



PRESS RELEASE

World leaders cannot ignore the grim facts emerging from the latest IPCC report on oceans and ice systems

Scale of threat to oceans and ice ecosystems and the communities dependent on them requires rapid and unprecedented political action to stop the climate crisis

25 September, Monaco: The latest IPCC Special Report on the Oceans and the Cryosphere (SROCC) lays out the full extent to which the world's marine life, oceans, glaciers, mountains, polar ecosystems are being disrupted by the climate crisis. These changes, happening at an unprecedented pace and scale, are impacting hundreds of millions of people who are being pushed to dangerous limits of adaptation and suffering the consequences of loss and damage.

The report shows that rising sea levels, rapidly melting ice sheets and the drastic warming of the oceans come with a steep ecological and social price- one that demands increasingly difficult choices with complicated trade-offs to protect people and our natural world. It reaffirms the main findings of the IPCC 1.5C Report on Global Warming.

Coming close on the heels of the UN Climate Action Summit, which specifically called on governments to 'unite behind the science', this report once again draws attention to the grim climate facts that world leaders cannot ignore.

It is the third major IPCC Special Report in less than a year sounding the alarm bell for fast and far-reaching decarbonisation to halve global emissions in the next decade, to support adaptation and to protect and restore nature.

Political will must match scientific reality. It is time for renewed international cooperation that responds to the millions of global climate strikers who are demanding a better future and refuse to take no for an answer. This report must spur stronger finance commitments for adaptation and loss and damage for those already experiencing the worst of the climate crisis.

Quotes from CAN members

Fernanda Carvalho, global policy manager, WWF Climate and Energy practice, said:
The three recently launched IPCC reports - on global warming of 1.5°C, land, and oceans and

the world's frozen places - eliminate any doubts about the intensity of the climate crisis and the need for an urgent and ambitious political response by countries. Besides the impacts to the oceans and cryosphere, this report stresses that there will be limits to adaptation for those systems and related livelihoods. This will demand more international and regional cooperation, new governance arrangements and enhanced financial support for building resilience and addressing damages.

Taehyun Park, global climate political advisor, Greenpeace East Asia, said:

“The science is both chilling and compelling. The impacts of human-made carbon emissions on our oceans are on a much larger scale and happening way faster than predicted. It will require unprecedented political action to prevent the most severe consequences to our planet.

“Climate action and building the resilience of our oceans need to go hand in hand and governments and industry know the solutions. They must take decisive steps to ditch fossil fuels and submit their national plans to stay below 1.5°C by next year, when they will also need to deliver a strong Global Ocean Treaty capable of protecting at least 30% of the world's oceans as marine sanctuaries.”

Chris Thorne, Oceans campaigner, Greenpeace UK, said:

“World leaders at the UNSG Climate Action Summit this week pretended to care, but unless words translate into more ambitious commitments to address the climate emergency and forge a strong Global Ocean Treaty, they are failing the millions of climate strikers around the world who came out onto the streets demanding radical change.”

“The IPCC report is another wake-up call for those governments who continue to sleepwalk through the climate crisis. The decisions that world leaders choose to make in the next few years will have profound consequences for the future of mankind in the coming centuries.”

Marko Reinikainen, AirClim, Sweden, said:

The alarming contents of the report cannot make anyone happy. Nevertheless, I am glad that the report is being published, and that thanks to tremendous efforts by the authors, the effects of global warming already at 1.5 degrees (and even at current levels) become visible. It is at the same time regrettable that not all countries have a readiness to listen to the scientists, and that the publication of the Summary for Policy Makers for this report became a lengthy ordeal for the authors at the meeting in Monaco.

Kristina Dahl, senior climate scientist, Union of Concerned Scientists, said:

“Our oceans have absorbed the vast majority of extra heat added to the planet by heat-trapping gases emitted by humans. As the latest IPCC report shows, the consequences for the health of our oceans and the safety of coastal communities are already grave and will worsen as the planet continues to heat up.

“The report details how glaciers and ice sheets around the world are rapidly shrinking in response to human-caused warming. This loss of land-based ice will further accelerate rising seas levels, which will have stark implications for communities whose cultures, livelihoods or water supplies are glacier-dependent, as well for coastal communities across the globe more broadly.

“To meet the goal of the Paris Agreement and stave off the most dangerous climate impacts on our oceans, glaciers, ice sheets and the communities dependent on them, all nations need

to step up their ambition. This includes developing concrete plans to achieve net-zero global warming emissions by 2050 and ensuring wealthier nations provide greater financial and technological support for developing countries as they transition to cleaner economies. While limiting warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius—in line with the Paris Agreement—is still possible, time to create a better, safer world is quickly running out.”

Stephan Singer, Senior Advisor, Climate Action Network International

"The projected climate impacts on and by warming oceans and ever faster melting ice will be dire to nature and people. In addition to phasing out fossil fuels and primarily coal before mid century and halting all deforestation before 2030, CAN urges nations and international climate finance to significantly upscale their support for resilience building and adaptation. In addition the assessed „limits to adaptation“ require an international Loss And Damage mechanism supporting climate disaster victims in poor countries.“

Mahir Ilgaz, 350.org

"Continuing our fossil fuel addiction is akin to literally drowning ourselves. Unless we start substantially reducing fossil fuel use now and go completely fossil free by 2050 at the latest, hundreds of millions of people will be displaced due to rising sea levels. Our marine ecosystems, already under stress from pollution and overfishing, will not be able to cope with unchecked climate change. We are not only damaging our life-giving oceans but we are also destroying their capacity as a carbon sink, risking even more runaway climate change. It's time to stop this madness and preserve what we have. This means enacting radical policies to protect marine ecosystems, stop all new fossil fuel infrastructure, and phase out existing ones.”.

Sven Harmeling, global policy lead on climate change and resilience, CARE International:

“The new IPCC report is another clarion call to urgently ramp up climate action. Much greater adaptation and mitigation efforts, and financial support from developed countries and big polluters is needed to ensure affected people in developing countries can protect themselves from glacial melting, more destructive storms and rising sea-levels. As the climate crisis continues to escalate, vulnerable communities in the Global South, particularly in coastal and mountain regions, must not be left behind.”

Lisa Speer, Director, International Oceans at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said:

“All life on Earth depends on our oceans. There’s no time to dwell on the grim news in this report: the time to act is now. We need immediate, coordinated action in the U.S. and abroad on three fronts: reducing fossil fuel emissions, fully protecting at least 30% of the global ocean from damaging human activities by 2030, and shifting people and economic development away from our most vulnerable coastlines. Only prompt, decisive action can help stave off the dramatic changes this report forecasts and ensure a viable future for our ocean and humanity.”

Harjeet Singh, global lead on climate change, ActionAid, said:

“Millions living in low lying coastal areas and along riverbanks will be forced to flee, as their homes and land are washed away or swallowed up."Fresh water resources will be contaminated, crops and farmlands destroyed and this may lead to conflicts over scarce resources. The world must unite and act urgently or face total chaos.

“Rich countries have a bigger responsibility to dramatically cut their carbon pollution and to help the most vulnerable people prepare for the possible climate catastrophe.”

Speak to CAN members

If you would like to interview CAN members on the IPCC SROCC who are in Monaco, please contact

Dharini Parthasarathy, Senior Communications Officer, CAN International at dparthasarathy@climatenetwork.org / +918826107830

About CAN

Climate Action Network (CAN) is a global network of over 1300 NGOs in more than 120 countries working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. More information on www.climatenetwork.org Twitter: @CANIntl