

Immediate press release

IPCC releases Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C – impacts could be calamitous for South Asia, Africa and some small island nations

Amidst calls for emission cuts, international cooperation for building resilience and adaptive capacities in vulnerable areas is the need of the hour, says report

- Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately **1.0°C of global** warming above pre-industrial levels, with a likely range of 0.8°C to 1.2°C
- Climate action plans submitted by countries under the **Paris Agreement would not limit global warming to 1.5°C**, even if supplemented by very challenging increases in the scale and ambition of emissions reductions after 2030
- A global increase of 1.5 C would mean even higher changes – **2 or 2.5 C – at a regional scale** and would lead to heightened weather variations, erratic rainfall, agricultural losses and other climate induced disasters
- Earlier reports have already identified **South Asia as one of the most vulnerable regions** to climate change, particularly the semi-arid parts of India. Seven out of the 10 most vulnerable districts of the country are in Maharashtra

Pune, 8th October, 2018

The **Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C** was approved by the IPCC on Saturday in Incheon, Republic of Korea. It will be a key scientific input into the Katowice Climate Change Conference in Poland in December, when governments review the Paris Agreement to tackle climate change.

Even as experts [call](#) for urgent action to protect small and marginal farmers from a global temperature rise of 1.5 C, it is becoming increasingly apparent that access to water and growing food could become harder leading to a food crisis in Asia.

In this context, Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) organized an international consultation on **'Adapting Agriculture in Semi-arid India to a Global Temperature Rise of 1.5°C'** on October 3-4, 2018 in Pune. The event brought together experts from research institutes including Agricultural research institutes, international universities, relevant department in Government of India and Maharashtra, NGOs and farmers. While the IPCC report looks at the science-policy interface, the WOTR consultation attempts to **connect the science and policy interfaces to practice** (or implementation).

Impacts on India

Kerala 2018, Mumbai 2017, Assam 2016, Chennai 2015, all point to a rising trend of extreme weather events. In a recent International Consultation organized by **Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR)**, it was said that while India may have made much progress in lifting people above the poverty line, climate change is a threat that could reverse this achievement. A series of info-graphics highlighting the impacts on different eco-systems in India has been captured in a [book](#) by WOTR's **senior researcher in Climate Policy, Arjuna Srinidhi**, published by the Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi.

Dr. J. Sanjay (IITM, Pune) shared how aridity in India is expanding and will be aggravated by the projected rainfall pattern. There will be large-scale losses to life and property, but the responsibility for these weather variations is not equally distributed. India for instance is expected to face **damages which would be four times its responsibility** purely on monetary calculations.“

Role of civil society organisations and research institutes

The Summary for Policy makers released by the IPCC on Monday, 8th October, goes on to highlight the important role played by civil society organisations, private sector, think-tanks and other sub-national authorities. Their actions are critical in **building capacities, supporting implementation in remote locations, and provide evidence for policy change and scaling up.**

Speaking at the international consultation, that also marks **the completion of 25 years of WOTR** as a premier institution in the field of participatory Watershed Development and Climate Change Adaptation, **Dr. Marcella D’Souza, Executive Director**, said that “international cooperation and strategic investments made by the national and state governments integrating climate action with the **sustainable development goals** is urgently required to build resilience. We need to look beyond the typical implementation silos of 1. Land use and Land Cover Changes, 2. Water Resources, 3. Agriculture Production Systems, and 4. Climate Financial Services and develop an enabling policy framework that will lead to a **‘pathway of change’**”. **Dr. Richard Thomas, Senior Scientific advisor**, ELD and ICARDA spoke of the urgent need of India to take up concrete action to Land Degradation Neutrality. **Dr. B. Venkateswarlu, ex-Vice Chancellor**, Vasantnao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth Parbhani, urged the government and supporting agencies to consider an integrated response to climate change and not just activities in isolation.

Stressing on the need for integration with state-of-the-art technology, **Crispino Lobo, co-founder and Managing Trustee, WOTR**, said that “access to locale-specific information is one of the most critical aspects of building resilience to climate change. At WOTR, we are already working with farmers across **7 states in pioneering services** such as automated crop and weather advisories, access to information from village and cluster level, decentralized weather stations, monitoring of soil moisture, water budgeting and other inputs related to adaptive sustainable agriculture”.

WOTR believes that, there is still time to avoid catastrophic and run-away climate change. Choices will have to be made and some that might involve trade-offs. International cooperation and the work of **intergovernmental organizations like the UNFCCC, and the IPCC** will help both developed and developing nations make these choices and take on commensurate responsibility and work efficiently towards a more sustainable future.

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