

Opening of the 58th Session of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

*Video message from Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
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Check against delivery

Congratulations on reaching the last mile of the Sixth Assessment Cycle of the IPCC and the approval of the Synthesis Report.

This report is critical, as it brings together the findings of the assessment reports and special reports in one powerful package. A package that lays out the scale and impacts of human-induced climate change.

The assessment report by Working Group I told us that climate change is here, now, and intensifying. This is indisputable.

The assessment report by Working Group II told us that climate change is a threat to human well-being and the health of the planet, which are one and the same. This is indisputable.

The assessment report by Working Group III told us that we are still not doing enough to cut greenhouse gas emissions – leaving us on track to far exceed the temperature targets of the Paris Agreement. This is indisputable.

Even though the international response is not yet strong or fast enough – on adaptation or mitigation – the IPCC's science has made a difference. IPCC reports have historically influenced climate change negotiations. The Sixth Assessment reports and special reports influenced decisions at the climate negotiations in Glasgow and Sharm el-Sheikh – and indeed decisions in government offices and boardrooms across the world.

The Sixth Assessment reports fed into the first and second step of the first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement. We look forward to the third and final step of the first Global Stocktake, which will take place at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates. The IPCC's input on this final step of the world's collective progress towards achieving the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement will set the tone for action in the second half of this critical decade.

Make no mistake, action is the key word here. We need more action from governments, businesses and investors – indeed everyone. The IPCC's work, which chimes with UNEP's own research, tells us that we have the knowledge and technology we need. That we can start slashing emissions and helping vulnerable communities adapt to climate change. And that by acting on climate, we are also acting on nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste – the other two prongs of the triple planetary crisis.

My thanks to the IPCC Chair, ExCom, Bureau, authors and Secretariat for their hard work during the sixth assessment cycle. I wish you a productive week and successful approval of the Synthesis Report and look forward to seeing you in person in Nairobi this July, when UNEP hosts the 59th session of the IPCC.