

2017/07/PR

IPCC PRESS RELEASE

31 March 2017

IPCC agrees outlines of new reports

GUADALAJARA, Mexico, March 31 – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has agreed the outlines of two new reports that will help governments understand the impact climate change is having on human activities and nature on land and sea and how human activity in these areas is affecting climate change.

The Panel approved the outlines of 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*, both to be finalized in September 2019.

The decision on the outlines, or tables of contents, which had been drafted by scoping meetings in December and February, clears the way for the IPCC to launch the call for nominations for authors for both reports in early April.

“This outcome combines the best scientific expertise available along with policymakers’ requirements to help advance our knowledge of how climate change affects the oceans and cryosphere. The IPCC looks forward to working with experts from around the world on this important topic that impacts billions of people, from the high mountains and polar regions to the coasts,” said IPCC Vice-Chair Ko Barrett, who chaired the scientific steering committee for the scoping meeting that drafted the outline of the *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*.

The cryosphere – from the Greek *kryos* meaning cold or ice – is a word to collectively designate the areas of the Earth where water is found in its solid state. This includes ice sheets, frozen lakes and rivers, regions covered by snow, glaciers, and frozen soil.

“This report will address some of the key issues that countries are grappling with in responding to climate change: how to sustain the ability of our land resources to sustain our societies in the face of a changing climate, and how emissions from the land sector can be reduced without jeopardising other development goals,” said IPCC Vice-Chair Youba Sokona, who chaired the scientific steering committee for the scoping meeting that drafted the outline of the *Climate Change and Land*. “The report will look in detail at desertification, land degradation and food security, but will also assess options for integrated responses that support sustainable development and respond effectively to climate change,” he said.

The agreed outlines, subject to final edits, are available on the IPCC website. The decisions were taken at the 45th Session of the IPCC, held in Guadalajara, Mexico, on 28-31 March 2017. The full agenda and documents can be found here: http://ipcc.ch/scripts/session_template.php?page=45ipcc.htm

The 46th Session of the IPCC will be held in Montreal, Canada, on 3-9 September 2017.

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What is the IPCC?

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the world body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly, to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.

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.

Thus the IPCC offers policymakers a snapshot of what the scientific community understands about climate change rather than promoting a particular view. IPCC reports are policy-relevant without being policy-prescriptive. The IPCC may set out options for policymakers to choose from in pursuit of goals decided by policymakers, but it does not tell governments what to do.

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 members of the Panel are its 195 member governments. They work by consensus to endorse the reports of the IPCC and set its procedures and budget in plenary meetings of the Panel. The word "Intergovernmental" in the organization's name reflects this.

IPCC reports are requested by the member governments and developed by authors drawn from the scientific community in an extensive process of repeated drafting and review. Scientists and other experts participate in this review process through a self-declaration of expertise. The Panel endorses these reports in a dialogue between the governments that request the reports and will work with them and the scientists that write them. In this discussion the scientists have the last word on any additions or changes, although the Panel may agree by consensus to delete something.

Sixth Assessment Cycle

At its 41st 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 that would oversee the work on this report and Special Reports to be produced in the assessment cycle. At its 43rd Session in April 2016, it decided to produce three Special Reports, a Methodology Report to update guidelines on national greenhouse gas inventories and the AR6.

At its session in Guadalajara in March 2017, the IPCC considered the outlines of the Special Report on climate change and oceans and the cryosphere, and the Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems. The two special reports are expected to be finalized in September 2019.

In September 2018 the IPCC will also finalize *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* (SR15). The *2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* will be delivered in May 2019. The AR6 Synthesis Report will be finalized in the first half of 2022.

For more information, including links to the IPCC reports, go to:

www.ipcc.ch