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IPCC Working Group II extends Sixth Assessment Report schedule

GENEVA, April 24 – Working Group II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which assesses scientific literature relating to impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability, has revised the timeline for preparing its contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) because of disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The revision is the latest in a series of changes the IPCC is undertaking as a [strategic response](#) to the impact of the pandemic.

Authors of IPCC reports volunteer their time and expertise. A survey by Working Group II found that its authors are experiencing unique and sustained challenges in the wake of COVID-19. Their ability to deliver to the original timeline has been compromised by competing responsibilities, limited resources and diverse personal challenges.

“We recognize the enormous challenges authors are facing in the current crisis situation, often exacerbating existing inequalities in terms of resources and connectivity and want to make sure they have enough time and flexibility to produce a rigorous and policy relevant assessment report,” said Debra Roberts, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group II.

In the light of these challenges, Working Group II is extending a number of milestones due to be reached in 2020 by around four months. The cut-off date for scientific literature to be submitted for publication, if it is to be included in the assessment, moves to 1 November 2020 from 1 July 2020. The government and expert review of the report’s Second Order Draft will now take place between 4 December 2020 and 29 January 2021, four months later than originally scheduled. The Fourth Lead Author Meeting to prepare the final draft will also be postponed by about four months to March 2021.

“All Working Groups are struck by Corona at somewhat different times in their schedule making it necessary for each Working Group to find a specific solution. We are extremely thankful for the commitment and dedication of authors, volunteering their time and keeping the high scientific quality standards for the Working Group II report, against all odds,” said Hans-Otto Pörtner, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group II.

The Working Group II report will cover the impacts of climate change on human and natural systems, their vulnerabilities, and the capacities and limits to adapt to climate change and options for creating a sustainable future for all through an equitable and integrated approach to mitigation and adaptation efforts at all scales.

Working Group II will monitor progress on preparing the report and the evolution of the pandemic to decide whether further adjustments are required for milestones due to be reached in 2021.

The agreed outline of the report can be found [here](#). The list of authors of the report can be found [here](#).

The intention is to release all the Reports of the three Working Groups and the Synthesis Report in time to inform the 2023 Global Stocktake by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) when countries will review progress towards the Paris Agreement goals, including the goal of keeping global warming to well below 2°C while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.

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Notes for editors

About the IPCC

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide political leaders with periodic scientific assessments concerning climate change, its implications and risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation strategies. It has 195 member states.

Thousands of people from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC. For the assessment reports, IPCC scientists volunteer their time to assess the thousands of scientific papers published each year to provide a comprehensive summary of what is known about the drivers of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and how adaptation and mitigation can reduce those risks.

The IPCC has three working groups: Working Group I, dealing with the physical science basis of climate change; Working Group II, dealing with impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and Working Group III, dealing with the mitigation of climate change. It also has a Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories that develops methodologies for measuring emissions and removals.

About the Sixth Assessment Cycle

Comprehensive scientific assessment reports are published every 6 to 7 years; the latest, the Fifth Assessment Report, was completed in 2014, and provided the main scientific input to the Paris Agreement.

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 IPCC also publishes special reports on more specific issues between assessment reports.

Global Warming of 1.5°C, an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius 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 was launched in October 2018.

Climate Change and Land, an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems was launched in August 2019.

The *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* was released in September 2019.

In May 2019 the IPCC released the *2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*, an update to the methodology used by governments to estimate their greenhouse gas emissions and removals.

On the original schedule, the contributions of the three IPCC Working Groups to the Sixth Assessment Report were due to be finalized in 2021. The concluding Synthesis Report is due in 2022.

For more information visit www.ipcc.ch.