



Aide memoire: Outcomes of the Sixty-First Session of the IPCC

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Actions sought from ministers	
<i>Name and position</i>	<i>Action sought</i>
To Hon Simon WATTS Minister of Climate Change	For noting only
CC Hon Winston PETERS Minister of Foreign Affairs	For noting only

Appendices and attachments
Nil

Key contacts at Ministry for the Environment			
<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Cell phone</i>	<i>First contact</i>
Principal Author	Hannah Chorley	64 27 5609260	✓
Secondary Author	Georgia Sharp	64 27 2253803	
Responsible Manager	Sophie Heighway	64 21 530212	
General Manager	Jonathan Ryan	64 22 292866	

Outcomes of the Sixty-First Session of the IPCC

Purpose

1. This aide memoire gives you detail on the outcomes of the Sixty-First Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) held 27 July – 2 August 2024 in Sofia, Bulgaria.
2. This is the second Plenary of the Seventh Assessment cycle (AR7). The AR7 commenced in July 2023 and is expected to reach conclusion with publication of the Synthesis Report by late 2029.
3. At the Session, the 195 member governments (the Panel) were invited to agree to the draft outlines of the Special Report on Climate Change and Cities and Methodology Report on Inventories for Short-lived Climate Forcers, agree to the Strategic Planning Schedule (timing for the delivery of reports), and discuss options for expert meetings and workshops.

Background

4. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Reports are written periodically, every five to seven years. The IPCC does not conduct its own research but aims to provide a comprehensive summary of climate science literature through the delivery of Special Reports (SR), Methodology Reports (MR), and three Working Group (WG) Assessment Reports:
 - WGI: The Physical Science Basis
 - WGII: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability
 - WGIII: Mitigation of Climate Change.
5. Reports are then accepted by the Panel, making them a key input into international climate negotiations and an authoritative tool to underpin government policy making.
6. The Seventh Assessment cycle (AR7) is significantly more political than previous cycles. The value of the IPCC to Governments, intergovernmental processes, and stakeholders is that it is an agreed, robust, and comprehensive assessor of the state of climate science. For this reason, political neutrality is key to the function and utility of the IPCC.
7. The following political nuances are of note:
 - In the Sixtieth Session of the IPCC, the greatest division occurred over which products would be provided in time for the second Global Stocktake (GST2) in 2028. Some countries, namely ^{6(a)}, provided significant pushback on publishing the WGIII report in time for the GST2. Other countries, ^{6(a)}, stated that an advanced timeline would limit the ability for developing countries to equitably

participate. Due to lack of consensus, the Panel requested the IPCC Bureau develop a Strategic Planning Schedule and associated timeline to bring to the next Plenary.

- Consensus was also not reached at this Plenary, although it is worth noting that there was considerably less division on the timeline, ^{6(a)} [redacted] supporting the timeline provided by the IPCC Bureau which would provide all reports in time for the GST2. The timeline will now be agreed to alongside the outlines for the WG Assessment Reports at the Sixty-Second Session of the IPCC.
 - The development of a methodology for hydrogen as part of the MR on Inventories for Short Lived Climate Forcers received significant pushback from some countries, ^{6(a)} [redacted] Agreement was reached by limiting its inclusion to an appendix. Noting, that the inclusion of a methodology does not mean countries are required to report on it, which is agreed to under UNFCCC processes, but can choose to if they wish.
 - The SR on Climate Change and Cities will be the only SR produced under the AR7, therefore agreement on an outline that caters to all Parties needs was a complex and time-consuming process. For context, the Sixth Assessment Cycle produced three SRs. New Zealand supported the original outline of the SR on Climate Change and Cities provided by experts.
8. A meeting was held with attendees from New Zealand, Australia, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Samoa, and Cook Islands. New Zealand is working closely with its IPCC colleagues in the Pacific to facilitate engagement and capacity building.

Next steps

1. The Sixty-Second Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is anticipated to take place in China during February 2025. At this Session the Panel will likely agree to the Assessment Report draft outlines and timelines, including what reports will be available in time for the second Global Stocktake (GST2). As well as this, the draft outline for the MR on Carbon Dioxide Removal Technologies and Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage will be agreed upon.
2. The Global Stocktake (GST) is the mechanism in the Paris Agreement to take stock of collective progress, based on the best available science, and influence action by Parties. ^{6(a)} [redacted]
3. ^{9(2)(j)} [redacted]
4. A call for authors has been received from the IPCC following agreement on the outlines for the SR on Climate Change and Cities and MR on Inventories for Short

Lived Climate Forcers. We expect significant interest from New Zealand experts and will provide nominations to the IPCC accordingly.

5. New Zealand experts have been nominated to participate in the Scoping Meeting for the MR on Carbon Dioxide Removal Technologies and Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage, tentatively scheduled for the second half of October 2024. The aim of this report is to develop methodologies for consideration in national greenhouse gas inventories.
6. New Zealand experts will participate in the Scoping Meeting for the WG Assessment Reports in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia during December 2024.

Signatures



Jonathan Ryan
General Manager

Evidence/Data and Insights

12 August 2024