwaves, heavier rainfall and other weather extremes further increase risks for human health and ecosystems. In every region, people are dying from extreme heat. Climate-driven food and water insecurity is expected to increase with increased warming. When the risks combine with other adverse events, such as pandemics or conflicts, they become even more difficult to manage.

Losses and damages in sharp focus

The report, approved during a week-long session in Interlaken, brings in to sharp focus the losses and damages we are already experiencing and will continue into the future, hitting the most vulnerable people and ecosystems especially hard. Taking the right action now could result in the transformational change essential for a sustainable, equitable world.

“Climate justice is crucial because those who have contributed least to climate change are being disproportionately affected,” said Aditi Mukherji, one of the 93 authors of this Synthesis Report, the closing chapter of the Panel's sixth assessment.

“Almost half of the world’s population lives in regions that are highly vulnerable to climate change. In the last decade, deaths from floods, droughts and storms were 15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions,” she added.

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In this decade, accelerated action to adapt to climate change is essential to close the gap between existing adaptation and what is needed. Meanwhile, keeping warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels requires deep, rapid and sustained greenhouse gas emissions reductions in all sectors. Emissions should be decreasing by now and will need to be cut by almost half by 2030, if warming is to be limited to 1.5°C.

Clear way ahead

The solution lies in climate resilient development. This involves integrating measures to adapt to climate change with actions to reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions in ways that provide wider benefits.

For example: access to clean energy and technologies improves health, especially for women and children; low-carbon electrification, walking, cycling and public transport enhance air quality, improve health, employment opportunities and deliver equity. The economic benefits for people's health from air quality improvements alone would be roughly the same, or possibly even larger than the costs of reducing or avoiding emissions.

Climate resilient development becomes progressively more challenging with every increment of warming. This is why the choices made in the next few years will play a critical role in deciding our future and that of generations to come.

To be effective, these choices need to be rooted in our diverse values, worldviews and knowledges, including scientific knowledge, Indigenous Knowledge and local knowledge. This approach will facilitate climate resilient development and allow locally appropriate, socially acceptable solutions.

“The greatest gains in wellbeing could come from prioritizing climate risk reduction for low-income and marginalised communities, including people living in informal settlements,” said Christopher Trisos, one of the report's authors. “Accelerated climate action will only come about if there is a many-fold increase in finance. Insufficient and misaligned finance is holding back progress.”

Enabling sustainable development

There is sufficient global capital to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions if existing barriers are reduced. Increasing finance to climate investments is important to achieve global climate goals. Governments, through public funding and clear signals to investors, are key in reducing these barriers. Investors, central banks and financial regulators can also play their part.

There are tried and tested policy measures that can work to achieve deep emissions reductions and climate resilience if they are scaled up and applied more widely. Political commitment, coordinated policies, international cooperation, ecosystem stewardship and inclusive governance are all important for effective and equitable climate action.

If technology, know-how and suitable policy measures are shared, and adequate finance is made available now, every community can reduce or avoid carbon-intensive consumption. At the same time, with significant investment in adaptation, we can avert rising risks, especially for vulnerable groups and regions.

Climate, ecosystems and society are interconnected. Effective and equitable conservation of approximately 30-50% of the Earth's land, freshwater and ocean will help ensure a healthy planet. Urban areas offer a global scale opportunity for ambitious climate action that contributes to sustainable development.

Changes in the food sector, electricity, transport, industry, buildings and land-use can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, they can make it easier for people to lead low-carbon lifestyles, which will also improve health and wellbeing. A better understanding of the consequences of overconsumption can help people make more informed choices.

“Transformational changes are more likely to succeed where there is trust, where everyone works together to prioritise risk reduction, and where benefits and burdens are shared equitably,” Lee said. “We live in a diverse world in which everyone has different responsibilities and different opportunities to bring about change. Some can do a lot while others will need support to help them manage the change.”

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Temperature-Scale Equivalents

1.1C = 2.0F

1.5C = 2.7F

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AR6 Synthesis Report in Numbers

Review comments: 6841

 Governments: 47 (21 Developed, 2 Economies in transition, 22 Developing, 2 SIDS)

 Government Comments: 6636 (1814 Figures, 4822 Text)

 Observers: 5

 Observer Comments: 205

Core Writing Team members: 49

Review Editors: 9

Extended Writing Team Authors: 7

Contributing Authors: 28

Women: 41

Men: 52

Developing Country Authors: 37

Developed Country Authors: 56

About the IPCC

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was established by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide political leaders with periodic scientific assessments about climate change. The IPCC has 195 member states that are members of the UN or WMO.

Thousands of people from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC. For the assessment reports, experts volunteer their time as IPCC authors to assess the thousands of scientific papers published each year to provide a comprehensive summary of what is known about the drivers of

climate change, its impacts and future risks, and how adaptation and mitigation can reduce those risks. An open and transparent review by experts and member governments is an essential part of the IPCC process to ensure an objective and complete assessment and to reflect a diverse range of views and expertise.

The IPCC has three working groups: Working Group I, which addresses with the physical science of climate change; Working Group II, which focuses on the impact, adaptation and vulnerability associated with climate change; and Working Group III, which deals with the mitigation of climate change. It also has a [Task Force on Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#) that develops methodologies for measuring emissions and removals.

IPCC assessments provide governments, at all levels, with scientific information they can use to develop climate policies. IPCC assessments are a key input into the international negotiations to tackle climate change. IPCC reports are drafted and reviewed in several stages to guarantee accuracy, objectivity and transparency.

About the Sixth Assessment Cycle

The IPCC publishes comprehensive scientific assessments every six to seven years. The previous one, the [Fifth Assessment Report](#), was completed in 2014 and provided the main scientific input to [The Paris Agreement](#).

At its 41nd Session in February 2015, the IPCC decided to produce a [Sixth Assessment Report](#) (AR6). At its 42nd Session in October 2015, it elected a new Bureau, which is composed of the IPCC Chair, the IPCC Vice-Chairs, the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Working Groups, and the Co-Chairs of the Task Force. At its 43rd Session in April 2016, the IPCC decided to produce three Special Reports, a Methodology Report and AR6.

The Working Group I contribution to AR6, [Climate Change 2021: the Physical Science Basis](#), was released on 9 August 2021. The Working Group II contribution, [Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability](#), was released on 28 February 2022. The Working Group III contribution, [Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change](#), was released on 4 April 2022.

The IPCC also published the following special reports on more specific issues during the Sixth Assessment Cycle:

[Global Warming of 1.5°C](#) (2.7°F) in October 2018;

[Climate Change and Land](#) in August 2019; and

[Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate](#) in September 2019

In May 2019, the IPCC released the [2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories](#)

For more information, please visit www.ipcc.ch. Most videos published by the IPCC can be found on its [YouTube](#) channel.