

High-level segment of COP24, Tuesday 11 December 2018

Statement by IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues

Three years ago this conference adopted the Paris Agreement, aiming to hold global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

At the time there was relatively little scientific knowledge specific to the difference between 1.5°C and 2°C global warming.

So you invited the IPCC to prepare a report this year on the impacts of warming of 1.5°C and related emissions pathways.

The IPCC accepted your invitation.

The report examines the differences between global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C and anchored the assessment in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.

Two months ago we released our Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C.

It forms the main scientific submission to the Talanoa Dialogue at COP24 and is informing your other deliberations here.

Today, we already live in a world where human activities have caused about 1°C of global warming, and, at the current pace of warming, we will soon enter a 1.5°C warmer world.

The key findings of this report are clear:

- Climate change is already affecting people, ecosystems and livelihoods all around the world;
- Limiting warming to 1.5°C is not physically impossible but would require unprecedented transitions in all aspects of society;
- There are clear benefits to keeping warming to 1.5°C rather than 2°C; and

- Limiting warming to 1.5°C can go hand in hand with achieving other world goals, including the imperative of a just transition of the workforce.

The report shows that to achieve the goals you have set, you need to take urgent and far-reaching action – an unprecedented transformation – in all aspects of society, with many implications for policy-making.

This report brings you a substantial amount of new knowledge.

Let me give some examples of the high-confidence statements it contains.

- Reaching and sustaining net zero global anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions and declining net non-carbon dioxide radiative forcing would halt anthropogenic global warming on multi-decadal time scales;
- The maximum temperature reached is then determined by cumulative net anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions up to the time of net zero emissions;
- In model pathways with no or limited overshoot of 1.5°C, global net anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions decline by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by about 2030;
- Estimates of the global emissions outcome of current nationally stated mitigation ambitions as submitted under the Paris Agreement would lead to global greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 of 52–58 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent a year. This is a medium-confidence statement but is followed by two high-confidence statements:
 - Pathways reflecting these ambitions would not limit global warming to 1.5°C, even if supplemented by very challenging increases in the scale and ambition of emissions reductions after 2030; and
 - Avoiding overshoot and reliance on future large-scale deployment of carbon dioxide removal can only be achieved if global carbon dioxide emissions start to decline well before 2030.

Our report shows that political will is key for the implementation of solutions that improve well-being and make it possible to limit global warming to 1.5°C.

It shows that the window to limit warming to 1.5°C is narrow – that it would require net global emissions of carbon dioxide to fall by about 45 percent by 2030.

Every year matters.

Excellencies, you invited the IPCC to prepare a report for your work here.

The IPCC accepted that invitation.

We worked hard with your representatives to prepare and approve the report to a challenging timeline.

And now the IPCC has delivered.

Let me summarize the findings of our report.

- Every bit of warming matters
- Every year matters
- Every choice matters

We appreciate greatly your recognition of this report.

With this report, the scientific message is clear.

It is now up to you, the governments, to act.