



United Nations

SECRETARY-
GENERAL » STATEMENTS AND
PRESS RELEASE
MESSAGES

SG/SM/20847
9 AUGUST 2021

Secretary-General Calls Latest IPCC Climate Report ‘Code Red for Humanity’, Stressing ‘Irrefutable’ Evidence of Human Influence

Following is UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ statement on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group 1 report on the physical science basis of the sixth assessment, today:

Today’s IPCC Working Group 1 report is a code red for humanity. The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse-gas emissions from fossil-fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk. Global heating is affecting every region on Earth, with many of the changes becoming irreversible.

The internationally agreed threshold of 1.5°C is perilously close. We are at imminent risk of hitting 1.5°C in the near term. The only way to prevent exceeding this threshold is by urgently stepping up our efforts and pursuing the most ambitious path.

We must act decisively now to keep 1.5°C alive. We are already at 1.2°C and rising. Warming has accelerated in recent decades. Every fraction of a degree counts. Greenhouse-gas concentrations are at record levels. Extreme weather and climate disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity. That is why this year’s United Nations climate conference in Glasgow is so important.

The viability of our societies depends on leaders from government, business and civil society uniting behind policies, actions and investments that will limit temperature rise to 1.5°C. We owe this to the entire human family, especially the poorest and most vulnerable communities and nations that are the hardest hit despite being least responsible for today’s climate emergency.

The solutions are clear. Inclusive and green economies, prosperity, cleaner air and better health are possible for all if we respond to this crisis with solidarity and courage. All nations, especially the G20 and other major emitters, need to join the net-zero emissions coalition and

reinforce their commitments with credible, concrete and enhanced nationally determined contributions and policies before COP26 in Glasgow.

We need immediate action on energy. Without deep carbon pollution cuts now, the 1.5°C goal will fall quickly out of reach. This report must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels, before they destroy our planet. There must be no new coal plants built after 2021. OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] countries must phase out existing coal by 2030, with all others following suit by 2040. Countries should also end all new fossil fuel exploration and production, and shift fossil-fuel subsidies into renewable energy. By 2030, solar and wind capacity should quadruple and renewable energy investments should triple to maintain a net-zero trajectory by mid-century.

Climate impacts will undoubtedly worsen. There is a clear moral and economic imperative to protect the lives and livelihoods of those on the front lines of the climate crisis. Adaptation and resilience finance must cease being the neglected half of the climate equation. Only 21 per cent of climate support is directed towards adaptation. I again call on donors and the multilateral development banks to allocate at least 50 per cent of all public climate finance to protecting people, especially women and vulnerable groups. COVID-19 recovery spending must be aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement. And the decade-old promise to mobilize \$100 billion annually to support mitigation and adaptation in developing countries must be met.

The climate crisis poses enormous financial risk to investment managers, asset owners and businesses. These risks should be measured, disclosed and mitigated. I am asking corporate leaders to support a minimum international carbon price and align their portfolios with the Paris Agreement. The public and private sector must work together to ensure a just and rapid transformation to a net-zero global economy.

If we combine forces now, we can avert climate catastrophe. But, as today's report makes clear, there is no time for delay and no room for excuses. I count on Government leaders and all stakeholders to ensure COP26 is a success.



For information media. Not an official record.