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IPCC agrees outlines of new reports

BANGKOK, October 20 – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has agreed the outlines of two new reports that will help governments implement the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

The Panel approved the outlines of *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*, to be delivered in 2018, and the *2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*, to be finalized in 2019.

The decision on the outlines, or tables of contents, which had been drafted by scoping meetings in August, clears the way for the IPCC to launch the call for nominations for authors for both reports at the beginning of November.

The special report on 1.5°C was requested by governments at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris in December 2015, which set a target of limiting global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to hold it to 1.5°C.

“The IPCC worked in a positive spirit of cooperation to build on the scientific expertise from the scoping meeting while highlighting policymakers’ priorities. This agreement on the outline means the IPCC can start work on a scientific assessment for policymakers of what warming of 1.5°C would mean and how we could get there,” said IPCC Vice-Chair Thelma Krug, who chaired the scientific steering committee for the scoping meeting that drafted the outline.

The *2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines* will be prepared by the IPCC’s Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories to provide governments with updated knowledge on how to estimate the level of their greenhouse gas emissions and removals – critical information for tracking progress on meeting the UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement goals.

“This refinement of inventory guidelines will greatly help governments improve their estimates of national emissions and removals of greenhouse gases,” said Task Force Co-Chair Kiyoto Tanabe.

The agreed outlines, subject to final edits, are available on the IPCC website.

The decisions were taken at the 44th Session of the IPCC, held at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok on 17-20 October 2016. The full agenda and documents can be found here: http://ipcc.ch/scripts/session_template.php?page=44ipcc.htm

For more information, contact:

IPCC Press Office, Email: ipcc-media@wmo.int

Werani Zabula, +41 22 730 8120 or +41 79 704 2459 (in Bangkok)

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Notes for editors

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 future 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. It is not a United Nations agency, but is sponsored by two UN organizations – WMO and UNEP.

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 and AR6.

The first of these special reports is the 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 (SR1.5). This report, which is being prepared in response to an invitation from the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the UNFCCC in December 2015, will be delivered in 2018. A scoping meeting to draft the outline of the report took place in August 2016.

The Methodology Report(s) to refine the *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* will be delivered in 2019. A scoping meeting to draft the outline was held in August 2016.

In 2019 the IPCC will also finalize two Special Reports: on climate change and oceans and the cryosphere; and on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems. The AR6 Synthesis Report will be finalized in the first half of 2022.