#### Climate change science

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DEPARTMENT OF

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#### Article 2 of the UNFCCC

The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

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#### Risk = probability x consequence

- Loaded dice
- Car driving toward a cliff in the fog
- Dumping nails on the road of life



#### Special challenges of climate change

- Gradual, delayed onset
- Emerges against a variable background
- "Permanent" impacts
- Global, differentiated impacts
- Contrasting historical and future responsibility
- Contrasting responsibility and vulnerability

#### "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal"

Global Land-Ocean Temperature Index



Black : annual mean, global met stations Red: 5-year running mean, global met stations

NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, updated through 2010



#### Climate sensitivity: Uncertainty in a key parameter



# Climate sensitivity from a comprehensive paleoclimate reconstruction



Carolyn Snyder thesis, Stanford, 2010

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