

FINAL REPORT OF THE SIXTIETH (BIS) SESSION OF THE IPCC BUREAU

Electronic session, 6 – 7 April 2021

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

Mr Hoesung Lee, Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), welcomed the members of the Bureau and government representatives.

The Secretary, Mr Abdalah Mokssit, welcomed delegates and explained the guidelines for running the session.

The Chair delivered an opening statement and invited the Bureau to observe a minute of silence in remembrance of Dr Cristóbal Díaz Morejónas, Lead Author of Working Group III (WGIII) and long time contributor to the IPCC, who passed away on 29 March 2021.

The Chair welcomed all Bureau members and government representatives to the session which is dedicated to discussing preparations for the 54th Session of the IPCC and 14th Session of Working Group I, which will be focused on the approval of Working Group I report.

The Chair recalled that the Panel during the 53rd (bis) Session of the IPCC (IPCC-53bis) invited the Secretariat to solicit views from Focal Points and Bureau members on challenges and opportunities for participation in IPCC and Working Group sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic and how these challenges may be resolved to promote transparency, inclusiveness and equal opportunity during the session. He added that the Panel asked Working Group I Co-Chairs and Bureau with help from the Secretariat to make appropriate arrangements for the approval session in July 2021. He further added that the Panel expects a report back by correspondence on the outcome of such consultations. He further recalled that in its decision the Panel highlighted the need to ensure the scientific quality and integrity of the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6).

The Chair thanked the Working Group I Co-Chairs, Bureau and Technical Support Unit on the preparations so far. He thanked the Secretariat for updating the documents very quickly in time for the Bureau session including the technical arrangements for the meeting. He thanked the Working Group I AR6 authors for their hard work so far and Member countries for their continued support during this challenging time. The Chair declared the session open.

The Chair invited the Bureau to adopt the provisional agenda. The Bureau adopted the provisional agenda as contained in document BUR-LX(bis)/Doc. 1, Corr.1, Rev. 1. The Agenda is attached as Annex 1.

2. PREPARATIONS FOR THE 54TH SESSION OF THE IPCC AND 14TH SESSION OF WORKING GROUP I

The Chair of the IPCC invited Mr Abdalah Mokssit, Secretary of the IPCC, to introduce this agenda item.

The Secretary introduced the discussion paper “Roadmap to the 54th Session of the IPCC/14th Session of Working Group I, noting that it was mainly based on the previous discussions on the Background Note on possible implications resulting from COVID-19 on the IPCC Plenary Sessions and the feasibility of holding a virtual approval session. The discussion paper was developed by the Secretariat in collaboration with Working Group I (WGI) Technical Support Unit (TSU) with the view to share with the Bureau a draft roadmap to the 54th Session of the IPCC (IPCC-54) and 14th Session of Working Group I (WGI-14) and solicit suggestions on how to enhance transparency, inclusiveness and equal participation in the virtual meeting.

Ms Ermira Fida, Deputy Secretary of the IPCC, presented the roadmap to 54th Session of the IPCC /14th Session of Working Group I (IPCC-54/WGI-14) highlighting expected milestones and their dates. She introduced the new pre sessional activities such as webinars on key concepts of the WGI report, online Questions and Answers (Q&A) forum for IPCC Focal Points with Authors, regional dialogues on the WGI report for Focal Points, pre-briefing sessions as well as a Helpdesk and the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) drafting team meeting. She presented some identified challenges which should be addressed in order to achieve transparent, inclusive and equitable participation in IPCC virtual meetings, and possible measures to address them. Also, she presented opportunities arising from virtual meetings and the next steps to be taken for the preparation of the IPCC-54/WGI-14 noting some benefits such as no limitations on delegation size and reduced carbon footprint of the virtual meetings, both due to no travel involved.

Ms Anna Pirani, Head of Working Group I TSU mentioned that in preparing for the IPCC-54/WGI-14 Session, they were building on lessons learnt from WGI virtual activities and the need to implement principles such as equitable participation, transparency of the process, and respect of participants' time and wellbeing with the view to replicate a standard line-by-line approval of the SPM. She stressed the need for the development of a guidance with the view to provide information on how decisions will be made, measures to support participants with connectivity issues, how sessions (plenary, contact groups, huddles) will be organized, how discussion outcomes and input will be documented and addressed by the SPM drafting team.

Mr Jesbin Baidya, IT and Logistics Officer, showed a demonstration of how the Q&A forum planned to be launched around the first week of May 2021 was expected to operate.

The Chair opened the floor for comments.

Mr Edvin Aldrian, Vice-Chair of Working Group I, Mr Gregory Flato, Vice-Chair of Working Group I, Ms Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of Working Group I, Mr Ramon Pichs Madruga, Vice-Chair of Working Group III, Mr Andy Reisinger, Vice-Chair of Working Group III, Mr Jim Skea, Co-Chair of Working Group III, Ms Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, Vice-Chair of Working Group III; Mr Taha Zatari, Vice-Chair of Working Group II, China, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America and Venezuela took the floor.

The Secretariat and Working Group I were commended for the preparation of the discussion paper which provided an analysis of anticipated possible challenges and practical solutions. Transparency was welcomed but legal advice was sought on how the line by line approval of the SPM was going to be done. The need to consider official holidays in the preparations for the sessions, including two major festivals of the Arab World (around May and July 2021) was proposed. Working Group III (WGIII) offered logistical support to the Secretariat and WGI TSU.

It was suggested that participation of delegates, particularly from developing countries be checked during the session using a quality control system with the view to ensure transparency, inclusiveness and equal opportunities; the need for contact group or huddle discussion, effective coordination among delegates from the same country as well as the intervention of the Chair of the IPCC when critical matters need to be solved were suggested.

Other suggestions included a shorter SPM of about 10 pages, scheduling the Q&A and webinar after the government review process, and considering time zones and securing proper interval between sessions noting that Asia and Oceania countries are sometimes forced to participate in virtual meetings late in the night or very early which might have health consequences; it would be helpful to establish a help desk to communicate between the Secretariat and delegates interactively; governments would need to be assured that their views are reflected in each of the and there should be measures to incorporate all government inputs in the process to help authors understand concerns and address them in the final draft of the SPM; it would be helpful for the discussion paper to mention how decision making will be done, how text will be coloured on the screen, gaveling text, handling

cases where governments are not able to participate in a particular session due to certain circumstances; suggested to establish a daily schedule well in advance to help participants plan their day.

Clarity was sought as to whether Q&A sessions would be merged with the government review comments or are kept separate. Suggestions were made on the ratio of time spent during the approval session and the approved text which should be synchronized and making the list of participants and their emails available before the meeting to enable delegates to communicate amongst each other during the sessions; the need for norms and ground rules for conducting the session and the need to replicate the conditions of an in-person meeting should be the key considerations; the consultation with government Focal Points is clearly required and urgent to get a comprehensive feedback about the issues they want to see addressed to enable the full participation of their countries.

The Secretariat was requested to consult WMO rules on how the IPCC can spend money from the Trust Fund to cover expenses such as daily subsistence allowance (DSA) when no travel is involved, to pay for high speed internet access at private residences, etc.

The use of UNDP regional hubs or network of Embassies was suggested; there should be guidance on the code of conduct; it would be critical to have a continuously running progress report during the session similar to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations to give everybody an instantaneous near-time snapshot on what was happening; it might speed up the approval process if there would be a platform like Google docs to share documents on the screen to help people edit the text in front of them; the Secretariat could provide a platform for people to discuss and negotiate; it is important to capitalize on the savings from reduced travels; it would be easier to enforce scientific integrity through written comments. It would be helpful for people to be informed in advance on contingency plans for not finishing on time; non-native speakers need more time to read through the report and formulate the government position.

The Chair invited the Secretary of the IPCC to wrap up and respond to the comments and questions.

Mr Abdalah Mokssit thanked the Bureau members and government representatives for positive feedback and input on the discussion paper. He further noted that the duration of IPCC-54/WGI-14 would be two weeks; governments would be allowed to register larger delegations than in physical meetings; there would preferably be a recommendation for the head of delegation or his/her alternate to make submissions on behalf of their country; options were being explored to request the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide support in case certain countries lack the necessary technical capacity; there were ongoing consultations with WMO on the possibilities of providing financial assistance to support delegates from developing countries. While appreciating the offer for support by Working Group III Co-Chair, he invited the support from other TSUs and invited governments to consider providing human capital through options such as the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) programme.

The discussion continued in the second day where:

Mr Abdalah Mokssit presented a summary of the input and feedback from the Bureau which were clustered in two categories, namely existing elements, currently reflected in the discussion paper such as delegation size, time zone considerations, pre sessional support including Q&A sessions, contact groups and huddles, replication of the line by line approval process and new elements suggested for consideration such as set of norms for decision making and ground rules for conducting the session, consideration of participant's well-being, etc.

Mr Mokssit responded to the questions posed by the Bureau and government representatives. As to merging the Q&A with the government review process he clarified that only comments submitted through formal review will be considered. On the question whether there needs to have a quorum for the approval session he said that quorum does not apply to the approval sessions; rather, it does

solely apply to the elections. He concluded by summarizing the process for future consultations with the Bureau and Panel as mandated by the Panel at the 53rd (bis) Session of the IPCC. The Chair opened the floor for comments.

Mr Eduardo Calvo Buendia, Co-Chair of the TFI, Ms Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of Working Group I, Mr Carlos Méndez, Vice-Chair of Working Group II, Ms Joy Pereira, Vice-Chair of Working Group II, Mr Sergey Semenov, Vice-Chair of Working Group II, Ms Carolina Vera, Vice-Chair of Working Group I, Ms Diana Ürge-Vorsatz, Vice-Chair of Working Group III; Mr Pius Yanda, Vice-Chair of Working Group II, Mr Taha Zatari, Vice-Chair, of Working Group II France, Germany, Norway, Switzerland, the United Republic of Tanzania, and United States of America took the floor.

The comments and suggestions included the need for more details on how decision making will be made during the approval session; a platform to enable delegates from various governments to share their comments on specific aspects, sections and figures; use of regional WMO offices in addition to UNDP offices and Embassy facilities; a dry run (rehearsal) ahead of the session; inform delegates in advance about the possible extended time of the session for them to make the necessary arrangements; displaying the text on the screen for editing during the session; allow delegates to use more than one device or more than 2 ways of connecting such as through WiFi, satellite phones and data packages for phones.

Mr Abdalah Mokssit in his concluding remarks mentioned that all the comments and suggestions received during the Bureau session would be incorporated into a consultation paper which will be shared with governments to solicit their views on how to conduct the virtual approval session as mandated by the IPCC-53bis.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3.1 Update on Working Group III schedule

The Chair invited Working Group III Co-Chairs to introduce the agenda item, document BUR-LX(bis)/INF. 2.

Mr Jim Skea, Co-Chair of Working Group III, informed the Bureau that WGIII held two consecutive Lead Author Meetings (LAMs) in virtual format (i.e. including the LAM4 to be held in about 10 days); one lesson learnt was that one cannot achieve the same objectives and undertake the same amount of work within a week that you would in a physical meeting; WGIII already has a very tight schedule aiming towards submission of the Final Government Distribution (FGD) on 9th August 2021.

Following a consultative process within the WGIII Bureau and a survey of all authors and Review Editors, it has been determined that it is not possible to submit the FGD as previously planned; about 80% of authors indicated that they would need a delay in the schedule in order to produce a high-quality report; an illustrative plan B which was shared with WGII and the Secretariat involves submitting the FGD and the second draft of the SPM sometime around mid-November 2021 and an approval plenary for WGIII AR6 around March 2022, which would place it after the Working Group II (WGII) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) approval. There would be further consultation with the WGII TSU, the Synthesis Report (SYR) TSU and the Secretariat. The revised schedule will be shared with the IPCC Executive Committee (ExCom) and consulted with the Bureau before seeking approval by the Panel; the Bureau was requested to provide advice.

Taha Zatari, Vice-Chair of Working Group II, China, France, Germany, Norway, the United Republic of Tanzania, and United States of America took the floor.

Comments and suggestions included the need to avoid the overlaps in the review periods; the need to ensure that the delivery of the AR6 SYR in September 2022 ahead of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) of 2022 is not impacted by the changes in the WGIII schedule; the changes in the schedule should not affect the transition onto the next cycle; the Bureau holds virtual sessions nowadays, the WGII and WGIII

approval sessions could take place during the review of the AR6 SYR although there might be a need to make the review period of the SYR relatively longer.

Mr Jim Skea, Co-Chair of Working Group III, further informed the Bureau that dealing with the overlap in the review periods is unavoidable in the current circumstances and it is important that all the Working Group reports are approved before the final stages of drafting the final draft of the SYR.

The IPCC Bureau took note of the proposal by the WGIII Co-Chairs.

3.2 Status of the Informal Group on Publications

The Chair invited the Secretary to introduce the item followed by the Co-Chairs of the Informal Group on Publications (IG-Pub).

The IPCC Secretary informed the Bureau on the discussions held on this matter at the 53rd (bis) Session of the IPCC (IPCC-53bis) noting that the mandate of the IG-Pub was extended to include translation. He further recalled the suggestions for publishing the reports as quickly as possible and putting the SPM online as soon as it will be approved and not tying this to the provision of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs). He further informed Bureau members that contracting arrangements between WMO and a leading academic publisher are ongoing and recalled the reasons for delays in the procurement process including the faulty submissions from the applicants.

Ms Valérie Masson-Delmotte Co-Chair of Working Group I, Mr Andreas Fischilin Vice-Chair of Working Group II, Mr Mark Howden Vice-Chair of Working Group II, Mr Taha Zatari Vice-Chair of Working Group II, Ms Diana Ürge-Vorsatz Vice-Chair of Working Group III, Germany and the United Republic of Tanzania took the floor.

Comments and suggestions included agreement that the IG-pub initial task has been completed and the extension is for the purposes of translation only; suggestions to include new members especially those representing all the other UN languages apart from English; the need for metadata including the list of authors. More information was sought on the scientific citation of already existing reports especially if this will be followed up and if progress will be reported to the Bureau. Clarity was sought on whether two Bureau members could be on the Tender Evaluation Board (TEB) to ensure that all the things that need to be considered are indeed considered. There was a call for the acceleration of the process.

Some noted that since the document presented for both the Panel and Bureau Sessions is an information document (INF) no decision is required and since we all agree on the goal, the necessary thing is to work together constructively and implement the recommendations that are useful.

The IPCC Chair reminded everyone that Bureau members are elected officials of the IPCC and this should be considered in terms of being members of the TEB which is a staff committee of other organization. He also noted that there might be legal elements to forming a committee under the Bureau. He asked for concluding remarks from the Chair of IG-Pub and the Secretariat.

In response, the Chair of IG-Pub who is also the Co-Chair of WGIII Jim Skea agreed that there is need to add other language speakers to the group in order to effectively deal with the issue of translation. He further noted that from his understanding, there is no procurement process going on for any of the AR6 products and the mandate of IG-Pub was to provide recommendations for future publications. He agreed with the suggestion for additional members and noted the need for native speakers of Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish.

The IPCC Secretary informed Bureau members that there is a process is underway with WMO to publish the Special Reports as soon as possible. He added that the publisher for AR6 will provide DOI's for the full document and hope that this will be followed up and work has started and we hope to conclude very quickly. He confirmed what Jim Skea said that there is no procurement process

going on as the initial contract was for products of the AR6 cycle and therefore no need for a TEB. He also said the IG-Pub was set up for future publications and clarified that the current process in WMO was on publishing the Special Reports as soon as possible. The IPCC Secretary also noted that the Secretariat will report on the progress of the implementation of the recommendations to the Bureau.

In conclusion, the Chair noted that all have a clear goal on this and will work towards that. He further invited the Bureau to take note of the verbal report on the status of the IG-Pub. The Bureau took note of the report.

4. PLACE AND DATE FOR THE 61ST SESSION OF THE IPCC BUREAU

The Chair invited the Secretary to introduce this item.

The Secretary informed the Bureau that the next Bureau session is planned for the third quarter of 2021, about a month before the approval session of the Working Group II contribution to the AR6.

5. CLOSING OF THE SESSION

In his closing remarks the Chair thanked Bureau members for working together well in a constructive manner which has ensured that the IPCC is on track with the preparations for IPCC-54 and WGI-14. He noted that much work needs to be done and we will continue to explore some innovative approaches in the next months.

He thanked the Secretariat and the WGI TSU for their hard work. He congratulated the Secretariat for preparing an efficient and effective meeting.

He expressed his hope that we will continue to work together in between sessions to help us prepare for the approval session of WGI contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report. He thanked the authors especially working so hard during this pandemic.

The Chair declared the session closed at 17.15 p.m.

IPCC BUREAU – SIXTIETH (BIS) SESSION
Electronic Session, 6 – 7 April 2021

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PROVISIONAL AGENDA

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Electronic session, 6 – 7 April 2021

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