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IPCC agrees outlines of Sixth Assessment Report

MONTREAL, Canada, Sept 10 – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has agreed the outline of its next comprehensive scientific assessment of climate change, the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (AR6).

At a Session of the Panel in Montreal, Canada, the IPCC agreed the outlines of the three working group contributions to AR6, which will all be delivered in 2021. The next step for the IPCC is to invite nominations through Governments and observers organizations for authors from among the international research community, who will prepare the report.

“The agreed outline combines scientific expertise across a range of disciplines with policymakers’ priorities. It will allow IPCC authors to prepare a comprehensive, balanced and objective assessment of our knowledge of climate change that is relevant to policymakers at all levels and in all regions,” said IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee.

The draft outlines had been prepared following a scientific scoping meeting in May held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At the meeting in Montreal, representatives of the IPCC’s 195 member governments discussed this draft and agreed on a final outline.

The IPCC includes three working groups: Working Group I assesses the physical science basis of climate change; Working Group II is responsible for impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and Working Group III assesses the mitigation of climate change. It also includes a Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories that focuses on developing internationally agreed methodologies for calculating and reporting greenhouse gas emissions.

The outline of the Synthesis Report, the final instalment of AR6, will be agreed in 2019. The Synthesis Report will integrate the three working group contributions and the Special Reports produced during the AR6 cycle. It will be finalized in April 2022.

The agreed outlines, subject to final copy edits, are available now on the IPCC website. The decisions on the outline were taken at the 46th Session of the IPCC, held in Montreal, on 6-10 September 2017, and hosted by the Government of Canada. The full agenda and documents can be found here: http://ipcc.ch/scripts/session_template.php?page=46ipcc.htm.

Among other business in Montreal the IPCC also considered options for strengthening the financial stability of the IPCC and for aligning its work with the global stocktake cycles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

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What is the IPCC?

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the world body for assessing the science related to climate change. It was set up by the World Meteorological Organization and United Nations Environment Programme in 1988 to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.

IPCC assessments provide governments at all levels with scientific information they can use to develop climate policies. IPCC assessments are a key input into the international negotiations to tackle climate change. IPCC reports are drafted and reviewed in several stages to guarantee objectivity and transparency.

The IPCC assesses the thousands of scientific papers published each year to tell policymakers what we know and don't know about the risks related to climate change. The IPCC identifies where there is agreement in the scientific community, where there are differences of opinion, and where further research is needed. It does not conduct its own research.

To produce its reports, the IPCC mobilizes hundreds of scientists. These scientists and officials are drawn from diverse backgrounds. Only a dozen permanent staff work in the IPCC's Secretariat.

The members of the Panel are its 195 member governments. They work by consensus to endorse the reports of the IPCC and set its procedures and budget in plenary meetings of the Panel.

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

IPCC Assessment Reports consist of contributions from each of the three working groups and a Synthesis Report. Special Reports undertake an assessment of cross-disciplinary issues that span more than one working group and are shorter and more focused than the main assessments.

Sixth Assessment Cycle

At its 41st Session in February 2015, the IPCC decided to produce a Sixth Assessment Report (AR6). At its 43rd Session in April 2016, it decided to produce three Special Reports, a Methodology Report to update guidelines on national greenhouse gas inventories, and AR6.

The first of these special reports, to be finalized in September 2018, is *Global Warming of 1.5°C, an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty*.

The Methodology Report, entitled *2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*, will be delivered in May 2019.

In September 2019 the IPCC will also finalize two Special Reports: the *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, and *Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems*.

The three working group contributions to AR6 will be released in 2021, and the Synthesis Report in April 2022.

For more information, including links to the IPCC reports, go to:

www.ipcc.ch