



Climate & Development
Knowledge Network



IPCC presents its Fifth Assessment Report, with a focus on implications for South Asia

New Delhi, August 6: The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) presented the findings of the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) to governments, civil society, the scientific community, media and other stakeholders at an outreach event held today in New Delhi. Titled 'IPCC AR5 – What it means for a stronger, more inclusive India', the event focused on the implications of the AR5 findings for India and for countries in South Asia, with a view to communicate the report's findings effectively to India's public and decision-makers, as well as to increase the accessibility of the report and promote discussion and connections between diverse stakeholders.

This event was organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), in co-operation with the IPCC and the Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), and in partnership with the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, and the TERI-Business Council for Sustainable Development. The event featured several authors from the IPCC's three working groups, who presented their overviews of the report and discussed special topics of interest to the region.

Mr Prakash Javadekar, Minister of State for Environment, Forests, and Climate Change, Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India, said: "Extraordinary situations demand extraordinary solutions. Our problems cannot be solved through the present levels of awareness. People's participation is crucial for developing and implementing environmental programs. For instance, cleaning rivers like Ganga and Yamuna will not succeed unless we make it a mass movement." "Our Indian ethos has always been in tune with Nature. But science is dynamic and one must believe in it. While GM crops are important, proper precautions need to be taken. Though growth as priority might lead to increased emissions, India is still committed to sustained green growth," Javadekar added.

Mr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Government of India, said: "If India has to realize its dream of becoming a world power, we will have to invest in science and technology, which will be the basis for change. Our government has taken several initiatives, including exploring the cost-effectiveness of

developing indigenous small satellites. We also need our youth to develop a scientific bent of mind, and our government will encourage our young Indian scientists to become a part of the global scientific community.” Many eminent persons participated in the event, including Dr Ashok Khosla, Founder and Chairman, Development Alternatives.

Speaking on the occasion, **Dr R K Pachauri**, Director General, TERI and Chairman, IPCC said: “The IPCC has completed three Working Group reports as part of the Fifth Assessment cycle. These contain a substantial amount of information and important findings on the underlying physical science basis of climate change, its impacts, adaptation possibilities and the vulnerability of different parts of the globe, as well as mitigation options. India is vulnerable to several impacts of climate change, and as a signatory to global agreements on climate change, also has a responsibility to take appropriate action. Dealing with climate change would require a substantial expansion of awareness on all aspects of climate change, and these may be relevant for decision making in India. The outreach event is a step towards creating awareness on the findings of the parts of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report brought out thus far.”

Mr Sam Bickersteth, CEO, CDKN, said: “The IPCC in their latest reports reinforce the first-hand experience of millions of Indians who are struggling with the impacts of climate change. Today we have heard that inspired action is needed to make India's development pathway climate compatible. Across India, at the national, state and local levels, and in individual communities and households, there is already leadership on tackling climate change. The message from the speakers today is that we need to scale this up to all sectors, all regions and get the benefits reaching the most vulnerable.”

Mr Rana Kapoor, President, ASSOCHAM and Managing Director & CEO, YES BANK: “This outreach program for the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) comes at a critical time – when India is facing a delayed monsoon, falling crop levels and flash floods, amongst several other environmental concerns. The susceptible farm sector accounts for around 15 per cent of India's economy and two-thirds of our population live in rural areas. With the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report predicting drought-related water and food shortage for Asia in the coming decade, we urgently need to address the challenges of climate change in our roles as individuals, collectively as organizations and together as a country, to ensure holistic, sustainable development and growth.”

The Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC finds that it is extremely likely (over 95% probability) that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. Since the 1950s, the rate of climate change has been unprecedented compared to previous decades and millennia. The Fifth Assessment Report presents an assessment of changes in the climate system that scientists have observed around the world, as well as observed and projected climate

change impacts. Since the mid-19th century, the average increase in the temperature of the Earth's surface has been 0.85 degrees Centigrade (°C).

Globally, sea levels have risen faster than at any time during the previous two millennia – and the effects are already felt in South Asia. Changing patterns of rainfall or melting snow and ice are altering freshwater systems, affecting the quantity and quality of water available in many regions, including South Asia. Climate change will have widespread impacts on South Asian society and South Asians' interaction with the natural environment. Climate change will impact settlements and infrastructure through flooding, human health, and contribute to food and water shortages in South Asia. Given the interdependence among countries in today's world, the impacts of climate change on resources or commodities in one place will have far-reaching global effects on prices, supply chains, trade, investment and political relations in other places. Climate change will progressively threaten economic growth and human security in complex ways, in this region and across the world.

The IPCC finds many observed changes in South Asia's climate. Warming has occurred, at a country scale, across most of South Asia over the 20th century and into the 2000s. Records indicate that it is likely that the numbers of cold days and nights have decreased and the numbers of warm days and nights have increased across most of Asia since about 1950. Heat wave frequency has increased since the middle of the 20th century in large parts of Asia. Observations show that there have been more extreme rainfall events and fewer weak rainfall events in the central Indian region.

Changes of sea level in the Indian Ocean have emerged since the 1960s, driven by changing wind patterns. Today already, climate-related risks threaten lives, food security, health and wellbeing across many parts of South Asia. There are clear signs that climate change is already happening. The Asia region as a whole experienced the most weather and climate-related disasters in the world between 2000 and 2008 and suffered the second highest proportion (almost 30%) of total global economic losses. The risk of deaths due to flooding is highly concentrated in Asia. At the same time, as sea levels are rising, most Asian deltas are sinking as a result of groundwater extraction, floodplain engineering and trapping of sediments by dams. Severe floods in Mumbai in 2005 have been attributed to both climatic and non-climatic factors, suggesting an interaction between climate change and other stressors.

For details: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/> and <http://cdkn.org/ar5-toolkit/ar5-south-asia/>

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