

SBSTA-35, Agenda Item 3
Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change (NWP)
Statement by Ms. Renate Christ, Secretary of the IPCC
Durban, South Africa, 28 November 2011

Completion of the IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation

It is with great pleasure that I report the successful completion of the IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation on 18 November 2011 in Kampala/Uganda.

Allow me to highlight a few key findings of the assessment that are relevant for the NWP:

A changing climate leads to changes in the frequency, intensity, spatial extent, duration, and timing of extreme weather and climate events, and can result in unprecedented extreme weather and climate events.

There is evidence from observations gathered since 1950 of change in some extremes particularly daily temperature extremes, and heat waves.

Confidence in projecting future changes in the direction and magnitude of climate extremes depends on many factors, including the type of extreme, the region and season, the amount and quality of observational data and the level of understanding of the underlying processes.

The report concludes *inter alia* the following:

- It is *likely* that the frequency of heavy precipitation will increase in the 21st century over many areas of the globe.
- Average tropical cyclone maximum wind speed is *likely* to increase, although not in all ocean basins. However, it is also *likely* that the global frequency of tropical cyclones will either decrease or remain essentially unchanged.
- There is *medium confidence* that droughts will intensify in the 21st century in some seasons and areas.
- It is *very likely* that mean sea level rise will contribute to upward trends in extreme coastal high water levels.
- There is *high confidence* that changes in heat waves, glacial retreat and permafrost degradation will affect high mountain phenomena such as slope instabilities and glacial lake outburst floods.

Economic losses from weather- and climate-related disasters have increased, but with large spatial and inter-annual variability. Economic disaster losses associated with weather, climate, and geophysical events are higher in developed countries. However, fatality rates and economic losses expressed as a proportion of GDP are higher in developing countries. During the period from 1970 to 2008, over 95% of deaths from natural disasters occurred in developing countries.

The severity of the impacts of climate extremes depends strongly on the level of exposure and vulnerability, which vary across temporal and spatial scales, and depend on economic, social, geographic, demographic, cultural, institutional, governance, and environmental factors. Development practice, policy and outcomes are critical to shaping disaster risk, which may be increased by shortcomings in development.

Closer integration of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation, along with the incorporation of both into development policies and practices, could provide benefits at all scales.

Low-regret measures that provide benefits under current climate and a range of future climate change scenarios such as early warning systems; sustainable land and ecosystem management; improvements in health surveillance, water supply and drainage systems; building codes; education and awareness offer benefits now and lay the foundation for addressing projected changes and help address other development goals, such as improvements in livelihoods, human well-being, and biodiversity conservation.

Effective risk management generally involves a portfolio of actions to reduce and transfer risk and to respond to events and disasters, as opposed to a singular focus, and it considers exposure, vulnerability and risk reduction in the short as well as long term.

Opportunities exist to create synergies in international finance for disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change. Integration of local knowledge with additional scientific and technical knowledge can improve disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

To conclude - interactions among climate change mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk management may have a major influence on resilient and sustainable pathways.

Further Information will be provided at a Special SBSTA-IPCC event on Wednesday lunchtime and the approved SPM is available at the IPCC booth.