Subject to revision

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Some ideas by Jill PEETERS, weather presenter, Belgium

The most solicited persons in Belgium to comment on climate disruption or extreme weather are:

- former vice-chair of the IPCC, Jean-Pascal van Ypersele
- DG for Climate Action European Commission, Jos Delbeke
- weather presenter and meteorologist, Jill Peeters
- other scientists, or people of the national Met Office KMI, but not so known by the public
- politicians, but not so trusted by the public

I am the weather presenter at VTM (commercial channel in Flanders) and Het Laatste Nieuws (most popular newspaper). In 2006 I started communicating about climate disruption. In this presentation I will show pictures and clips, showing some examples of my work, since the outcome of AR5.

Looking for momentum: the outcome of AR5-WG1

As scientists, we think that it's important to get science into the news. But in fact media is only interested in this climate background, when people suffer from big disasters (extreme weather). I decided to come over to Stockholm, at the outcome of the AR5, by my self. It was only a few days before the outcome, that my news department was convinced that we could create an unique momentum. (in fact: the other channels weren't going, and they don't have a popular climate communicator) There was a live satellite intervention in the news, I also gave some radio interviews, and tweeted about it. I could arrange a live interview with JP van Ypersele about the importance of the AR5, but there was not enough time to go into depth. Papers tried to the next day…

But they communicated that "we're all gonna die and it is our own fault". Without having the opportunity to read the AR5 in depth, I had to defend the outcome that 'the figures are overwhelming and they don't lie' (the same seeing the WG1 came out). Papers and other media focused on the extremes, without any balance, ignoring uncertainty or different model outcomes of ranges.

Although the AR5-WG1 outcome is a more general one, focused on the physics, it is the most cited. Based on this outcome a lot of press translated these WG1 general figures into local ones. Again, without any respect for the scientific procedures. They made up their own science, just focusing on the 'what's in it for me' side. I could help some journalists with this, trying to put more nuances into the communication, and adding the importance of doing this.

With the support of two dedicated authors I managed to write a book (which came out December 2014!). This was based on the IPCC-AR5 outcome, and written with 'an 18 year old' in mind. In 21 questions we tried to answer all basics of climate disruption. 7 questions in part one 'what is happening' (WG1), in part two 'how come?' (WG2) and in part 3 'what can we do about it?' (WG3). With a focus on the importance of national policy and international co-operation (Cop21; UNFCCC). JP van Ypersele and Ph Huybrechts from IPCC wrote forewords, also T. Stocker and M. Van Aalst from Red Cross Climate helped me out. All questions were answered, starting with an original IPCC graph. Again, especially WG1 graphs were useful, although there is most of the time too much information in one graph.

Giving lectures I started using my own graphs and cartoons, and free-to-download clips or graphs from Climate Central, NOAA, NASA…

Besides giving interviews on my own channel during the news on radio and TV, I am often invited by the national channel to do the same. But this always starts from extreme weather events. The only exception was the COP21 in Paris.I also made a weather report 2050 for the WMO. This

was covered by the whole Belgian press, and this is still used very often in schools and government. (Not only because of the content, but also because ‘the WMO-UN invited our weather presenter to do so’.)

My channel owns a children’s channel too, and there we made 8 episodes on climate. We chose the subjects based on AR5, but didn’t communicate it as such. The children trusted my explanations, because they link a weather presenter with climate knowledge.

I used to tweet more climate scientific information. But more and more I’m convinced this doesn’t help people at all. It creates a discrepancy between the world where people would like to live in (without weather disasters, climate refugees, no air pollution…) and reality (traffic jams, energy bills, taking a plane…). I started focusing my communication on good stories, simple choices, opportunities, progress…

by the way: I prefer the phrase “climate disruption” instead of “climate change” or “global warming”.