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PROGRESS REPORTS

Matters related to UNFCCC and Other International Bodies

(Prepared by the UNFCCC Secretariat)

(Submitted by the Secretary of the IPCC)

PROGRESS REPORTS

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This note describes the activities undertaken by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in collaboration with IPCC, as well as other activities relevant for the work of the IPCC, since the last update presented during the 52nd Session of the IPCC in February 2020. The UNFCCC activities are now focused on the preparations for the 26 session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) that is planned to be held in November 2021 in Glasgow.

1. June Momentum for Climate Change

The Chairs of the Subsidiary Body of Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), with the support of the UNFCCC secretariat, conducted a series of online events from 1-10 June 2020,¹ which offered an opportunity for Parties and other stakeholders to continue exchanging views and sharing information in order to maintain momentum in the UNFCCC process and to showcase how climate action is progressing under the special circumstances owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within this series of events, the SBSTA Chair held an informal meeting with the scientific community to discuss the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic had on science.² Issues considered included the impacts of COVID-19 on greenhouse gas emissions and the climate system and on the work of the scientific community, as well as the options and opportunities to enable scientific support for a sustainable recovery and for knowledge sharing.

At this event, Ms Valerie Masson-Delmotte Working Group I (WGI) Co-Chair and Mr Jim Skea Working Group III (WGIII) Co-Chair outlined how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the preparation of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) and how IPCC is considering to include relevant publications on COVID-19 impacts in the AR6.³ Mr Youba Sokona, IPCC Vice Chair provided reflections on the presentations and discussions.

2. The SBSTA-IPCC Joint Working Group

Continuous collaboration between the presiding officers and secretariats of the UNFCCC and the IPCC has been extremely helpful over the years in structuring the input of the IPCC into the work of SBSTA and the UNFCCC process more generally, which has provided a solid scientific basis for policy making, as well as served as an avenue for providing feedback to the scientific community on the ongoing and future needs of the UNFCCC process. To this end, the Joint Working Group of the SBSTA and the IPCC continued to provide an informal space for strengthening this collaboration.

The SBSTA and IPCC Chairs convened an online meeting of the Joint Working Group on 17 September 2020. The agenda of the meeting was designed to provide an opportunity to continue discussing how the work of the IPCC could support the implementation of the Convention and the Paris Agreement, looking at what has been achieved and what will be needed in the future at different levels, including for the second periodic review of the long-term global goal (LTGG) under the Convention and the global stocktake under the Paris Agreement.

¹ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/june-momentum-for-climate-change>.

² <https://unfccc.int/event/sbsta-chair-information-event-with-the-scientific-community>.

³ For example cross-chapter boxes on effects on emissions and atmospheric composition and compound COVID-climate risks, the pandemics-biodiversity-climate and health-climate links and climate mitigation and a “green recovery”.

The meeting allowed UNFCCC participants to understand the latest changes to the schedule of the Working Group and Synthesis reports, including any uncertainties and flexibility that may still exist, and the tentative schedule for the IPCC sessions in 2020 and 2021, as well as the progress of the AR6 work and novel aspects of assessment and “hot topics” of high relevance for the UNFCCC process.

Areas of, and opportunities, for strengthening collaboration discussed included the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Dialogues 2020 (see below), the second periodic review of the LTGG under the Convention and the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement, the upcoming IPCC expert meetings (IPBES, ICOMOS/LCIPP, SLCF) and responding to the mandate to collaborate with the Adaptation Committee on developing further guidance in relation to the adaptation communication and on methodologies for assessing adaptation needs.

3. The UN Climate Change Dialogues 2020

Due to health and safety measures put in place worldwide in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, COP 26 and subsidiary body sessions were postponed to 2021. Capitalizing on the experience from the June Momentum for Climate Change, the SBSTA and SBI Chairs, in collaboration with the COP 25 Presidency and incoming COP 26 Presidency, launched another series of virtual events, the UN Climate Change Dialogues 2020 (Climate Dialogues) to advance work on the subsidiary bodies and COP agendas.⁴

The objective of the Climate Dialogues was to provide a platform for Parties and other stakeholders to showcase progress made in 2020 and exchange views and ideas across the subsidiary bodies and COP agendas mandated for 2020. Overall, the Climate Dialogues helped to advance work under the subsidiary bodies and the COP in a virtual setting, thereby paving the way for a successful COP 26.

Structured Expert Dialogue (SED) of the second Periodic Review (PR2) of the long-term global goal and the progress toward it

The goal of SED1.1,⁵ convened on 26-27 November 2020, was to contribute to: enhancing Parties’ understanding of the LTGG and scenarios towards achieving it, progress made in relation to addressing information and knowledge gaps, and challenges and opportunities; and assessing the overall aggregated effect of the steps taken by Parties in order to achieve the LTGG. This contribution was made on the basis of the findings relevant to PR2 of the three special reports of the IPCC made available in 2018-19 and relevant information available from Parties.

At this meeting, seventeen IPCC experts consolidated findings from the above-mentioned special reports relevant to PR2 in four presentations and, together with the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and other IPCC experts participated actively in the dialogue with Parties and other participants.⁶ The IPCC participation was well appreciated by participants and we would like to extend our gratitude to WGI for coordinating the preparation of presentations and videos and for organizing the preparatory meetings.

⁴ <https://unfccc.int/cd2020>.

⁵ <https://unfccc.int/event/first-meeting-of-the-structured-expert-dialogue>.

⁶ The IPCC experts which attended SED1.1: Valérie Masson-Delmotte (WG I Co-chair), Panmao Zhai (WG I Co-chair), Hans-Otto Pörtner (WG II Co-chair), Debra Robert (WG II Co-chair), Jim Skea (WG III, Co-chair), Priyadarshi R. Shukla (WG III Co-chair), Joeri Rogelj, Kirsten Zickfeld, Piers Forster, Sarah Connors, Alexandre Magnan, Aromar Revi, Bruce Glavovic, Debora Ley, Elvira Poloczanska, Andreas Fischlin, Roderik van de Wa, Melinda Tignor, Zinta Zommers, Chuks Okereke, Katherine Calvin, Michael Oppenheimer, Michael Taylor, Mikiko Kainuma, Raphael Slade, Roberto Schaeffer, Pauline Dube, Pamela McElwee and Héléne des Combes.

The twelfth meeting of the SBSTA Research Dialogue

The twelfth meeting of the research dialogue,⁷ held on 24-25 November 2020, explored the scientific research and understanding of moving towards net zero global anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. This topic is of relevance for Parties considering how to move to global net-zero CO₂ emissions whilst being resilient to the unavoidable impacts of climate change in the context of the LTGG, in particular in the context of updated or revised nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and long-term strategies. One IPCC expert with inputs from seven other experts presented opportunities, risks and benefits of carbon dioxide removal for net-zero and contributed to enhancing understanding of these issues.

The Dialogue on the relationship between land and climate change adaptation related matters⁸ and the Ocean and Climate Change Dialogue⁹ to consider how to strengthen adaptation and mitigation action

These dialogues, held on 30 November – 1 December and 2-3 December 2020 respectively, aimed to identify opportunities and gaps in strengthening action in these areas building on the findings of the IPCC Special Reports on Land and Climate Change and Oceans and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, which have been presented to Parties in 2019 at SBSTA-IPCC Special Events.

Three IPCC experts presented on climate change impacts on land and adaptation responses at the dialogue on land.¹⁰ At the dialogue on Oceans a presentation on key messages from the IPCC Special report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate was delivered by two IPCC experts.¹¹ The participation of IPCC in these events ensured that the discussions were informed by the best available science on these matters.

The round table on pre-2020 implementation and ambition

The round table, held on 30 November and 1 December 2020,¹² provided a space for continued consideration by Parties of efforts in relation to implementation and ambition in the pre-2020 period, taking into account the views expressed in submissions and the 2018-19 stocktakes on this matter and other relevant events. An IPCC expert (Jim Skea, WGIII Co-Chair) set the scene for these considerations by outlining the evolution of the findings of the IPCC Assessments with a focus on: key concepts; scenarios; attribution; impacts, adaptation and risk management; mitigation; and synergies and trade-offs between adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development.

4. Forthcoming events in 2021 relevant for IPCC

The COP Bureau requested presiding officers to plan for activities to take place as soon as possible and to schedule work throughout the coming months and up to COP 26, including the original June session period, as it is not yet feasible to hold in-person meetings.¹³ In response to this request, the presiding officers have advanced their planning, focusing particularly on the first half of 2021.¹⁴

⁷ <https://unfccc.int/topics/science/events-meetings/research-dialogue/twelfth-meeting-of-the-research-dialogue>.

⁸ <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/events-meetings/national-adaptation-plans/dialogue-on-the-relationship-between-land-and-climate-change-adaptation-related-matters>.

⁹ <https://unfccc.int/event/ocean-and-climate-change-dialogue-to-consider-how-to-strengthen-adaptation-and-mitigation-action>.

¹⁰ Jim Skea (WG III, Co-chair), Jagdish Krishnaswamy and Cynthia Rosenzweig.

¹¹ Hans-Otto Pörtner (WG II, Co-chair) and Elvira Poloczanska.

¹² <https://unfccc.int/event/roundtable-on-pre-2020-implementation-and-ambition>.

¹³ <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/conferences/road-to-glasgow-consultations-and-other-activities-by-the-presiding-officers>.

¹⁴ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Governing_and_Subsiary_Body_activities.pdf.

The Governing and Subsidiary Body activities for 2021 include several activities of relevance for the work of the IPCC, such as the thirteenth meeting of the SBSTA Research Dialogue (June 2021), the second session of the first meeting of the Structured Expert Dialogue (June 2021), informal technical workshops on the methodological issues under the Paris Agreement (early May 2021), and an informal meeting on oceans and climate. We will work closely with the IPCC Secretariat and presiding officers to ensure a good participation of IPCC in these events.

We would like to use this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Chair of IPCC, the Co-Chairs of the IPCC Working Groups, the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories and other presiding officers, colleagues in the Secretariat of the IPCC, and IPCC experts for the valuable contributions to the climate change events organized under the UNFCCC process in 2020 and we look forward to your contribution to events and meetings that we will convene in 2021.