

Subject to revision

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Preparations for the release of AR5 and previous reports
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The Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) saw a number of innovations for the IPCC in communication.

Release of the report

Press release

IPCC press releases for reports were only introduced in the AR5 cycle, for the Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation (SRREN) and the Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX). Previously press releases were issued on behalf of the IPCC by the parent organizations World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

This approach was bedded down for AR5, in line with the communications strategy, under which the co-chairs are responsible for the content of a respective working group's report, and the chair for the Synthesis Report. The co-chairs drafted press releases that were edited by the communications team from the perspective of communications and media, not content. Press releases were revised at the last minute to reflect changes to the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) in approval.

Embargo

Each working group report SPM and the Synthesis Report, and press release, were made available under embargo to media, to allow them to prepare articles. For Working Group I, texts were provided to media present at the press conference a few hours in advance; for the other working groups and Synthesis Report they were made available electronically to registered media the previous day. This was tested with the release of the full SREX, and was welcomed by media. For Working Groups II and III and the Synthesis Report, some advance briefings were conducted, also under embargo, with key media, either individually or in national groups.

Press conferences

Press conferences were streamed live, and the recordings posted soon after (though with some delays in some cases). In practice there was insufficient time to prepare with the respective co-chairs/chair. Facilities included power cables and audio sockets for media, and working space for media afterwards.

Interviews

The respective co-chairs or chair identified authors present at the approval plenary or who would have returned home who could take a lead on interviews. Most of these underwent media training. The list of authors with specialization, language and country was circulated to media, who bid for interviews. Schedules were drawn up allowing dozens of interviews to take place. Space was reserved at the approval plenary location so that interviews, including telephone interviews, could take place simultaneously. Local support staff brought media to authors to ensure the schedules were adhered to and not disrupted by impromptu approaches to authors. Support staff in other centres organized interviews with local authors. A process for booking and facilitating interviews for the subsequent day or days was put in place.

Broadcasters

Broadcasters were offered “B-roll” from the opening session of the approval plenary, and from recent author meetings. Arrangements for the press conference and interviews included parking and cabling for satellite trucks. For Working Group II we built a studio for broadcasters to conduct interviews; for Working Group III and the Synthesis Report we arranged with a firm providing satellite links through their own truck to forward requests from broadcasters to them, and underwrite their costs.

Full report release

A press conference for the release of the full SREX report attracted media interest, despite scepticism that media would report on it following the SPM release half a year earlier. In contrast to earlier reports, the full AR5 working group draft reports were released only a working day or so after the SPM (for Working Group II on the same day) instead of the published report several months later.

Staffing

The IPCC communications team was augmented in the run-up to releases by expert and professional consultants and volunteers provided by foundations, under a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Foundation.

Leaks

The IPCC moved from a simple “no comment” on leaks of draft reports, to short statements and in some cases comments by co-chairs or authors.

Video

Videos were produced for each working group report and the Synthesis Report, with a professional video maker. As with press releases, content was fully under the control of the co-chairs or chair, with the producer providing technical advice.

Outreach

Outreach events were held in many countries following the release of the working group reports. Following the release of the Synthesis Report, and thanks to the generosity of several member states, an enhanced AR5 outreach programme was organized to present AR5 findings with partners in Kenya, Tanzania, Pakistan, India, France, Morocco, Thailand, Mexico, Nicaragua, Argentina, Turkey, Russia, Vietnam and the United States, supporting travel for many participants with the country or sub-regionally. Other outreach events were held in Japan, Italy, Ethiopia, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Germany, France, Cuba, Australia, Norway, United Kingdom, Vatican, Croatia and Zimbabwe, among others. It is hoped to continue this in 2016.

SREX

The Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation (SREX) was launched during the IPCC-session in Kampala, Uganda 18-19 November 2011. This included a webcast press conference and an SREX website <http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX> with the SPM, press release, fact sheet, presentation, video *In Harm's Way*, information on the authors and Review Editors, the IPCC process, and other materials. Key authors underwent media training prior to the launch.

The full report of the SREX was launched electronically 28 March 2012. The launch included a “virtual” press conference i.e. a teleconference open to media around the world. The full report was made available to journalists two days before under embargo. This met a long-standing wish of media, and benefited the IPCC by giving reporters enough time to produce well-researched and considered articles. Presentation-quality JPEGs of all SREX figures and tables were provided.

At the same time, the Review drafts and comments archive where made available.

By the end of April 2012, there were more than 25,000 downloads of the full SREX report and more than 65,000 downloads of the SPM.

These activities were complemented by a continuing wide-ranging programme of outreach, targeting mainly policy-makers and the disaster risk management community, but also open to the media, in a number of countries.

An outreach programme targeted to developing countries with partners including Norwegian agencies and CDKN resulted in eight regional events in 2012/13 in Cuba, China, India, Thailand, Ethiopia, Senegal, South Africa and Brazil. Several events were heavily oversubscribed. As part of the programme CDKN produced regionally specific materials based on SREX in English, Chinese, French, Spanish and Portuguese.