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October deadline for the Second Order Draft of the IPCC Working Group III Report no longer feasible, report on first virtual Lead Author Meeting released

GENEVA, July 6 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has announced that the October deadline for delivery of the Second Order Draft of the Working Group III Report contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), which assesses the mitigation of climate change, is no longer possible because of disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This step comes as the Working Group III Technical Support Unit (TSU) publishes a report on the IPCC's first Virtual Lead Author Meeting.

An internal consultation by the Technical Support Unit identified that during the current COVID-19 pandemic, authors and experts are facing substantial challenges to their health and working conditions, with many experiencing changed or increased work obligations and additional domestic commitments.

"Our Authors and Experts are working hard under the most difficult of circumstances," said Jim Skea, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group III. "We want to ensure that there is opportunity for equal contribution from all authors, that they can maintain their health and wellbeing, and that they are given adequate time to produce a thorough report. This is especially important given the practical and technological limitations they're facing, many of which were highlighted at our recent virtual Lead Author Meeting".

Working Group III's third Lead Author Meeting was originally scheduled to be held in Quito, Ecuador, on 15-19 April, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the physical meeting was cancelled and moved online as "eLAM3". A report from the Working Group III Technical Support Unit provides insight into the benefits and trade-offs of hosting large virtual meetings and outlines implications for future IPCC meetings.

"eLAM3 was successful in what it set out to achieve, but from the outset its ambitions were lower and its objectives more limited," the Working Group III Technical Support Unit said in the report on the meeting. "There was a general view that a virtual meeting could not completely substitute for a physical meeting," it said in the report, which can be accessed [here](#).

Analysis of the meeting shows that the number of virtual participants was considerably higher than the number who had confirmed their participation in the physical meeting.

However, more respondents from developing countries felt they were not able to fully participate in the meeting than those from developed countries, said the Working Group III Technical Support Unit in the report.

Other notable benefits included a reduced carbon footprint from avoiding air travel (an estimated saving of 368 tonnes of CO₂ emissions), benefits to participant health and wellbeing from avoiding travel, and financial savings (an estimated saving of approximately US \$1m). The associated virtual outreach event was attended by over 600 members of the public, significantly higher than the 80-250 attendees typically expected at an in-person event.

“This report shows just how much we can accomplish from a distance and provides an example of how IPCC meetings could be run online in future,” said Priyadarshi Shukla, Co-Chair of Working Group III. “We found that a virtual meeting brings both trade-offs and benefits for those who must balance meeting requirements with domestic and other work commitments, but we must not forget that there were still challenges in achieving equitable participation and that this eLAM3 was never intended to replicate a standard Lead Author Meeting.”

In the light of these challenges, Working Group III has reviewed progress on the Second Order Draft and ascertained that meeting an October deadline is no longer feasible. Moving forward, consultation with member governments will be undertaken in order to determine a precise schedule for Working Group III’s contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report.

IPCC Working Group III is responsible for assessing the mitigation of climate change – responses and solutions to the threat of dangerous climate change by reducing emissions and enhancing sinks of the greenhouse gases that are responsible for global warming.

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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.

The Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report will examine topics such as the link between consumption and behaviour and greenhouse gas emissions, and the role of innovation and technology. The report will assess the connection between short to medium-term actions and their compatibility with the long-term temperature goal in the Paris Agreement. It will assess mitigation options in sectors such as energy, agriculture, forestry and land use, buildings, transport and industry, and consider these in the context of sustainable development.

The agreed outline of the Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report can be found [here](#). The list of authors of the report can be found [here](#).

Each of the three IPCC Working Groups is preparing a contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report. A Synthesis Report, due for release in 2022, will integrate them together with the three special reports that the IPCC has produced in the current assessment cycle.

The intention is to release 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.

IPCC Working Group I, which assesses the physical science basis of climate change, has postponed its fourth Lead Author Meeting to early 2021 and is holding a series of online “pre-LAM” discussions in June and July 2020.

More information on the Sixth Assessment Report can be found [here](#).

For more information visit www.ipcc.ch.