

REPORT OF THE FIFTY-THIRD (BIS) SESSION OF THE IPCC

Electronic, 22 – 26 March 2021

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

The Chair of the IPCC, Mr Hoesung Lee, called the 53rd (bis) Session of the IPCC (IPCC-53bis) to order at 11:00 (CET) on Monday 22 March 2021.

The Chair invited Secretary, Mr Abdalah Mokssit, to moderate the opening session and announce the guidelines for meeting.

The Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Mr Petteri Taalas, addressed the session. He recalled the discussions over the last year or so on how WMO could serve the IPCC better to enhance its performance. He noted that international bodies are coping with the pandemic by meeting electronically, which is boosting participation and saving on travel costs. This is likely to continue, although face-to-face meetings are also important. He said the world did not expect any major delay in the IPCC reports which are critical for the climate negotiations.

Mr Taalas recalled the reports published recently by WMO, and those coming shortly. He noted that while the rise in the global temperature of 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels and its impacts are not encouraging, the policy side is more encouraging with many countries committing to net zero emissions in 2050/2060 and what matters now is concrete action.

Mr Taalas reported that the reform of WMO had opened the door to engagement with the private sector and strengthened its climate-related expertise. WMO is looking for more financing for basic observation systems and will host a donor conference.

WMO is working with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on enhancing support for the IPCC in areas such as staffing, but these must respect the rules. A solution for publication of the AR6 Special Reports has been found. He expressed wishes for a successful meeting and looked forward to the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6).

The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Ms Inger Andersen, congratulated the IPCC for organizing the meeting in difficult circumstances and has solidarity with those affected by the pandemic and related measures.

Ms Andersen noted that the world faces three crises: climate change, biodiversity and pollution, and waste and the work of the IPCC is critical for addressing the nature and pollution crisis and creating a healthy and natural world that protects people from future pandemics and lifts them out of poverty.

Ms Andersen expressed deep appreciation for the work of the authors, Bureau members, and Technical Support Unit and Secretariat staff affected by the pandemic. She expressed condolences for the death of coordinating lead author Gemma Teresa Narisma.

2020 Emissions Gap Report shows that with the existing commitments the world is still heading for warming of 3°C. It is good that 120 countries have committed to net zero by 2050, but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The AR6 can give new momentum to commitments. She welcomed the progress on the AR6 which is critical and cannot be delayed.

Ms Andersen welcomed the smooth collaboration and leadership in the IPCC and said UNEP would continue to strengthen the efficiency of the modestly sized IPCC Secretariat. She commended the work of the IPCC Bureau and authors lending their precious time to the IPCC, a service not just to

governments and businesses but to all impacted by climate change. Building back on what has been borrowed from future generations must be guided by science.

The Chair of the IPCC, Mr Hoesung Lee, welcomed delegates to the session, the second time the Panel is meeting in virtual format. This form of working imposes extra demands, and Mr Lee thanked the Secretariat for its work to ensure the session could be run efficiently and inclusively. He noted that this session of the Panel followed virtual Bureau session the previous week and would be followed by another Bureau session in two weeks. He thanked the Panel for its flexibility and open-mindedness that enable the IPCC to continue its work in challenging circumstances. Inclusivity underpins the work of the IPCC, he said, noting the provision of technical infrastructure and interpretation.

The Chair pointed to the packed agenda for the Session. One of the most important items is the Strategic Planning Schedule. This had been thoroughly reviewed by the Bureau the previous week, and the document submitted for consideration reflects the Bureau's comments. He thanked the Secretariat, the IPCC Executive Committee (ExCom) and the TSUs of WG/TFI and the Synthesis Report for preparing the documents.

The Chair concluded by commending the authors who volunteer their time and expertise, describing them as "the backbone of the IPCC", and declared the 53rd (bis) Session of the IPCC open.

The Chair then invited the Mr Abdalah Mokssit, Secretary of the IPCC, to introduce the provisional agenda as contained in document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/Doc.1](#).

The Secretary informed the Panel that the provisional agenda had been prepared after consultation, and some requests by email had been addressed.

China, France, Germany, India, Kenya, Namibia, Nicaragua, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, Zambia as well as Mr Jim Skea, Co-Chair of Working Group III and Mr Ramón Pichs-Madruga, Vice-Chair of Working Group III took the floor.

Many speakers expressed condolences to the United Republic of Tanzania over the death of its president.

Speakers said that virtual meetings should be used to advance process issues not to take decisions given the challenges to inclusivity; the review of the principles governing IPCC work should not be included on the agenda but reserved for an in-person session; the admission of observers organizations should be included; documents should be provided in sufficient time to allow governments to formulate a position; the agenda should be restricted to three items as originally announced; the organization of the meeting should be considered including the distribution of sessions over different time zones; the order of work should be considered to ensure urgent items are discussed first; and questions of content should not be trumped by the need for speed or efficiency.

Speakers said that the AR6 Strategic Planning Schedule should be a priority so that the work on the AR6 can continue; there needs to be a focus on completing the cycle and getting through the approval session and to accelerate efforts to provide the scientific input into climate negotiations; Some delegates suggested that progress reports could be dealt with in a written format with others suggesting live discussions of them; face-to-face sessions should be resumed when possible and virtual meetings allow greater participation and save costs, but pose problems for developing countries and are not suitable for every topic.

The Secretary agreed the importance of posting documents in line with the procedures. He noted that documents had been prepared in time but were only posted after they could be updated with the outcomes of the Bureau session which ended the previous week, with largely the same agenda. Progress reports were included for information rather than as agenda items requiring decisions.

Because consultations showed support for consideration of both the review of the principles governing IPCC work and the AR6 Strategic Planning Schedule, it was decided to have four agenda items rather than three as originally indicated. In deciding the order of consideration of agenda items, the time zone of those presenting them was taken into account as well as the availability of interpreters. Participation in a virtual meeting should be considered as comparable to participation in an in-person meeting, and participants should not be expected to undertake other duties during the meeting.

The Secretary thanked delegates for their comments and assured them that the Secretariat would do its best to publish documents in line with the rules. He proposed retaining the discussion on progress reports on the agenda, dropping consideration of the review of the principles governing IPCC work and adding consideration of requests for observer organization status if time allowed.

After a brief discussion of the order of consideration of agenda items, the revised agenda was adopted with the withdrawal of agenda item 5 on Review of the Principles Governing IPCC Work, and addition of the agenda item on the Admission of Observer Organizations. A revised version of the Provisional Agenda ([IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/Doc.1, Rev.1](#)) has been issued to reflect the change of agenda items as agreed by the Panel.

2. APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE 52nd SESSION OF THE IPCC

The draft report of the 52nd Session of the IPCC as contained in document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/Doc. 2, Corr.1](#) was presented and approved with amendments under Agenda Items 5, 6, 11 and a correction in the list of Participants (Annex 2).

The Chair of the IPCC invited the Secretary of the IPCC to introduce the agenda item. The Secretary informed delegates that after the Draft Report to the 52nd Session of the IPCC (IPCC-52) was posted, a request was received by Iran to correct the list of participants in adding the name of the delegate that was missing under their delegation. The document IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc.2, Corr.1 was posted.

Brazil, France, India and Switzerland took the floor.

It was pointed out that the list of participants to the Draft Report of the 52nd Session of the IPCC missed the names of two delegates from India who participated in the Session. There were concerns that there were some inaccuracies and imbalances in some parts of Agenda item 5 (i.e. Sixth Assessment Report Synthesis Report Outline), Agenda item 6 (i.e. Organization of future work of the IPCC in light of the Global Stocktake) and Agenda item 11 (i.e. Joint activities between IPCC and IPBES). It was mentioned that listing the AR6 Synthesis Report (SYR) topics which were proposed during the Session was not necessary considering that the final outline was available. It was highlighted that Brazil had raised concerns at IPCC-52 on the joint IPCC and IPBES co-sponsored workshop. It was proposed that in future reports of IPCC Panel Sessions, it might not always be necessary to list the countries which make interventions. A request was made to prepare a revised version of the report and post it on Papersmart to enable delegates view it prior to it being presented for adoption.

The revised version of the Draft report of the 52nd Session of the IPCC was posted on Papersmart. When the revised report was presented, India while appreciating the revisions made, raised a concern that the views expressed by governments under Agenda Item 6 were incomplete and unbalanced.

The Panel decided to adopt the revised Draft report of the 52nd Session of the IPCC ([Decision IPCC-LIII\(bis\)-3](#)).

3. AR6 STRATEGIC PLANNING SCHEDULE

The Chair opened the Agenda Item 3, documents [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/Doc. 4, Rev. 1](#), [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF. 10, Rev. 1](#) and [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF. 16, Rev. 1](#).

The Chair invited Ms Ermira Fida, Deputy Secretary of the IPCC, to introduce the item.

The Deputy Secretary recalled that ExCom needs to address urgent requests for changes to the AR6 timeline due to the COVID-19. The document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/Doc. 4, Rev.1](#), summarizes the changes taken by the ExCom and Panel after consultations with the Bureau. These were communicated to the Bureau at its 58th, 59th and 60th Sessions. It also sets out possible future changes, which remain tentative and uncertain.

The document outlines a strategic response to the pandemic, with a revised Strategic Planning Schedule (SPS), changed milestones and options for a possible switch to a virtual from an in-person format.

All the changes agreed so far consist of adjustments of 4-5 months up to the third quarter of 2022, set out in Annex 1. Other changes remain tentative, and it should be noted that changes to the schedule of one report affect the others including the Synthesis Report.

The document has three annexes: 1 – approved changes so far; 2 – the revised and current SPS; 3 – background information on consultations. It also links to the Background Note (document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF. 10, Rev. 1](#)) which provides a roadmap of plenary sessions to the end of the cycle, with some dates remaining tentative, and sets out three options for the format of Working Group I (WGI) approval session.

Both documents were revised to reflect comments from the Bureau.

The Panel was invited to take note of the urgent actions, and to consider and advise on the provisional timelines for AR6 and provide guidance to the Secretariat, noting that any changes remain tentative.

The Deputy Secretary reported that two comments on document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/Doc. 4, Rev. 1](#) had been received in advance in the Papersmart system:

France raised concerns on a potential further delay in the schedule of the Working Group III (WGIII) Final Government Distribution (FGD) governmental review and recommended that the Secretariat provide 2 versions for the WGIII calendar.

Germany expressed concerns over overlaps of the review periods of the Working Group II (WGII) FGD, SYR Second Order Draft (SOD), the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Northern Hemisphere winter holidays which will prevent meaningful reviews from many governments, suggesting bringing forward the WGII review by two weeks and schedule WGII approval session in February 2022. To avoid further delays in the work of the IPCC, Germany said the elections of the IPCC Bureau for the Seventh Assessment Report (AR7) should take place as soon as possible after the SYR approval and suggested setting up an intersessional task group to work on a decision on the composition and size of the Bureau and requested information on requirements for the elections as per IPCC principles. The scoping and outline approval for the Short-lived Climate Forcers (SLCF) methodology report should take place after the elections of the new TFI Co-Chairs to allow their participation in the discussions.

In response Mr Jim Skea, Co-Chair of Working Group III, clarified that coordination across the Working Groups was continuing in order to minimize overlaps; Working Group III would confirm in the first week of April whether the current timeline was viable.

The Deputy Secretary clarified that Working Group II would require an additional three weeks to compensate for the unavailability of authors in the Northern Hemisphere winter holidays and their work on the Synthesis Report, but they had some flexibility to shift the approval session to late February from March if needed. Regarding elections, the Secretariat intended to retain the current system and the Legal Officer would make a presentation on this.

China and Saudi Arabia took the floor and said it was important for all options presented in the Background Note to be considered, for decisions to be taken by the Panel, not by subsidiary bodies, and for advice on the legal implications of virtual meetings to be shared.

The Deputy Secretary explained how the Background Note had been developed and that all options including for a physical meeting had been considered, and pros and cons examined. She invited the Legal Officer to present to the Panel Legal considerations for the IPCC in respect of the holding of virtual plenary and working group approval sessions in context of COVID-19.

The Legal Officer noted that the current public health emergency (COVID-19) may present a basis that plenary and working group sessions be held through non-physical means and decision-making accordingly, in view of the pressing need that the IPCC fulfil its mandate to approve, adopt and accept assessment reports, with such considerations balanced with fundamental principles and values to find solutions. She emphasized as essential in this consideration the principles of participation and equitable representation in the expert and governmental review process, in particular given the identified barrier of a possible digital divide between developed and developing countries as leading to disadvantaged participation. Pointing out that electronic (virtual) meetings must still provide for fair, inclusive and transparent processes so that all Members are able to meaningfully participate in review and approval, she observed that the current electronic (virtual) session scenario does not in that way replicate the conditions as needed for the option of full participation. She concluded stating that towards ameliorating the digital divide noted, solutions to be crafted need to account for means of participation and representation on a basis ensuring retention of IPCC values and principles.

Australia, Belgium, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Jamaica, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Mexico, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela, as well as Mr Sergey Semenov, Vice-Chair of Working Group II took the floor.

Speakers discussed the importance of having the Working Group I approval session in July (and August) as now planned, the need for governments to support authors in delivering the reports in a timely fashion, the risks of further delaying approval sessions; meeting the legal implications for meetings, the need for the Secretariat to survey countries with difficulties in participating in virtual meetings and to take the necessary steps, the advisability of adding innovative elements to complement a virtual meeting, other conditions for such a meeting, the disadvantages for developing countries besides connectivity in participating in virtual meetings, the need for a solid legal basis for approval and acceptance of reports, options for an effective approval session in the current circumstances, the importance of assuring quality and due process in the approval of Summaries for Policymakers and acceptance of reports, the possibility of extending the approval session to two weeks; and the need for participation by all countries including those with limited capacity; the possibility of increasing delegate numbers and the need to consider time zones with a virtual meeting; the need to distinguish between the approval of the Summary for Policymakers (SPM), owned by governments, and the acceptance of the underlying report, owned by the authors; the need for a high-quality robust process rather than speed whatever the format; and the benefits and modalities of a Questions and Answers (Q&A) session during the final government distribution; governments and the IPCC Secretariat should consider a virtual session as an official mission for purposes of absence from other tasks and eligibility for daily sustenance allowances; the need for a virtual approval session to follow line-by-line scrutiny and replicate in-person conditions; the need to treat any special arrangements for the Working Group I approval session as a one-off and not standard or precedent-setting for future approval sessions; the suggest to consult with the World Health Organization on the likely duration of the pandemic and availability of vaccines and ways in which developing country

authors and delegates might benefit from access to an accelerated COVID-19 vaccination procedure; the advisability of the Secretariat exploring ways by which other UN organizations could help the IPCC be inclusive, e.g. through the UNDP or other regional UN centres making office space and computer equipment available to developing country delegates; and the need for the Panel rather than individual Working Group Bureaux to determine the rules of procedure.

Ms Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of Working Group I, outlined some of the innovative approaches being considered by Working Group I to facilitate its approval session, described the constraints and risks on further extending the schedule, and invited delegates to make suggestions on how to enhance inclusiveness and participation in hybrid sessions.

The Deputy Secretary presented the revised text of draft [Decision IPCC-LXIII\(bis\)/2.2](#). Following the comments the Panel adopted a decision through which it invited the Secretariat to solicit views from IPCC Focal Points and the Bureau for consideration at the 60th (bis) Session of the IPCC Bureau regarding challenges and opportunities for participation in IPCC and Working Group (WG) sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic and how these challenges may be resolved to promote transparency, inclusiveness and equal participation in virtual sessions. As per the same decision, the Panel requested the Working Group I Co-Chairs/WGI Bureau within IPCC rules and procedures to make appropriate arrangements, with the assistance of the IPCC Secretariat, for holding the 14th Working Group I approval session (WGI-14) from 26 July 2021 as stipulated in IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc. 4, Rev.1, considering all options contained in IPCC-LIII(bis)/INF. 10, Rev.1 and the guidance and direction from the solicitation mentioned in paragraph 7 therein, reporting back to the Panel intersessionally by correspondence, prior to the 54th Session of the IPCC.

In response to the request made by Germany, the Legal Officer gave a presentation on the rules governing elections. Subsequently, specific guidance was provided on the elections process and timing of elections. It was stated that there was no legal obstacle to the formation an intersessional group in place of a dedicated session on the future work of the IPCC, but that per Rule 7, it remains that the Panel must decide on the structure of the IPCC Bureau and Task Force Bureau. On the issuance of a letter by the Secretariat initiating the nominations process and stipulating a response date, it was pointed out that the elections rules do not provide for such stipulations, and that any changes to the elections rules would need to be in the context of Panel review of the Principles and Procedures. Regarding issuance of a letter prior to SYR approval, it was clarified that the SYR is part of the Assessment Report; with Rule 8 extending the Term of the Bureau to approximately one year after acceptance of this Report, yet with the Term of Office ending when elections take place, and with Rule 21 directing the Secretary to invite Members of the IPCC to submit to the Secretariat nominations for the Bureau positions six months or more before the scheduled election and thus ensuring election campaign for six months or more before the election. Issuance of the letter prior to approval of the SYR report would have the campaign process beginning before SYR approval, with the SPM written by candidates running for the next office, resulting in a compromise of the approval process as well as the reputation and perceived integrity of the IPCC.

Australia, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, St Kitts & Nevis, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela as well as Mr Jim Skea, Co-Chair of Working Group III, Mr Panmao Zhai, Co-Chair of Working Group I, Ms Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of Working Group I, Mr Hans-Otto Pörtner, Co-Chair of Working Group II, Ms Debra Roberts, Co-Chair of Working Group II took the floor.

Some speakers highlighted the importance of adhering to the existing rules and past practice and addressing the structure of the Bureau and elections only after completion of the approval process for reports. They warned that initiating elections before reports are approved could create conflicts of interest and undermine the credibility of the reports.

Others highlighted the merits of an expedited election to facilitate a smooth transition into the Seventh Assessment Report (AR7) cycle and foster a smooth handover for the new Technical Support Units (TSUs). One option would be to announce in early 2022 that the Secretary would issue a letter inviting nominations (inaugurating the election campaign) immediately after approval of the Synthesis Report with a view to elections in late 2022 or early 2023. This could be combined with a streamlined mandate and timeline for the Task Group considering the structure of the Bureau, which could meet intersessionally and report to only one Session of the Panel.

The Co-Chairs took the floor and highlighted the practical difficulties extending the TSUs and securing travel budgets and the importance of continuity for TSUs between cycles with a handover. They also urged consideration of how to increase the possibility of electing a woman chair and noted that co-chairs from the Global South face particular challenges in terms of support.

Denmark, France, Germany, India, Italy, Ireland, Jamaica, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela, as well as Mr Andy Reisinger, Vice-Chair of Working Group III, Ms Valerie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of Working Group I took the floor.

Some suggested that the incoming AR7 Bureau to be involved in the Special Report on Cities and Climate Change from the start, a lengthy campaign involving travel of candidates may not be appropriate after the COVID-19 pandemic; campaigning will happen anyway; a break between cycles would affect delivery of the new methodology report; negotiators are waiting for scientific input including from the IPCC; every transition is different; different processes could be adopted for forthcoming reports that may straddle two assessment cycles; a solid election process would be possible with a shorter period before the scheduled election; a Task Group could be set up with a limited mandate to consider the structure and composition of the Bureau, and issues around longer cycles, without disturbing the scientific process; while elections and the Synthesis Report approval should not be mixed it would still be possible to start early consideration of the composition and structure of the Bureau; the review of the composition and structure of the Bureau by a Task Group at this stage would not start an election and could be done in parallel with the approval sessions; an additional plenary session may need to be scheduled in late 2022 or early 2023 for elections; TSUs play a crucial role supporting co-chairs and authors, and a lack of continuity can lose valuable experience on organizing work and engaging with stakeholders; governments should take this work seriously, much of which is invisible to them; issues of transition and continuity are about substance as much as logistics.

Others said that the burden of preparing an outline for the Special Report on Cities and Climate Change would fall on the current Co-chairs and TSUs who are already overburdened; the quality of the reports should not be threatened for the sake of advancing the election timetable by a few months; a wide variety of experience and competencies is available and the question of continuity of the TSUs should not prevent the new Bureau continuing its work; continuity is important but does not trump other aspects; the priority is to concentrate on completing the reports not how to run elections; has the ExCom been consulted on the proposal to set up a Task Group with a precise mandate; those coordinating a report should be part of scoping it, as participants in a scoping meeting may be future lead authors; questions about the structure of the Bureau and elections should be handled by a face-to-face meeting; the rules and procedures (rule 8 of Appendix C to the Principles Governing IPCC Work) state that the term of a Bureau is the time to prepare a report, with the term of the Bureau to extend approximately one year after the Session at which the Assessment Report, including the Synthesis Report, has been accepted.

The Chair made a statement outlining his perspective on the transition between cycles and the timing of elections noting that there has not been any time lost during the AR6, compared to the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), even with the pandemic and the unprecedented extra load of three Special Reports in this cycle.

The Chair turned to the timing of the election for the AR7 Bureau in the context of the rules and procedures for IPCC elections, i.e. rule 7, rule 8, and rule 21 stating that IPCC election rules are very clear and that they require putting a safe distance between the SYR approval and the election. This safe distance is six months or more, as stipulated in Rule 8 and 21. Any proposal for holding election in January 2023, (three months after the SYR approval) is inconsistent with IPCC rules and procedures and endangers the SYR successful completion. This has never happened in the history of the IPCC.

The Chair pointed out that the election process and the SYR development cannot go simultaneously. The two processes are separated by the election ruled which thus prohibit their overlap. He stated that the Secretary's letter of inviting nominations for the AR7 Bureau initiates the period of six months prior to the election, and that if the Secretary's letter were sent before the completion of the SYR, candidates, both active and potential, would start seeking election while the SYR is still under development, that some SYR authors, who may also be nominated as candidates for the election, will have a conflict of interest between SYR authorship which is scientific and candidacy for the election which is political, that it would give an advantage to candidates outside the current Bureau, because candidates associated with the current Bureau would feel constrained by their duty to the Synthesis Report, and that the SYR author team will be disturbed by an IPCC action starting the election process before they finish their work for the SYR. The Chair indicated that the rules state that the Secretary's letter can only be issued after approval of the Synthesis Report. The timing of this letter is the key to the election process, not the timing of the discussion about the structure and composition of the Bureau.

The Chair indicated that there is a practical step to help the AR7 to start its work as expeditiously as possible by way of approving an outline of the Special Report on Cities already committed for AR7 in this AR6 cycle. He noted that time saving would amount to eight months and that there is a precedent: the AR5 carried out a Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation (SRREN) with its outline approved in the last year of the AR4, greatly facilitating the AR5 schedule. He further noted that more time savings could be expected from the SLCF methodology report planned for AR7 if its outline were to be approved in this cycle in advance.

Algeria, Belize, China, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, St. Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, United States of America, Venezuela and the Friends World Committee for Consultation, as well as Mr Edvin Aldrian, Vice-Chair of Working Group I took the floor.

Speakers considered the various merits of leaving consideration of the elections until after approval of the reports, and starting work on the composition and structure of the Bureau already now by creating a Task Group with a slim mandate. A Task Group had been established at the end of the AR5 cycle before completion of the reports. They asked about the timing of delivery of products in the AR7 cycle and set out options for the timing of different stages of the election process, including in the Strategic Planning Schedule (SPS) the timing of the Secretary's letter inviting nominations after approval of the Synthesis Report which would help provide certainty for governments.

The Chair invited the Legal Officer to comment. She said there was no legal obstacle to establishing a streamlined group to work intersessionally on the structure and composition of the Bureau. Under Rule 7 of Appendix C to the Principles Governing IPCC Work, it is up to the Panel to determine the structure and composition of the Bureau. Rule 8 of Appendix C says the Term of the Bureau extends approximately one year after the Session at which the Assessment Report has been accepted. The Synthesis Report is part of the Assessment. If the election is held in December 2022 or January 2023 then campaigning would start before adoption of the Synthesis Report leading to a possible conflict. Per a query on a letter inviting nominations at a date in the future, it was noted that this was not provided for under Appendix C, and to set such a restriction would be a violation of the rights of governments to begin the process of inviting nominations following receipt of the Secretary's letter. Such changes in the rules would only be possible under the Panel's review of rules and procedures.

The Secretary presented a draft decision on setting up an Ad-hoc Group with open-ended membership to develop a platform for the election for the next cycle and clarified some details such as timing and mandate of the Ad-hoc Group.

Angola, Canada, China, Cuba, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Switzerland, Trinidad & Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela, as well as Mr Jim Skea, Co-Chair of Working Group III, Ms Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, Vice-Chair of Working Group III took the floor.

Speakers discussed the details of the proposed Ad-hoc Group including its composition, the timelines for the open-ended Ad-hoc Group's work, its terms of reference, and its work schedule.

Mr Kiyoto Tanabe, Co-Chair of the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, asked for clarification of the timing of the scoping meeting for the Methodology Report on Short-lived Climate Forcers to be included in the decision or meeting report.

The Chair said the SLCF report timing should be included in the meeting report to keep it separate from the decision document under discussion. The Chair said his understanding was that the SLCF scoping approval would be in the AR7 cycle.

The Chair invited the Panel to accept [Decision IPCC-LXIII\(bis\)/2.1](#) since this is the final decision text.

Following these discussions, the Panel decided to establish an Ad-hoc Group with open-ended membership with a mandate to provide recommendations to the Panel on the size, structure, and composition of the IPCC Bureau and any other Task Force Bureau for the Seventh Assessment cycle as governed by Rule 7 of Appendix C of the Principles Governing IPCC Work. The Secretary's letter inviting nominations will be sent two weeks after the 57th (bis) Session of the IPCC, following the Synthesis Report (SYR) approval and to have an elections Plenary to take place after six months following issuance of the Secretary's letter requesting written nominations, but not to exceed seven months thereafter. The Chair noted that under Decision IPCC-LXIII(bis)/2.1, the Ad-hoc Group should be constituted. It was agreed that the United States and Saudi Arabia would serve as co-chairs and Venezuela and Germany as rapporteurs.

4. PROGRESS REPORTS

4.1 Working Group I contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report

The Chair of the IPCC invited Working Group I Co-Chairs to introduce Document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF.1](#).

Ms Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of Working Group I informed the Panel about the sad demise of Ms Gemma Narisma, WGI Coordinating Lead Author (CLA) who made a remarkable input to the WGI AR6. She informed the Panel that the WGI Interactive Atlas will be dedicated to her. She further informed the Panel that the Final Government Draft was completed. At the time of reporting, WGI was drafting their AR6 Technical Summary while revising the Summary for Policymakers (SPM). Governments were invited to participate in the review process of the WGI AR6 SPM which was scheduled to commence on 3 May 2021 and would feature informal Questions and Answers (Q&A) presentations in an endeavour to address clarification questions. Ms Masson-Delmotte thanked the WGI Bureau, Technical Support Unit and author team for their dedication, and governments for agreeing to extend the WGI timeline. During the review of the WGI Second Order Draft (SOD) review comments exceeding 50,000 were submitted by more than 1200 experts. Notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic, the comments were about 60% more than those received for the WGI AR5 SOD. Owing to the delay in the completion of the WGI AR6, an additional internal review process of the draft chapters was conducted from November to December 2020. More than 7000 comments from 150 reviewers which included experts from WGII and WGIII were received. Review comments in excess of 2500 were received during an internal review of the Technical Summary.

WGI was successful in establishing and implementing an inclusive and participatory online working environment. Examples include pre-LAM activities conducted from June to September 2020 which discussed review comments, featured cross-chapter, cross-WG coordination meetings and a webinar on the science-policy interface which featured presentations by invited speakers to share their experiences with the author team, eight CLA virtual meetings from October 2020 to February 2021, WGI Bureau meeting, and an SPM writeshop. Surveys conducted with pre-Lam participants revealed that many albeit experiencing some form of stress enjoyed their involvement in IPCC work and suggested that additional time was required, and recommended the development of publication which would capture the unique experience of finalizing the WGI AR6 through an inclusive and participatory online approach. Virtual cross-WG coordination activities which were conducted addressed issues such as the use of emulators to relate emission scenarios with climate response outcomes, deep uncertainty associated with emission metrics, the Glossary, and guidance on the risk framework and scenarios. WGI AR6 Chapter 6, with the contribution of WGII and WGIII experts, was working on a cross-Chapter Box on climate and air quality implications of the COVID-19 containment. Two WGI Chapter 6 Lead Authors (LAs) took over the coordinating role after it was decided that the previous CLAs would become LAs.

Other matters mentioned by Ms Masson-Delmotte included: WGI's collaboration with the Task Group on Data Support for Climate Change Assessments (TG-Data), which is important considering the large volumes of datasets used in their assessment; a co-design process of the SPM visuals which had started and an associated user survey; an outreach programme which was on its second phase and focussed on the experience of authors from different regions with its third phase feeding into the training for WGI starting shortly; a one-hour media training session attended by more than 60 WGI authors; an infographic based on one cross-chapter box of the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C (SR1.5) was translated into five UN languages; a WGI blog which reports on ongoing activities; and the launch of a figure manager that would enhance the traceability of figures.

France, India, Nicaragua, Saudi Arabia, Spain, United Kingdom and Venezuela took the floor.

Delegates thanked WGI Co-Chairs for the commendable efforts to deliver a high-quality product despite the difficult situation and developing innovative approaches to enable the participation of authors in the online activities. Condolences were expressed to the family of the late Ms Gemma Narisma. Issues and concerns which were raised and suggestions include: inadequate and/or insufficient assessment in IPCC reports of publications and reports produced by governments, particularly those from developing countries; some inconsistencies between statements made in the SPM and findings in the underlying reports; the significance of avoiding selection bias in citation, particularly in the context of cross-cutting issues and topics which are qualitative in nature; the need for WGI to focus on physical science and not on socio-economic issues; the decrease in the participation of experts in the work of the IPCC, including the review process in Venezuela, in part due to political sanctions; the need for balance in views made by governments and highlighting limits and uncertainties of the conclusions made in IPCC reports; truthfulness to the underlying science assessed in order to maintain the credibility of the reports.

Ms Valérie Masson-Delmotte thanked Spain for supporting the development of the WGI Interactive Atlas which will provide regional information. She further mentioned that: the infographic related to one chapter-box of the SR1.5 would be available on the website; efforts were made to enhance the traceability between the comprehensive scientific assessment in the chapters and the SPM through the Technical Summary; WGI, inter alia, assesses how the climate system responds to a broad range of scenarios related to emissions (socio-economic aspects); the new scenarios consider a broader range of perturbations to the earth's energy budget due to greenhouse gases and short-lived climate forcers; there is a broad participation in the WGI work, particularly on regional projections; and climate simulations in response to scenarios benefit from new knowledge provided by several countries.

The Panel took note of the WGI progress report.

4.2 Working Group II contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report

The Chair of the IPCC invited the Co-Chairs of Working Group II to introduce Document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF.4](#). Ms Debra Roberts, Co-Chair of Working Group II mentioned they got a 4-months extension of their schedule. Some activities undertaken towards their contribution to the AR6, which included: the Third Lead Author Meeting (LAM3) which was held in Faro, Portugal, from 26 January – 1 February 2020; virtual activities in support of the WGII Second Order Draft (SOD) were held in August 2020 and attended by more than 250 participants from over 50 countries; the WGII SOD which was submitted to the TSU on 6 November 2020. The SOD underwent expert and government review from 4 December 2020– 29 January 2021 and received more than 40,000 review comments which were submitted by 41 governments and 1168 experts from 89 countries; webinars to inform groups of early career researchers and interested scientists about the work of the IPCC, WGII AR6 work, the IPCC calibrated uncertainly language, and engaging with the IPCC as an Expert Reviewer; and organization of the WGII LAM4 which was held virtually from 1–5 and 8–12 March 2021 at the invitation of the government of Guatemala. The LAM4 was attended by over 260 participants from more than 60 countries. The LAM4 was followed by a media briefing and two virtual outreach events.

Mr Hans-Otto Pörtner, Co-Chair of Working Group II informed the Panel about the challenges they experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The IPCC Executive Committee approved a 4-month extension in the WGII schedule which resulted in a shift in the literature cut-off date, the Final Government Distribution and Government Review of the Summary for Policymakers, and the WGII approval Plenary. He mentioned: the IPCC-IPBES¹ Co-Sponsored Workshop on Biodiversity and Climate Change which was held virtually from 14–17 December 2020 and attended by more than 50 participants. The workshop report was expected to undergo peer-review prior to its publication; and the preparation of the ICOMOS²-UNESCO³-IPCC Co-Sponsored Meeting on Culture, Heritage, and Climate Change scheduled for late in 2021. The Scientific Steering Committee was established and a proposal for the meeting was considered by the IPCC Executive Committee at its 80th Meeting.

Brazil, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan and Saudi Arabia took the floor.

Delegates commended the contribution of Working Group II and the dedication of the AR6 authors during the difficult times. Comments and suggestions made include: perceived insufficient transparency and consultations during the preparation of the IPCC-IPBES Co-Sponsored Workshop on Biodiversity and Climate Change; subjecting the report of the workshop to peer-review and holding outreach events to disseminate the contents of the report was deemed to be inconsistent with IPCC practice; sharing the agenda of the IPCC-IPBES workshop and list of participants with governments before the report would be finalized; the need to avoid bringing together issues across independent multilateral organizations (e.g. IPCC and IPBES); the use of the IPCC logo in the report for the co-sponsored workshop; errors in the maps and wording which have implications for the sovereignty of China; perceived insufficient literature from developing countries; the contribution made by India in climate change projections and changes in monsoons in different geographical regions; perceived consideration of a narrow view of the published literature; and an example of paper which was allegedly misquoted in WGII Chapter 17; the need for transparency, inclusivity and balance when considering the literature to be assessed; the use of complex wording in the SPM; and insufficient justification on the use of particular methodology and data.

Mr Hans-Otto Pörtner in his response mentioned that: rules and procedures for co-sponsored workshops are very similar for IPCC and IPBES and that the steps and processes undertaken during the preparation and conducting of the workshop were agreed by the respective Bureaux; the concept note of the co-sponsored workshop outlining the steps and modalities was presented to the IPCC Panel at IPCC-52; the report of the co-sponsored workshop which mainly focuses on the scientific processes was expected to contribute to the scoping of the next IPBES report and the IPCC AR7; a

¹ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

² International Council on Monuments and Sites

³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

communication strategy was being developed and would be submitted to the workshop Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) for approval; more information on the co-sponsored workshop was publicly available on the internet; the IPCC logo would be used and a disclaimer would be included mentioning that the meeting report does not represent the views of the IPCC; comments raised during the review process and at the Panel Session would be taken into consideration during the finalization of the WGII AR6.

Ms Debra Roberts thanked the delegates for their submissions and reassured the Panel that their comments and suggestions would be taken into consideration to ensure that the final product meets IPCC standards.

The Panel took note of the WGII progress report.

4.3 Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report

The Chair of the IPCC invited the Co-Chairs of Working Group III to introduce Document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF.2](#). Mr Jim Skea, Co-Chair of Working Group III in his response to comments submitted before the Session mentioned that: the Co-Chairs noted issues raised by China concerning country classification and maps, and they would reinforce their efforts to convince authors to adhere to globally acceptable principles; and in relation to the comment made by France, WGIII in consultation with other TSUs and the Secretariat were working on an alternative schedule for the completion of their AR6 contribution. He remarked that there was no solution that would entirely avoid a clash with other IPCC activities such that an overlap between the review periods of the different elements of the AR6 was inevitable. Any workable solution would require some modification of the work schedule for WGII and the SYR. WGIII had launched a consultation process with their authors and the outcome would be used to prepare a proposal which could be submitted for the consideration of the IPCC Executive Committee around early April 2021.

As part of their progress report, Mr Skea informed the Panel that: their virtual Third Lead Author Meeting (eLAM3) which was hosted by the government of Ecuador in April 2020 and attended by 287 participants, including authors, Bureau members and Technical Support Unit (TSU) members from across the three Working Groups; an outreach event which involved several hundreds of people and conducted in Spanish was held following the eLAM3; a Light Touch Stocktake author meeting was held in October 2020; at the end of the Second Order Draft Expert and Government Review on 14th March 2021, about 32,500 comments were provided by about 850 reviewers; a series of webinar-based workshops engaging authors and representatives from governments, and stakeholder groups including business and environmental NGOs were held during the WGIII SOD review period, with the support of Climate Action Network and the International Chamber of Commerce. These engagements were expected to accelerate the common understanding between the author teams, governments and other stakeholders; WGIII eLAM4 was rescheduled for a five-day period within 12-30 April 2021; there would be difficulties meeting the 9th August 2021 for submitting the WGIII Final Government Distribution; many intense scientific discussions underpinning the development of a combined WG Glossary; work on cross-WG boxes which are expected to appear in similar form across the three WGs; and that the collaborative operation within the two components of the WGIII TSU, one based in London, United Kingdom and the other in Ahmedabad, India was on an equal basis as a consequence of the lockdowns.

Brazil, China, Cuba, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, as well as Edwin Aldrian, Vice-Chair of the Working Group I took the floor.

Delegates applauded the contribution of Working Group III and the cross-WG collaboration during the challenging times. Comments and suggestions which were made, and concerns include: support for the changes of WGIII schedule; the potential to provide misleading information if emissions from Africa in WGIII AR6 were lumped up with those from Asia; the classification of countries according to developed and developing regions could follow the UNFCCC approach; need to be more objective when calculating carbon leakage and carbon budgets; more balanced consideration of literature on

past and future emissions; the need to maintain inclusivity and comprehensiveness in the policy space; an alleged referencing-citation nexus within WGIII which involves about four authors who have cited more than 100 of their own publications; an allegation that narrow view points and technical concepts and terms preferred by particular groups appear to dominate certain chapters and/or sections of the WGIII AR6; the need to avoid being policy prescriptive; and the perceived inappropriate naming of countries as examples where climate policies are affected by corruption.

Mr Jim Skea acknowledged the concerns and points made by delegates which were similar to some of the review comments, which the authors were committed to address. He mentioned that: in their grouping of countries they rely on classifications performed by organizations who provide the relevant data and information; the concerns and suggestions made by governments during the Panel Session would be communicated to the authors and would be considered during the eLAM4 and the finalization of the report.

The Panel took note of the Working Group III progress report.

4.4 Sixth Assessment Report Synthesis Report

The Chair of the IPCC introduced the document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF. 3](#) and informed the Panel that: about 8 months ago, Ms Noémie Leprince-Ringuet, the Head of the AR6 SYR TSU was selected from among four shortlisted candidates through international recruiting and evaluation; the interview panel included Mr Hoesung Lee and two Deputy Ministers from Ministries which oversee the funding of the climate agenda in the Republic of Korea; Ms Leprince-Ringuet who has previous experience working with the AR5 SYR TSU started working on 1 July 2020; the AR6 SYR Core Writing Team (CWT) was established by the IPCC Bureau at its 58th Session in May 2020; the CWT had their first meeting (CWT-1) in January 2021; the CWT was drafting each section of the AR6 SYR; the SYR Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) was established and had convened eight times; the tremendous support and enthusiasm of the SYR CWT was commendable particularly because they carry a double burden of completing the WG AR6 and developing the AR6 SYR, thanks to the underlying strong commitment of IPCC Bureau members, Working Group TSUs, SSC members and the Secretariat.

Ms Leprince-Ringuet reported about the steps which were followed to select the CWT; the mandate of the SYR TSU, which in AR6 is funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea and located at the IPCC Chair's office in Seoul; that the SYR SSC comprises of all IPCC Bureau members except those who were selected to be Review Editors; that about six SSC meetings were convened during CWT-1 to track the progress during the meeting and to guide the CWT to move towards successful outcomes, six weeks after CWT-1 the SSC held a meeting with members of the CWT to provide an update of the AR6 SYR development; that the CWT-1 was preceded by a series of informal preliminary activities from September to November 2020 aimed at developing a common understanding of the SYR document before the start of its official drafting and explore options together for maximizing policy relevance of the SYR; that CWT-1 was held virtually from 25 – 29 January 2021 and attended by 30 authors from 19 countries, SSC members, Heads of Working Group TSUs, and the IPCC Secretariat. The CWT-1 produced a narrative structure for the SYR sections based on the topic headings and the list of indicative bullets approved by the Panel at IPCC-52, a list of six cross-cutting topics, an internal workplan until CWT-2, and preliminary potential key messages for each Section; that facilitators for each Section were appointed from amongst the CWT members to manage the Sections, and small contact teams were constituted to deal with each topic with some SSC members acting as advisers; that the CWT was developing the AR6 SYR towards a pre-draft which would be submitted for an internal review; that the SYR TSU was involved in a number of Working Group activities such as eLAMs and workshops; the CWT was encouraged to participate in WGI internal review of the SPM and chapters, and WGII and WGIII Expert and Government review of their SODs; and that the IPCC Executive Committee in consultation with the IPCC Bureau approved the shift in the dates of the CWT-1. The SYR TSU was working in consultation with the WG TSUs to develop an appropriate revised schedule.

India, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, United Kingdom took the floor.

Delegates commended the IPCC Chair, the Head of the SYR TSU, CWT and the SYR SSC. They remarked that: the Republic of Korea would continue to support the AR6 SYR TSU; the AR6 SYR is relevant for the first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement and will inform climate action; there was an overlap between the review of the AR6 SYR and WGII, which should be avoided; it was important for the SYR TSU to have adequate capacity to deliver its work and there was a question about appointment of staff; there was need to clarify the meaning of section themes and cross-sectional topics and how these relate to the indicative bullets which were decided by the Panel at IPCC-52; Switzerland offered to host the Session which will adopt the AR6 SYR in Geneva in Autumn 2022.

The Chair thanked the Government of Switzerland for offering to host the AR6 SYR Approval Plenary. He informed the Panel that: the strengthening of the TSU through the recruitment of technical staff was ongoing and more people would join the TSU as the SYR drafting process intensifies; the purpose of the cross-section topics is to maintain consistency across sections.

Ms Leprince-Ringuet in her response mentioned that the cross-section topics are not additional elements of content but were just topics which run throughout the AR6 SYR Sections in dynamic temporal and spatial processes and require consistent treatment.

The Panel took note of the AR6 Synthesis Report progress report.

4.5 Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories

The Chair of the IPCC invited the Co-Chairs of the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI) to introduce the document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF. 5](#). Mr Kiyoto Tanabe, TFI Co-Chair mentioned that: as part of preparatory work on short-lived climate forcers (SLCF), the TFI TSU had started compiling source categories and preliminary comparative analysis of different available methodologies; two Expert Meetings on SLCF-related topics were tentatively deferred to September and October 2021; the expected participants to the Expert Meetings were requested to carry out some deskwork to collect information on significant source categories of SLCF emissions; the Norwegian Environment Agency extra budgetary contribution of 1,000,000 Kroner in September 2020. Mr Tanabe thanked the Government of Norway for their support; the TFI TSU continued to improve the IPCC Inventory Software and supporting its users. The software was being upgraded to enable the use of higher-tier methods in addition to the basic Tier-1 methods and develop three different approaches of data collection on land representation in the AFOLU⁴ sector; the TFU TSU was helping inventory compilers to better understand the software through outreach events organized by other international organizations including the UNFCCC; the UNDP⁵ provided in-kind support for the work undertaken to verify the inventory software. Mr Tanabe thanked UNDP for their support; an upgraded version of the Emission Factor Database (EFDB) was released in November 2020 and was available on the TFI website; the Task Force Bureau selected new members of the EFDB Editorial Board from the people who were nominated by governments and IPCC Observer Organizations; virtual meetings of the EFDB Editorial Board were scheduled for April and May 2021; new errata for the 2006 IPCC Guidelines was issued in July 2020; and that some TFI meetings were either cancelled or postponed.

The Panel took note of the TFI progress report.

4.6 Task Group on Data Support for Climate Change Assessments

The Chair of the IPCC invited the Co-Chairs of the Task Group on Data Support for Climate Change Assessments (TG-Data) to introduce the document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF. 6, Rev.3](#). Mr Sebastián Vicuña, TG-Data Co-Chair reported that: three virtual meetings for the Task Group were held in October and November 2020 during with TG-Data Subgroups made considerable progress towards achieving their medium-term objectives; the Webpages and Outreach Subgroups prepared a roadmap for website

⁴ Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use

⁵ The United Nations Development Programme

updates and have initiated the organization of outreach activities which are scheduled to start after the adoption of the WGI AR6; the Partnerships Subgroup held discussions with representatives of the governments of Japan and Australia in an endeavour to explore possibilities of establishing new Data Distribution Centre (DDC) partnerships; the transfer of final data underlying figures and tables in WGI AR6 to the United Kingdom DDC node was expected to commence in April 2021. The intention is to store the data in long-term archives and make them publicly available; around September 2021 the WGI TSU would expectedly receive a catalogue of final data curated at the DDC. Links to the DDC website are expected to be included in the WGI AR6 online version; WGII and WGIII TSUs were developing protocols to transfer final data to the DDC; some of the software code used to produce figures would be made publicly available after the publication of the AR6; the DDC nodes based in Germany and in the United States of America were advancing the curation of source datasets; Spain was providing support for a new DDC node located at the University of Cantabria, Spain which will focus on the design and maintenance of the WGI Interactive Atlas; the IPCC licensing used for the reports cannot be applied to final data archived at the DDC because the data would be scientifically unusable. TG-Data recommended that IPCC data could be licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution; CMIP6, which are key datasets, are licensed under a Creative Commons Sharealike license. The implications are that CMIP6 derivatives including some IPCC final data products should also be licensed under same sharealike license. TG-Data recommended that the IPCC could request a waiver from CMIP6 data providers to allow the IPCC to license CMIP6 derivatives and data included in the WGI Interactive Atlas under a Creative Commons Attribution License.

The Panel took note of the TG-Data progress report.

4.7 Communication and outreach activities

The Chair invited Mr Jonathan Lynn, Head of Communications and Media Relations, , to present the Progress Reports on Communications and Outreach Activities ([IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF.11](#)), Review of the IPCC Communications Strategy ([IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF.12](#)) and the IPCC Communications Strategy Update ([IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF.13](#)).

Written comments were received from France and Sweden expressing appreciation for the work of the Secretariat on communications and outreach. Further clarification on the status of the proposed Communications strategy update was requested. It was highlighted that this was not an agenda item for this Panel Session for decision and that further discussions in another Session will be required which can be supported by the provision of a document in track changes showcasing the proposed revisions. In terms of content of the document, the need to include the important role the IPCC Focal Points play in communications was highlighted as well as the importance of measuring the impact of the communications work. A clarification on the reference to work with broadcasters was requested.

Mr Lynn reported that since the 52nd Session of the IPCC (24 – 28 February 2020), the IPCC communications and outreach work like all other activities has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the team has managed to continue raising the visibility of the IPCC with a large number of outreach activities taking place virtually as preparations for the Sixth Assessment Report progressed. The team is taking innovative approaches such as the Working Group I user testing of the Summary for Policymakers figures.

One focus of the communications work has been reviewing the IPCC Communications Strategy and the communications activities in general at the request of the IPCC Executive Committee (ExCom). This led to several recommendations which fall into three main groups: (1) Recommendations that are for immediate implementation based on approval by the ExCom; (2): Recommendations with financial implications that need to be submitted to a future Session of the Panel that deals with the IPC; (3) Recommendations without financial implications which involve updating the IPCC Communications Strategy with the aim of bringing it in line with current practice.

Mr Lynn highlighted that it was the group 3 recommendations that were being presented at this Session to the Panel as ultimately responsible for the IPCC Communications Strategy. He provided

a summary of the group 3 related changes as contained in document IPCC Communications Strategy Update (IPCC-LIII(bis)/INF. 13).

These included changes under the “Goals” of the Communications Strategy allowing to include communications related to other aspects of the IPCC work such as the Gender Policy. Changes were proposed also under “Activities” to reflect making statements and op-ed articles as well as under “Audiences” to include youth. Revisions were proposed also under “Methods and Tools” to include the vital role that can be played by the communications specialists in the Technical Support Units, the importance of the IPCC website, social media, digital strategy in general and the work with broadcasters.

Germany, Kenya and South Africa took the floor.

Appreciation was expressed to the communications team for their efforts to communicate the important scientific messages of the IPCC to the outside world. Comments included a suggestion to include a reference to the value added of the communications activities.

Further clarifications were requested on the financial implication of the proposed changes. It was highlighted that any decisions on budget related matters are made by the Panel and not by the Financial Task Team (FiTT). Staffing matters were also raised, including the criteria for extended staff contracts beyond retirement age and the need for additional staff, noting that the Secretariat and the Technical Support Units (TSUs) already have communications staff. It was proposed that further options should be explored to strengthen the communications team such as using national experts in different countries and the IPCC Focal Points, and strengthening their capacity to communicate in local languages.

One speaker raised the status of informal documents submitted to the Session of which the Panel is invited to take note and suggested that further consideration by the Panel will be needed to take a decision on the proposed updates as had been done at previous Sessions.

Responding to the comments, Mr Lynn clarified that the suggestion of highlighting the importance of the IPCC Focal Points in the Communications Strategy is welcomed. He also added that measuring the value added of the communications activities is a very complex matter for any organization and that the communications team is devoting a lot of attention to this. He clarified the proposal to highlight the importance of broadcasters as the communications team has been traditionally working more closely with print media, while broadcasters and television in particular are the main source of news for many people around the world.

Mr Lynn emphasized that the IPCC communications team is continuing to see large increases in demand which it is trying to meet with existing resources. However, it is quite stretched. As examples of additional work now undertaken in-house he mentioned increased and enhanced social media output, video production and internal communications including the new newsletter for IPCC Focal Points. If the Panel thinks that such activities are worthwhile, it would need to put them on a more sustainable footing.

Mr Lynn clarified that there were no further financial implications due to the changes proposed in the updated Communications Strategy (IPCC-LIII(bis)/INF. 13) and that any proposal that will have financial implications will be brought to the Panel in another Session. He also stated that detailed proposals for any new staffing will be brought to a future Session of the Panel as this matter also has financial implications.

Mr Lynn highlighted the improvement to communications from the addition of communications specialists in the TSUs with whom the Secretariat works closely. There is a division of labour. With the TSU communication specialists working with the authors, and their respective scientific communities, while the Secretariat keeps an overview of the outreach and communications activities and works with the media in general and other parts of the UN system.

Mr Lynn said it was an important point to work with national experts in different countries, and indeed it was something which has already been implemented through the outreach and communications activities, by developing communications plans and working closely with host institutions when holding events in person or virtually to access the requisite local expertise and to ensure that the activities are tailored to the needs of those countries and regions.

Mr Lynn said that the status of the documents submitted as information documents or progress reports reflected the need to limit the agenda to three substantive items. He said changes in the Communication Strategy (IPCC-LIII(bis)/INF.13) are more in the nature of updates to bring work in line with current practice. As these are not major changes, it was considered adequate to inform the Panel of these changes and ask the Panel to take note of them. These updates do not require substantive discussion unlike the question of additional staffing, which is something the Panel would want to consider the future.

The Panel took note of the Progress Reports on Communication and Outreach Activities (IPCC-LIII(bis)/INF.11); the Review of the IPCC Communications Strategy (IPCC-LIII(bis)/INF.12) and the IPCC Communications Strategy Update (IPCC-LIII(bis)/INF.13).

4.8 Informal Group on Publications

The Progress Report of the Informal Group on Publications was presented to the Panel I document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF. 8](#).

The Chair invited Mr Jim Skea, Chair of the Informal Group on Publications (and Co-Chair of Working Group III) to introduced the item.

As discussed at the 60th Session of the Bureau, the report of the Informal Group on Publications was presented to the 53rd (bis) Session of the IPCC, together with the conclusions of the Bureau discussion: that the report should be forward to the Panel and the group's mandate extended to include translation.

France, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Ireland, and Mr Andreas Fischlin, Vice-Chair of Working Group II, took the floor.

Speakers thanked the Informal Group for the impressive work it had carried out. They suggested that the group's mandate be extended to translation, in which case the group should submit its recommendations before the Working Group I approval session.

Speakers also stressed the importance of putting an SPM online as soon as possible after approval, and not tying this to the provision of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs).

It was noted that there was no conditionality between publishing the SPM online and the provision of DOIs, which could be prepared before publication.

Speakers also urged the importance of publishing the reports as quickly as possible.

The Panel took note of the report.

4.9 Gender Action Team

The Chair invited the Chair of the Gender Action Team (GAT) Ms Ko Barret to introduce this agenda item. The Chair of the GAT introduced the document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF. 7](#) starting with a brief background. She reminded the Panel of the first Task Group set up at 47th Session of the IPCC (IPCC-47) which submitted a report to the 49th Session of the IPCC (IPCC-49) and the second one set up at IPCC-49 that prepared the Gender Policy and Implementation Plan which was approved at 52nd Session of the IPCC (IPCC-52).

She highlighted a few elements from the document noting that the start of the work of the GAT had been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She informed the Panel that during the 87th Meeting of the IPCC Executive Committee (ExCom), the Secretariat reported on the steps taken to establish the GAT including sending letters requesting nominations of representatives from WMO and UNEP. The GAT held its first meeting on 12 February 2021 where the group elected Ms Ko Barret and Ms Thelma Krug as Chair and Vice Chair respectively. The GAT also took an initial look at the steps and actions that need to be taken as stipulated in the Implementation Plan.

She further informed the Panel that the GAT plans to have its next meeting as soon as possible after IPCC-53bis. She added that during this next meeting of the GAT will start to have a more thorough look at the steps and actions and start to assess the needs and capacities needed for implementation.

She noted the comments received and thanked governments for their support adding that she looked forward to working on this.

France, Sweden and United Kingdom took the floor. They thanked the Secretariat for the work done and were happy that the GAT had been established, and expressed hope that the IPCC becomes a model that others learn from.

To conclude the Chair of the GAT thanked governments for their encouragement.

The Panel took note of the report.

4.10 Secretariat Staffing, roles and requirements

The Progress Report on Secretariat Staffing, Roles and Requirements was presented to the Panel in document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF. 9, Rev.1](#).

The Secretary introduced the document. He recalled the discussions on Secretariat staffing at the 52nd Session of the IPCC and 60th Session of the Bureau and related decisions. He presented an analysis of the Secretariat staffing, roles and requirements mapped against the Secretariat's terms of reference and considering current tasks and requirements and job descriptions. He reviewed recent increases in the work required from the Secretariat for the unprecedentedly ambitious Sixth Assessment Report cycle, and reviewed recent staffing changes. He closed by reviewing options for adjusting staffing further.

The Secretary noted one written comment, from Sweden, which was received in advance. Sweden appreciated the work of the Secretariat, welcomed the further use made of WMO resources, and looked forward to the vacancies mentioned in the document being filled. Future staffing should reflect possible changes in work and travel practices after the pandemic, including more use of virtual activities. Sweden considers that a dedicated fund-raising resource would not seem to be timely, which has been confirmed in some of the recent plenaries, including that governments, together with some UN agencies, fund the work of the IPCC.

France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Norway, Sweden, as well as Ms Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, Vice-Chair of Working Group III took the floor.

Speakers thanked the Secretariat for its hard work, carried out efficiently despite the small size of the Secretariat; highlighted the need for resources to handle Information Technology and communications in different formats; they supported the proposals in the report and urged the Secretariat to come back to the next Session of the Panel with an updated proposal in line with procedures; asked about the criteria for extending the contract of the head of communications; asked whether the implementation of previous decisions on staffing could be accelerated; noted that the challenging times affected the spectrum of necessary competences; welcomed the increased cooperation with the WMO and the enhancements to IT work; stated that taking note of a report is not the same as taking a decision; and underlined the need for following the rules when positions are added.

The Secretary thanked delegates for their encouragement. He noted that many countries had stressed the importance of the role of head of communications. Opening a post to applications rather than extending a contract posed a risk to continuity as a new incumbent developed their network. It was important to have someone in place who could communicate the reports in this period of intense activity for AR6. The Secretariat would ensure a good transition, was introducing a system of deputizing and would ensure an overlap between present and future incumbents, especially as the pandemic has disrupted the recruitment process. There was nothing exceptional in an extension of several months in a contract. The important thing was to avoid a gap in communications.

The Secretary noted that the Secretariat is supported by the WMO and works strictly in line with the rules, which can create delays in implementing decisions. For instance, the new Information Technology (IT) posts which would be advertised in the coming days had needed to be classified by an external adviser. He thanked Morocco for offering to second two IT staffers. The approved posts would be filled, and the Panel would be invited at its next Session to consider further staff resources where they are needed.

The Chair commended the excellent work of the Secretariat under the Secretary's leadership.

The Panel took note of the report.

4.11 Matters related to UNFCCC and Other International Bodies

The Chair invited the representative of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Mr Florin Vladu to introduce the agenda item. Mr Florin Vladu introduced the document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF.14](#) which presents activities the UNFCCC has done with the IPCC since IPCC-52. The document also noted the forthcoming activities up to June 2021 that are relevant for the IPCC.

The first of these activities done were on 1-10 June when the Subsidiary Body of Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body of Implementation (SBI) held a series of online activities called Momentum for Climate. This replaced the normal meetings held in June. IPCC Vice-Chair as well as Working Group I and III Co-Chairs participated in the informal meeting with the scientific community on how the pandemic is affecting science. They discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the climate, how IPCC will consider the impact of COVID-19 on climate change and how the pandemic affects the delivery of the AR6.

The second activity was the SBSTA-IPCC Joint Working Group held in September virtually. The main topic was to try to synchronize processes and considering the various implications of the pandemic on the delivery of the AR6 and the novel aspects of the assessment that would be of relevance for the UNFCCC process. The joint meeting also discussed upcoming events like the IPCC-IPBES Co-Sponsored workshop, and the work on Short Lived Climate Forces among others.

The third set of activities is the UN Climate Change Dialogues. He informed the Panel that IPCC strongly participated in the Climate Change Dialogues. 17 experts participated in the Structured Expert Dialogue. IPCC experts also took part in the Research Dialogue which focused on reaching net zero emissions, the Oceans, and Land Dialogues which were follow ups to the IPCC Special Reports. The IPCC also participated in the roundtable on pre-2020 implementation and ambition where IPCC presented on how issues of implementation and ambition have evolved since the First Assessment Report.

He informed the Panel of forthcoming activities that have been decided up to June 2021 that would be of interest to the IPCC. He highlighted the Research Dialogue that will convene under the meeting of the second part of the first meeting of the Structure Expert Dialogue.

He concluded by expressing his appreciation to the IPCC Chair, Bureau Members, Working Group Co-Chairs, authors, the TFI and Technical Support Units on the collaboration so far adding that he looked forward to the activities to be undertaken for the rest of 2021.

The Panel took note of the report.

5. ADMISSION OF OBSERVER ORGANIZATIONS

The Secretariat, Ms Jennifer Lew Schneider, introduced this agenda item. She presented the document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/Doc. 3](#), which contains the details of the new applications to obtain IPCC observer status received by the Secretariat since the 52nd Session of the IPCC. These are:

1. European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (EAERE)
2. Integrated Carbon Observation System European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ICOS ERIC)
3. Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)
4. Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)
5. African Academy of Sciences (AAS)
6. International Actuarial Association (IAA)
7. Office for Climate Education (OCE)
8. King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC).

The Secretariat informed the Panel that five of these organizations, the EAERE, ICOS ERIC, ICC, IAA and KAPSARC, are already accredited as observer organizations with UNFCCC, and that one organization, the EIA, is accredited with both UNEP and the UNFCCC, and therefore in accordance with Rule I.5 of the IPCC Observer Policy, these do not have to submit additional documentation concerning their respective organizations.

She added that in accordance with Rule II.1 of the IPCC Observer Policy the two other organizations AAS and OCE have submitted necessary background documentation concerning their organizations.

The Chair invited the Panel to accept the observer organizations. There being no comments, the Panel accepted the applications.

6. PLACE AND DATE FOR THE 54TH PLENARY SESSION OF THE IPCC

The Secretary informed the Panel that the next plenary session will be from 26 July 2021 and will end two weeks afterwards if handled in hybrid mode. He added that this is still to be confirmed pending discussions outlined in Decision IPCC-LIII(bis)-2.2.

China took the floor and asked that the plenary session should be limited to two weeks.

7. CLOSING OF THE SESSION

Before officially closing the Session, the Chair presented some data that compared government participation in the reviews of the AR6 cycle and the AR5. He noted and welcomed the increase in government participation in the AR6 cycle and further encouraged them to continue to increasingly participate in the review of the Final Government Drafts. He stressed the importance of government participation as it is what makes IPCC reports not only scientifically robust but policy relevant. He invited Ms Valerie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of Working Group I, to make some remarks.

Valérie Masson-Delmotte thanked IPCC members for their flexibility and enthusiasm in taking part in the review of the drafts of the Working Group contribution to AR6. She echoed the Chair's remarks on the importance of government participation in reviews adding that this will be even more needed in this instance in order to have a high-quality Summary for Policymakers (SPM) and Technical Summary (TS). She informed the Panel that the Working Group has just finished a final draft of their 60-page TS which is divided in four sections with 30 figures and full traceability. The Working Group

has also started working on the SPM which they aim to have 10 pages of text in addition to 7 figures. She encouraged governments from all regions to continue to take part in the user testing for the SPM figures with a deadline extended to Sunday 28 March 2021.

In closing, the Chair thanked delegates for the flexibility during their discussions noting that their deliberations this week have put the IPCC on track to hold a successful approval session of the Working Group I contribution to the AR6 in four months. He added that this will further ensure that the AR6 is delivered in a timely manner despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic. He informed the Panel that the Bureau will meet in two weeks to prepare for the IPCC-54 and the 14th Session of Working Group I.

He thanked the Secretariat for preparing a successful Session. He noted that the interpretation, the staggered scheduling to facilitate different time zones, and the pre-briefing meetings had all made the Session as inclusive as possible. He appreciated the work the authors are doing as they are still working hard to deliver the AR6 despite huge challenges brought about by the pandemic. He also thanked the Co-Chairs, the Bureau members and Technical Support Units for their work to ensure the completion of the AR6.

He thanked the members of the Panel for their flexibility in allowing a 3-hour extension of the meeting. The Chair closed the meeting at 03:21 am CET on Saturday 27 March 2021.

**53rd (bis) SESSION OF THE IPCC
Electronic Session, 22 – 26 March 2021**

Decisions adopted by the Panel

Decision IPCC-LIII(bis)-1. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda

Documents: IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc.1 and IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc.1, Add.1

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at its 53rd (bis) Session adopts the Provisional Agenda as contained in document IPCC-LIII/Doc.1 with the withdrawal of agenda item 5 on Review of the Principles Governing IPCC Work, and adding the agenda item on the Admission of Observer Organizations. A revised version of the Provisional Agenda (IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc.1,Rev.1) has been issued to reflect the change of agenda items as agreed by the Panel.

Decision IPCC-LIII(bis)-2.1 AR6 Strategic Planning Schedule

*Documents: IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc.4, Rev.1; IPCC-LIII(Bis)/INF.10, Rev.1;
IPCC-LIII(Bis)/INF.16, Rev.1*

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at its 53rd (bis) Session:

- Decides to establish an Ad-hoc Group with open-ended membership with Terms of Reference as set out in Annex 1 to this decision, with the view to initiate the process as governed by Rule 21 of Appendix C to the Principles Governing IPCC Work, with the Secretary's letter inviting nominations to be sent two weeks after the 57th (bis) Session of the IPCC, following the Synthesis Report (SYR) approval and to have an elections Plenary to take place after six months following issuance of the Secretary's letter requesting written nominations, but not to exceed seven months thereafter. The mandate of this Ad-hoc Group is to provide recommendations to the Panel on the size, structure, and composition of the IPCC Bureau and any other Task Force Bureau for the Seventh Assessment cycle as governed by Rule 7 of Appendix C of the Principles Governing IPCC Work.

Annex 1

Ad-hoc Group on the Size, Structure and Composition of the IPCC Bureau and any Task Force Bureau for the Seventh Assessment cycle

Terms of Reference

Background

The Principles Governing IPCC Work, Appendix C, Rule 7 provides for Panel review and amendment of the size, structure and composition of the IPCC Bureau and any Task Force Bureau at least one Session prior to the Session at which the IPCC Bureau and/or any Task Force Bureau are elected.

The IPCC agreed at its 53rd (bis) Session (March 2021) to set up an Ad-hoc Group on the size, structure and composition of the IPCC Bureau and any Task Force Bureau for the Seventh Assessment cycle.

Objectives

The Ad-hoc Group will identify proposals to present to the Panel regarding the size, structure, and composition of the IPCC Bureau and any Task Force Bureau for the Seventh Assessment cycle.

In undertaking its work, the Ad-hoc Group will seek to ensure transparency, inclusiveness and equal opportunity for participation of all its members, noting the importance of the inclusion of the perspectives of developing countries.

Term

The Ad-hoc Group will undertake its work following closure of IPCC-53 (bis), preparing progress reports and presenting these to the Panel at its future sessions, with the final outcome to be presented to the Panel at 57th (bis) Session of the IPCC (IPCC-57 bis) for its decision, during the week following Synthesis Report (SYR) approval at the 57th Session of the IPCC (IPCC-57), avoiding any overlap between the work of the Ad-hoc group and SYR approval Plenary.

Composition and operation of the Ad-hoc Group

The Ad-hoc Group should consist of:

- Two Co-Chairs, with balanced representation from developed and developing countries and taking into account gender balance;
- Two Rapporteurs, with balanced representation from developed and developing countries and taking into account gender balance;
- A minimum of two representatives from each WMO Region; and
- Open-ended membership as to participation of all Members of the IPCC.

The Ad-hoc Group will conduct its work both in conjunction with plenary sessions and intersessionally, including by electronic, remote communication and virtual means.

Administrative support will be provided by the Secretariat.

Decision IPCC-LIII(bis)-2.2 AR6 Strategic Planning Schedule

*Documents: IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc.4, Rev.1; IPCC-LIII(Bis)/INF. 10, Rev.1;
IPCC-LIII(Bis)/INF. 16, Rev.1*

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at its 53rd (bis) Session:

1. Takes note of the urgent decisions made by the IPCC Executive Committee (ExCom) regarding the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) work programme as described in Document [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/Doc.4, Rev.1](#) since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that any changes remain tentative, depending on the evolving COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity of consideration by the Panel;
2. Recognizes the current exceptional circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic under which preparation of the AR6 is taking place;
3. Recognizes with appreciation the tremendous efforts that are currently being taken by the IPCC authors, ExCom, Bureau Members, Technical Support Units and the IPCC Secretariat for the completion of IPCC AR6 under exceptionally challenging circumstances due to COVID-19 pandemic;
4. Highlights the need to ensure scientific quality and integrity of the IPCC AR6;
5. Takes note of the concerns raised by Member countries regarding participation in meetings in view of the pandemic situation in respect for adherence to IPCC values and principles, including observation of IPCC rules and procedures while approving IPCC reports, as set out in Appendix A, section 2 and section 4.6;
6. Notes the information presented in [IPCC-LIII\(bis\)/INF.10, Rev.1](#) and the views expressed by IPCC Members and Bureau Members during the 53rd (bis) Session of the IPCC;
7. Invites the Secretariat to solicit views from IPCC Focal Points, and Bureau for consideration at the 60th(bis) session of the Bureau regarding challenges and opportunities for participation in IPCC and Working Group Sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic and how these challenges may be resolved to promote transparency, inclusiveness and equal opportunity in the session;
8. Requests the Working Group I Co-Chairs/Working Group I Bureau within approved rules and procedures to make appropriate arrangements, with the assistance of the IPCC Secretariat, for holding Working Group I approval session from 26 July 2021 as stipulated in IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc. 4, Rev.1, considering all options contained in IPCC-LIII(bis)/INF. 10, Rev.1 and the guidance and direction from the solicitation mentioned in paragraph 7 above, with the view to report back to the Panel intersessionally by correspondence, prior to the 54th Session of the IPCC;
9. Recognizes that any arrangements taken for the 54th Session of the IPCC in response to the current exceptional circumstances highlighted in paragraph 2 will not set a precedent for future sessions of the IPCC.

Decision IPCC-LIII(bis)- 3. Approval of the draft report of the 52nd Session of the IPCC

Document: IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc.2, Corr. 1

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at its 53rd (bis) Session approves the report of the 52nd Session of the IPCC, with amendments under Agenda Items 5, 6, 11, and a correction in the list of participants (Annex 2).

Decision IPCC-LIII(bis)-4. Admission of Observer Organizations

Document: IPCC-LIII(bis)/Doc. 3

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at its 53rd (bis) Session decides to grant the following organizations IPCC observer status, in accordance with the IPCC Policy and Process for Admitting Observer Organizations:

- (1) the European Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (EAERE);
- (2) the Integrated Carbon Observation System European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ICOS ERIC);
- (3) the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC);
- (4) the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA);
- (5) the African Academy of Sciences (AAS);
- (6) International Actuarial Association (IAA);
- (7) Office for Climate Education (OCE); and
- (8) King Abdullah Petroleum Studies and Research Center (KAPSARC).

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

**53rd (bis) SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE
Electronic Session - 22 to 26 March 2021**

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