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ALIGNMENT OF THE CYCLES OF THE IPCC AND THE GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

(Submitted by the Secretary of the IPCC)

ALIGNMENT OF THE CYCLES OF THE IPCC AND THE GLOBAL STOCKTAKE

Aligning the work of the IPCC during its Seventh Assessment Report with the needs of the global stocktake foreseen under the Paris agreement

The IPCC at its 43rd Session agreed to request the Secretariat to prepare proposals for aligning the work of the IPCC during its Seventh Assessment Report (AR7) with the needs of the global stocktake foreseen under the Paris Agreement and to submit these proposals for consideration at a Plenary session of the IPCC no later than 2018.

The Paris Agreement entered into force 4 November 2016. Its Article 14 states that:

1. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Agreement shall periodically take stock of the implementation of this Agreement to assess the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of this Agreement and its long-term goals (referred to as the "global stocktake"). It shall do so in a comprehensive and facilitative manner, considering mitigation, adaptation and the means of implementation and support, and in the light of equity and the best available science.
2. The Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Agreement shall undertake its first global stocktake in 2023 and every five years thereafter unless otherwise decided by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to this Agreement.
3. The outcome of the global stocktake shall inform Parties in updating and enhancing, in a nationally determined manner, their actions and support in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Agreement, as well as in enhancing international cooperation for climate action.

In Paris, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) decided to establish the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Paris Agreement (APA) that is preparing for the entry into force of the Agreement and oversees the implementation of the work programme resulting from the relevant requests contained in decision 1/CP.21, including the identification of the sources of input for the global stocktake. The latest reports of the IPCC were mentioned in paragraph 99(b)) and the development of the modalities for the global stocktake. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA) was also requested to advise APA on how the assessments of IPCC can inform the global stocktake. This advice is available in document FCCC/SBSTA/2016/4, paragraphs 48-56.

In order for the global stocktakes to inform Parties in updating and enhancing, in a nationally determined manner, action and support as well as enhance international cooperation for climate action based on best available science, it would be conducive for new IPCC products to be delivered ahead of each global stocktake.

In the present setting, an IPCC assessment cycle lasts around six to seven years and produces a full assessment report (AR), methodology guidelines, technical papers and special reports.

Since the timing of the UNFCCC and IPCC processes do not coincide, the IPCC Plenary has requested that the secretariat prepares a proposal for aligning the work.

Main options for consideration by the Panel

Discussions at previous Plenary and Bureau sessions centered on two main options for addressing this matter :

1. Reducing the assessment cycle to five years, including by conducting the assessment of the future IPCC products and the elections for the next assessment cycle in parallel with the final part of the current assessment cycle.
2. Increasing the assessment cycle to ten years and producing an update of relevant information for the global stocktake in the middle of the assessment cycle.

The Secretary of the IPCC, in an endeavour to seek middle ground between these two options hereby puts forward a third option as follows:

3. The IPCC would maintain the approximately seven-year assessment cycle as has been the case over the last few cycles. If the time of approval of the Assessment Report for a given cycle does not align with the timing of the immediate next global stocktake (GST), the IPCC would produce a targeted Special Report the scope and timing of which would be designed to address the needs of the UNFCCC global stocktake in a similar manner as the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C (SR1.5).

The Special Report would, inter alia, address topics such as most recent evolutions of GHG concentrations in the atmosphere and updated observations and trends of key variables such as global temperature and precipitation, and their regional impacts.

The Panel may recall that the SR1.5 was in response to a request by the 21st Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP-21) to the IPCC for a report on this topic to be delivered in 2018, in time for the Facilitative Dialogue. The request by COP-21 was accepted by the IPCC.

Considering the suggested global stocktake cycles under the UNFCCC, an up to date report to inform the process will be required for the second global stocktake in 2028, the third global stocktake in 2033 and the fourth global stocktake in 2038.

It should be noted, however, that the actual timing and other modalities for the global stocktake cycles are still to be determined.

Proposed action

The Panel is invited to consider the options presented above on the alignment of work of the IPCC AR7 and beyond and the UNFCCC global stocktake cycles, with the aim of aligning the work of the IPCC during its Seventh Assessment Report (AR7) with the needs of the global stocktake foreseen under the Paris Agreement.