

Information on the SBSTA-IPCC special event: Unpacking the new scientific knowledge and key findings in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C

Note by the Chair of the SBSTA and the Chair of the IPCC

23 November 2018

The special event of the SBSTA and the IPCC on unpacking the new scientific knowledge and key findings in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C will take place during SBSTA 49 in Katowice, Poland, on Tuesday 4 December 2018 from 15:00 to 18:05, in Plenary Mazowsze.

This note provides some information on the background and organization of the meeting.

Further information is available on the UNFCCC's website prior to the workshop at <https://unfccc.int/event/sbsta-ipcc-special-event-unpacking-the-new-scientific-knowledge-and-key-findings-in-the-ipcc-special>

I. Background

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), at its twenty-first session in Paris in 2015, invited the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to provide a special report in 2018 on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways.¹
2. The IPCC, in response to the invitation by the COP, produced a Special Report entitled: “*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.*”
3. The Summary for Policymakers (SPM) was approved by the IPCC plenary on 6 October 2018 at the closing of its forty-eighth session, held in Incheon, the Republic of Korea.
4. Preparation of the Special Report entailed a significant effort by the IPCC: ninety-one authors and review editors from forty countries were mobilized, over a thousand reviewers contributed to the process, more than 6,000 scientific references and forty-two thousand comments were considered. Furthermore, this was the first time that the three IPCC Working Groups (WGs)² had worked together on a Special Report, and it led to a harmonization by the WGs on a number of core concepts.³
5. The structure of the Special Report is as follows:
 - (a) Chapter 1: Framing and Context;
 - (b) Chapter 2: Mitigation pathways compatible with 1.5°C in the context of sustainable development;
 - (c) Chapter 3: Impacts of 1.5°C global warming on natural and human systems;
 - (d) Chapter 4: Strengthening and implementing the global response;
 - (e) Chapter 5: Sustainable Development, Poverty Eradication and Reducing Inequalities.
6. The SPM presents the key findings of the report under four headline statements:

¹ Decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 21.

² Working Group I assesses the physical science basis of climate change; Working Group II addresses impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and Working Group III deals with the mitigation of climate change.

³ Pages 32–33 of the SPM, available at: http://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf.

- (a) Understanding global warming of 1.5°C;
 - (b) Projected climate change, potential impacts and associated risks;
 - (c) Emission pathways and system transitions consistent with 1.5°C global warming;
 - (d) Strengthening the global response in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.
7. The IPCC continues its work on the sixth assessment cycle and further products will be published in the coming years:
- (a) A Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security and GHG fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems – due to be approved in August 2019;
 - (b) A Special Report on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate – due to be approved in September 2019;
 - (c) A Methodology Report on the 2019 refinement to the 2006 IPCC guidelines for national greenhouse gas inventories – due to be approved in May 2019
 - (d) The Sixth Assessment Report with reports of the three IPCC WGs (The physical science basis; Change change impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; Mitigation of climate change) due to be approved during 2021, and a synthesis report – due to be approved in April 2022.
 - (e) In addition, the IPCC has held a conference on cities and climate change and is holding several expert meetings and workshops to support the preparation of the Sixth Assessment Report.
8. The reports of the sixth assessment cycle will be ready in time for the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement in 2023.
9. The special report will also inform the Talanoa Dialogue and a dedicated space will be provided both during the preparatory and the political phase at the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties in Katowice to facilitate the understanding of its implications.

II. The special event of the SBSTA and the IPCC

10. The special event of the SBSTA and the IPCC will take place during SBSTA 49 in Katowice, Poland, on Tuesday 4 December 2018 from 15:00 to approximately 18:05. Further information is available on the UNFCCC's website prior to the workshop at <https://unfccc.int/event/sbsta-ipcc-special-event-unpacking-the-new-scientific-knowledge-and-key-findings-in-the-ipcc-special>. The event will be open to Parties and observers.
10. The event will focus on unpacking the new scientific concepts and definitions used in the report and hence generate a better understanding of the key scientific findings of the report. It may also allow for identifying research gaps and clarifying the uncertainties associated with specific findings.
11. To achieve those goals, the special event will be organized as a fact-finding exchange of views between IPCC experts and Parties. The experts will present findings from the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, focusing on new scientific findings and their context. After presentations have been made, a moderated discussion will then allow an exchange with the room and questions from all participants. To ensure that this can be an interactive learning exercise, we invite Parties and observers to keep their interventions succinct and to ask the experts questions that pertain to the findings of this report.
12. The agenda will be structured around the four sections of the SPM, as per paragraph 5 above. The agenda is below:

Agenda of the SBSTA-IPCC special event: Unpacking the new scientific knowledge and key findings in the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C

Opening and welcome		
15:00–15:15	Welcome remarks and opening of the event by the SBSTA and the IPCC Chairs Keynote remarks by the Executive Secretary	Paul Watkinson (SBSTA Chair), Hoesung Lee (IPCC Chair) and Patricia Espinosa (UNFCCC ES)
Unpacking the new scientific knowledge and key findings		
15:15–15:55	Understanding global warming of 1.5°C - Presentation (10–15 minutes) - Open discussion (25 minutes)	Presentation by Valérie Masson-Delmotte and Panmao Zhai (WGI Co-Chairs)
15:55–16:35	Projected climate change, potential impacts and associated risks - Presentation (10–15 minutes) - Open discussion (25 minutes)	Presentation by Hans-Otto Pörtner (WGII Co-Chair)
16:35–17:15	Emission pathways and system transitions consistent with 1.5°C global warming - Presentation (10–15 minutes) - Open discussion (25 minutes)	Presentation by Jim Skea (WGIII Co-Chair)
17:15–17:55	Strengthening the global response in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty - Presentation (10–15 minutes) - Open discussion (25 minutes)	Presentation by Debra Roberts (WGII Co-chair)
Closing		
17:55–18:05	Closing remarks by the SBSTA Chair and the IPCC Chair	Paul Watkinson and Hoesung Lee

13. At the end of the event, we will reserve time to make closing remarks.

14. After the event, a summary report will be prepared under our authority, which will be made available on the UNFCCC web site⁴ in early 2019.

⁴ <https://unfccc.int/event/sbsta-ipcc-special-event-unpacking-the-new-scientific-knowledge-and-key-findings-in-the-ipcc-special>.