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COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND OUTREACH

Other communication and outreach activities

(Submitted by the IPCC Secretariat)

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COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY AND OUTREACH

Other communication and outreach activities

Communications and outreach have been increasingly dominated by preparations for the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), since the last session of the Panel in June 2012. At the same time we have responded to continuing strong interest in the two Special Reports finalized in 2011. We have taken advantage of the run-up to AR5 to brief media and others on the way the IPCC works and how we prepare reports – one of the two goals of the Communications Strategy.

Day-to-day communications

Since the 35th Session of the Panel in June 2012, besides the statements issued in line with the Rapid Response process and described below, the IPCC has issued a press release on the completion of the review of processes and procedures, four press releases on the start of new stages of the AR5 review, six press releases on the Kyoto Protocol and Wetlands Supplements of the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI), and a press release on the call for applications for the second round of awards under the Scholarship Programme, translated into all UN languages. The Secretariat routinely uses social media such as Facebook and Twitter to draw attention to press releases and statements.

Senior IPCC officials have given a large number of interviews at the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC in Doha in November/December 2012 (COP18) and on other occasions. Journalists attending COP18 sought interviews with Rajendra Pachauri, Chair of the IPCC, and Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, IPCC Vice-Chair. Extreme events such as Tropical Storm Sandy and the heatwave and fires in Australia also stoked interest. Chris Field, Working Group II Co-Chair, was in demand in the wake of Sandy, and Australian media took advantage of the presence of Rajendra Pachauri and Thomas Stocker, Working Group I Co-Chair, for the Fourth Lead Author Meeting (LAM4) of Working Group I (WGI) to ask about extreme weather there. Thomas Stocker was interviewed for a long-format piece about AR5 in the Financial Times magazine. Press conferences and briefings were organized by WGI at LAM4 in Hobart, Australia, Working Group II at LAM4 in Bled, Slovenia, and Working Group III at LAM3 in Vigo, Spain, and at LAM4 in Addis Ababa.

Launch of reports, conference participation and other planned communications activities

The IPCC took part with two side events at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012. Both examined the science/policy interface, taking the two most recent special reports, 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), as examples. The first side event was part of the Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development organized by the International Council for Science (ICSU) and others in the run-up to the conference. The second was a side event at the conference proper. Details can be found at:

http://www.ipcc.ch/news_and_events/outreach.shtml

The IPCC held two side events at the UNFCCC's COP18 in Doha in November 2012, one on SREX and one on SRREN. Both events were very well attended, testifying to continuing interest in the reports and to the IPCC's activities in general. Also at COP18, the IPCC held a series of meetings with business, environmental and youth Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The focus was on explaining our plans for AR5.

The TFI held a side event at the Subsidiary Body meetings of the UNFCCC in June 2013 to present its products and activities. Details can be found here:

http://www.ipcc.ch/news_and_events/outreach.shtml

A series of factsheets about the IPCC and its processes was prepared in advance of the release of the Working Group I contribution to the AR5, to serve as background to media and other stakeholders.

Rapid response

There were no events requiring a formal rapid response. Nevertheless, a number of incidents required an urgent and consultative response, prepared largely in line with the rapid response procedures laid out in the Communications Strategy Implementation Plan. Most of these related to the unauthorized publication of drafts of AR5 or news stories based on the drafts.

1. New Scientist article
An article in the New Scientist on 18 June 2012 contained several factual errors. The IPCC issued a statement on 24 June (<http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ar5/statement/newscientist.pdf>) and secured corrections to the article.
2. Nobel Peace Prize
Public discussions about the 2007 award of the Nobel Peace Prize justified the issue of a clarifying statement. (http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/nobel/Nobel_statement_final.pdf)
3. Unauthorized posting of Working Group I's Second Order Draft
An expert reviewer posted Working Group I's entire Second Order Draft on his website, from where it was widely reposted, prompting a discussion in the media and social media about the contents of the forthcoming WGI AR5 report. A statement was quickly issued. (http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ar5/statement/Statement_WGI_AR5_SOD.pdf)
4. Unauthorized posting of Working Group II's First Order Draft and other materials
A blogger published the contents of three memory sticks distributed at Working Group II Lead Author Meetings, including the Zero Order and First Order Drafts, with responses. Again, a statement was issued in a little over four hours. (http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ar5/statement/Statement_WGII_AR5_FOD.pdf)
5. Reuters report on Working Group III Second Order Draft
Reuters published a story based on the Working Group III Second Order Draft, which was widely used by other media. A statement was issued quickly. (http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ar5/statement/Statement_WGIII_AR5_SOD.pdf)
6. Economist article on climate sensitivity
The Economist published an article on climate sensitivity drawing on material from a table in the Working Group III Second Order Draft, which was attributed to the IPCC. A statement was quickly issued pointing out that this material was not yet finalized. The Economist declined to publish a letter on the matter, but subsequently corrected errors in the table (though not in the article) in its online edition. A meeting with the Editor was sought. (http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/ar5/statement/statement_wg3_table.pdf)
7. Reuters and other media stories on Working Group I final draft
Reuters published a story based on the final draft Summary for Policymakers of the Working Group I report. A statement was quickly issued, again clarifying the status of drafts. Over the following week many other media obtained copies and also published stories. Requests for comment were referred back to the statement. (http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/press-releases/pr_19Aug2013_wwg1_ar5.pdf)

The IPCC Executive Committee and the Communications Action Team have reviewed the lessons learnt from the handling of the unauthorized postings of Working Group drafts.

Future activities

Work in the coming months is focused on communications and outreach for AR5. (See document IPCC-XXXVII/Doc.13, agenda item 7.1). There will also be opportunities to communicate the two Methodology Reports being finalized at the 37th Session of the Panel in Batumi, Georgia, and we are encountering interest in the discussions about the future of the IPCC.