

14 December 2020

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

IPBES-IPCC co-sponsored workshop on biodiversity and climate change

14-17 December 2020

Opening statement by IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee

Excellencies, dear colleagues

Thank you for inviting me to join you for the opening of this important meeting.

I am very grateful to the governments of the United Kingdom and Norway for hosting this workshop.

I thank the IPBES and IPCC Bureaus, including my colleagues from IPCC Working Group II, for their detailed and pragmatic efforts to find the most useful and productive ways of bringing biodiversity and climate change issues together.

And I congratulate the Scientific Steering Committee for developing an agenda that promises a valuable and fruitful exchange of ideas, and IPBES for the organizational arrangements enabling this workshop to proceed as scheduled in these difficult circumstances.

Two days ago we marked the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Many governments announced ambitious new pledges on climate action.

But the latest reports from the WMO and UNEP suggest we are still far from stabilizing the climate in line with the Paris accord.

True, emissions dipped in 2020, but that was a short-term response to the COVID-19 pandemic, not the result of policies to stabilize the climate.

And in any case our assessments must consider data over a longer period, not just one year. The evidence over the longer term on climate change is clear.

COVID-19, its impacts and the responses will occupy scientists for many years.

But as researchers investigate the origins of this health emergency, they will also look at linkages with other planetary emergencies such as climate change and biodiversity.

This co-sponsored workshop is therefore extremely timely, as it brings together our two scientific communities to probe the interactions between biodiversity and climate change.

The participation of the IPCC in this interdisciplinary workshop is particularly appropriate because it reflects the unprecedented cross-disciplinary nature of the Sixth Assessment Report that we are now working on despite the many challenges.

IPCC Secretariat

c/o WMO · 7 bis, Avenue de la Paix · C.P. 2300 · CH-1211 Geneva 2 · Switzerland
telephone +41 22 730 8208 / 54 / 84 · fax +41 22 730 8025 / 13 · email IPCC-Sec@wmo.int · www.ipcc.ch



It is urgent to bring biodiversity to the forefront of discussions regarding land- and ocean-based climate mitigation and adaptation. This workshop will address the synergies and trade-offs between biodiversity protection and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

This will include exploring the impact of climate change on biodiversity, the capacity of species to adapt to climate change, the resilience of ecosystems under climate change and the contribution of ecosystems to climate feedback and mitigation.

While the workshop report is not an IPCC product, its conclusions and your deliberations will still constitute a valuable contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report.

I wish you collegial and fruitful discussions over the next four days.

Thank you for your attention.