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IPCC STATEMENT

21 September 2017

IPCC statement: Clarifying the role of the IPCC in the context of 1.5°C

GENEVA, Sept 21 - The last few days have seen extensive media coverage of climate science, some directly referencing the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In light of this reporting, we would like to take the opportunity to clarify some aspects of our work and the unique role the IPCC plays in advancing scientific knowledge on climate change.

The IPCC's mandate is to assess the state of the scientific literature on all aspects of climate change, its impacts and society's options for responding to it. Whenever a new piece of scientific research is published that is relevant to any these topics, it joins the ever-growing body of evidence that the IPCC assesses. The IPCC does not conduct original research itself, or develop its own models or scenarios.

Our next major assessment report (the Sixth Assessment Report, or AR6) is due in 2021/22. Scientific understanding about the implications of a global temperature increase of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is growing quickly. In early October 2018, a year from now, the IPCC will be releasing a *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C*, to round up all the available knowledge on this important topic.

The Special Report will also serve as an update to the IPCC's previous comprehensive assessment (the Fifth Assessment Report, or AR5), which was published in 2013/14 before the Paris Agreement. At each stage of preparation through to completion, the Special Report will assess the fast-growing body of scientific literature relevant to 1.5°C. Until that point, it would be inappropriate for the IPCC to comment on any single study.

At the moment, the First Order Draft of the *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C* is undergoing expert review until Sunday 24 September. With nearly 2,000 experts from around the world registered to take part in this process, this is a key step in ensuring our reports continue to be objective, comprehensive and balanced. All comments received will be considered in the preparation of the Second Order Draft which will be open for review by government representatives and Expert Reviewers in January and February 2018.

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What is the IPCC?

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was established by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization in 1988 to provide policymakers with regular scientific assessments concerning climate change, its implications and risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation strategies. It has 195 member states.

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, thus guaranteeing objectivity and transparency.

The IPCC assesses the thousands of scientific papers published each year to tell policymakers what we know and don't know about the risks related to climate change. The IPCC identifies where there is agreement in the scientific community, where there are differences of opinion, and where further research is needed. It does not conduct its own research.

To produce its reports, the IPCC mobilizes hundreds of scientists. These scientists and officials are drawn from diverse backgrounds. Only a dozen permanent staff work in the IPCC's Secretariat.

The IPCC has three working groups: Working Group I, dealing with the physical science basis of climate change; Working Group II, dealing with impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and Working Group III, dealing with the mitigation of climate change. It also has a Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories that develops methodologies for measuring emissions and removals.

IPCC Assessment Reports consist of contributions from each of the three working groups and a Synthesis Report. Special Reports undertake an assessment of cross-disciplinary issues that span more than one working group and are shorter and more focused than the main assessments.

Sixth Assessment Cycle

At its 41st Session in February 2015, the IPCC decided to produce a Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). At its 43rd Session in April 2016, it decided to produce three Special Reports, a Methodology Report and AR6.

The first of these special reports, to be finalized in October 2018, is *Global Warming of 1.5°C, an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty*.

The Methodology Report, entitled *2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*, will be delivered in May 2019.

In September 2019 the IPCC will also finalize two *Special Reports: the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, and Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*.

The IPCC approved the outlines of AR6 in early September 2017. The three working contributions will be released in 2021 and the Synthesis Report in April 2022 in time for the first global stocktake in 2023 by the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) when countries will review progress under the Paris Agreement towards their goal of keeping global warming to well below 2°C while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.