

Information on the special event of the SBSTA and the IPCC: Unpacking the new scientific knowledge and key findings in the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land

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

6 November 2019

This note provides information on the special event of the SBSTA and the IPCC that will be organized to unpack the new scientific knowledge and key findings in the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land and provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on that knowledge during SBSTA 51 in Madrid, Spain, on **Wednesday 4 December 2019 from 15:00 to 18:00**, in the Plenary Room.

Further information is available on the UNFCCC's website and will be updated regularly: <https://unfccc.int/event/srccl-special-event>.

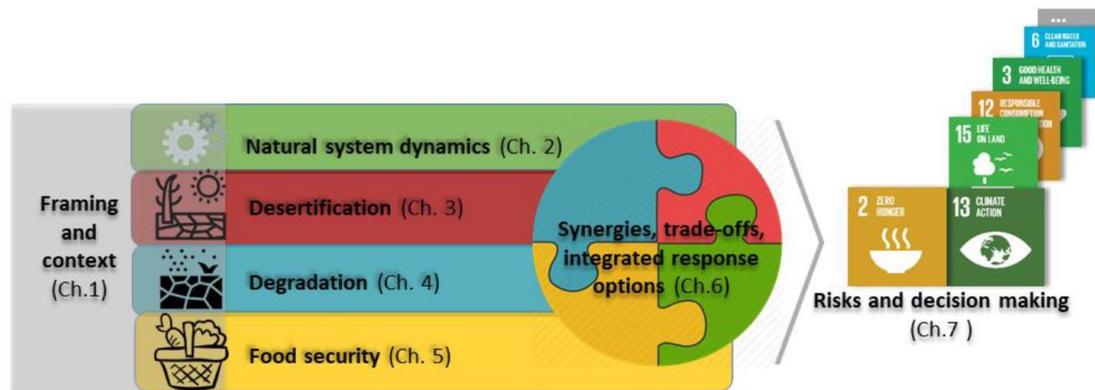
I. Background

1. The IPCC adopted and accepted a special report on *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* (SRCCL) at its 50th Session held on 2–7 August 2019 in Geneva.
2. The decision to prepare the SRCCL was taken at the IPCC's 43rd Session (Nairobi, April 2016), as part of the Sixth Assessment cycle. The special report was prepared under the joint scientific leadership of Working Groups I, II, III and the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories and supported by the WG III Technical Support Unit. It was prepared by 107 experts from 52 countries serving as Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors – who are working on each individual chapter – and Review Editors ensured that comments by experts and governments were given appropriate consideration. For the first time, more authors (53 per cent) of an IPCC report were from developing than developed countries. 40 per cent of the coordinating lead authors were women. The SRCCL assessed over 7,000 scientific publications and received more than 28,000 comments from expert reviewers and governments.
3. The SRCCL's Summary for Policymakers (SPM) was approved by the IPCC plenary on 6 August 2019.¹
4. The SRCCL is the first ever comprehensive assessment on the way we use land, from the perspective of climate change, desertification, land degradation and food security. It provides an updated assessment of the current state of knowledge on these topics since the Fifth Assessment Report and the special report on *Global warming of 1.5°C* (SR1.5).² The report is of relevance to all three Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD) and raises important questions on synergies between them in the context of sustainable development.
5. The structure of the Special Report is as follows (see figure 1):
 - (a) Chapter 1: Framing and Context;
 - (b) Chapter 2: Land-Climate Interactions;
 - (c) Chapter 3: Desertification;
 - (d) Chapter 4: Land Degradation;
 - (e) Chapter 5: Food Security;
 - (f) Chapter 6: Interlinkages between desertification, land degradation, food security and GHG fluxes: Synergies, trade-offs and Integrated Response Options;
 - (g) Chapter 7: Risk management and decision making in relation to sustainable development.

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/event/50th-session-of-the-ipcc/>.

² <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>.

Figure 1: Overview of the SRCCL



Source: Chapter 1 of SRCCL, Figure 1.2

6. The SPM presents the key findings of the SRCCL under four headline statements:

- (a) People, land and climate in a warming world;
- (b) Adaptation and mitigation response options;
- (c) Enabling response options;
- (d) Action in the near term.

7. The IPCC continues to work on the Sixth Assessment cycle. The preparation of two other special reports was agreed at the 43rd Session: SR1.5 was released on 8 October 2018 and was the object of a special event at SBSTA 49³ and further consideration at SBSTA 50,⁴ the special report on the *Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* (SROCC)⁵ was released on 25 September 2019 and will be the object of another special event at SBSTA 51.⁶ In addition to the special reports the IPCC released a 2019 refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Inventory Reports at its Plenary on 2 May 2019 in Kyoto and a joint SBSTA-IPCC special event was held on it at SBSTA 50.⁷ The IPCC plans to produce the Sixth Assessment Report with the contribution of the three IPCC WGs (The physical science basis; Change climate impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and Mitigation of climate change) scheduled to be approved in 2021, and a synthesis report to be approved in 2022.

8. Participants may wish to be aware of a number of other reports that have recently been prepared by other organizations, including the thematic assessment of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on Land Degradation and Restoration, the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (which was the object of a special event at SBSTA 50), and the Global Land Outlook of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

II. Special event of the SBSTA and the IPCC

9. The special event of the SBSTA and the IPCC on the SRCCL will take place during SBSTA 51 in Madrid, Spain, on Wednesday 4 December 2019 from 15:00 to 18:00. Further information on this special event is available on the UNFCCC website and will be updated regularly.⁸ The special event will be open to all participants, including Parties, observers and media, and will be webcasted.

10. The event will present the new scientific concepts and the global contribution of integrated response options to mitigation, adaptation, combating desertification and land degradation and enhancing food security, to help all participants have a better understanding of its main findings, including some of the data behind the key findings drawing on information in the report. The event may also facilitate the identification

³ <https://unfccc.int/topics/science/events-meetings/cooperation-with-the-ipcc/sbsta-ipcc-special-event-unpacking-the-new-scientific-knowledge-and-key-findings-in-the-ipcc-special>.

⁴ <https://unfccc.int/topics/science/workstreams/cooperation-with-the-ipcc/ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-15-degc>.

⁵ <https://www.ipcc.ch/srocc/home/>.

⁶ <https://unfccc.int/event/srocc-special-event>.

⁷ See footnote 2 above.

⁸ <https://unfccc.int/event/srccl-special-event>.

of areas of interest to policy-makers that the IPCC could further developed in AR6 and beyond. To achieve these goals, the special event is planned to be an open dialogue between participants and IPCC experts.

11. The event will follow the storyline of the SPM as outlined in paragraph 6 above with short presentations by the IPCC (WG Chairs and Experts), followed by question and answer sessions. 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 the special report. In that regard, we have suggested some guiding questions (kindly see paragraphs 15, 17 and 19 below) for consideration by the presenters and participants. Participants may also wish to consider how the information in the SRCCL might provide useful inputs to other work under the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, including to help Parties in the updating and the implementation of their nationally determined contributions, national adaptation plans and long-term low greenhouse-gas emission development strategies.

12. Below is the draft agenda for the event which will be further completed:

Draft agenda of the SBSTA-IPCC special event: Unpacking the new scientific knowledge and key findings in the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land

| Opening and welcome | | |
|---|---|--|
| 15:00–15:15 | Opening remarks and objective of the event by the SBSTA and the IPCC Chairs Remarks by the UNFCCC Executive Secretary | Paul Watkinson (SBSTA Chair) and Hoesung Lee (IPCC Chair), Patricia Espinosa (UNFCCC ES) |
| Unpacking the new scientific knowledge and key findings | | |
| 15:15–16:05 | Land, people and climate change - Presentation (15–20 mins) - Q&A followed by an open discussion (30 mins) | Presentation by IPCC representatives |
| 16:05–16:55 | Adaptation and mitigation response options - Presentation (15–20 mins) - Q&A followed by an open discussion (30 mins) | Presentation by IPCC representatives |
| 16:55–17:45 | Enabling response options and actions in the near-term - Presentation (15–20 mins) - Q&A followed by an open discussion (30 mins) | Presentation by IPCC representatives |
| Closing | | |
| 17:45–18:00 | Closing remarks by the Chairs of the SBSTA and the IPCC | Paul Watkinson and Hoesung Lee |

13. The special event will commence with a presentation on Land, people and climate change, which will focus on the interaction between global warming and land, illustrating how human-induced climate change is dramatically degrading the land, while the way people use the land is exacerbating global warming impacts.

14. New findings will be presented on: the effect of climate change on the ability of land to sustain humanity as a result of rising temperatures; emissions from AFOLU; changes in land conditions and how they affect global and regional climate; the additional stress on land that creates cascading risks to food, livelihoods, human and ecosystem health and infrastructure and how they compare with previous information; and on the factors that affect the level of these risks.

15. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session and an open discussion. Participants may wish to consider the following guiding questions and reflect on how the findings in the SRCCL could inform work under the UNFCCC process.

- (a) How does the land contribute to climate change? How does climate change exacerbate the stress on land?
- (b) What factors could reduce the climate risks for land-based ecosystems and humans?

16. The event will continue with a presentation on adaptation and mitigation response options. Many of such options that are contributing to climate change can also combat desertification, land degradation and enhance food security. The presentation will focus on the benefits and limitation of over 40 such options addressed in the report in an integrated manner (i.e. mitigation, adaptation, desertification, land degradation, food security) as well as on the portfolio of options deployed in scenarios to limit global warming as agreed in Paris.

17. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session and an open discussion. Participants may wish to consider the following guiding questions.

- (a) What is the potential of land-related responses on adaptation and mitigation? What are the barriers to mitigation and limits to adaptation?
- (b) Which response options have the potential to increase the demand for land conversion? Which modelled pathways can achieve 1.5°C with reduced land conversion?
- (c) What response options can jointly combat desertification, contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and halt biodiversity loss?

18. The last presentation will focus on enabling response options and actions in the near-term. This combines two sections of the SPM and will cover the appropriate design of policies, institutions and governance systems to enable the response options presented, including policies that operate across food systems, enable more sustainable land use management, enhanced food security and low emissions trajectories and will consider their benefits and trade-offs. It will also illustrate near-term actions, such as building individual and institutional capacity, accelerating knowledge and technology transfer and deployment and enabling financial mechanisms.

19. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session and an open discussion. Participants may wish to consider the following guiding questions.

- (a) How should policies, institutions and governance systems at all scales be designed to contribute to land-related climate change adaptation and mitigation?
- (b) How can policies across food systems be designed to enable sustainable land-use management, enhance food security and low emissions trajectories?
- (c) Which near-term actions could address desertification, land degradation, food security while supporting a long-term response to adaptation and mitigation to climate change?

20. We encourage Parties to come prepared to ask questions on the relevant presentation topics outlined above.

21. After the event, an informal summary report will be prepared under our authority and will be made available on the UNFCCC website⁹ in early 2020.

⁹ <https://unfccc.int/event/srccl-special-event>.