

IPCC Hopes Report Will “Shock” People Into Action

The world's top climate scientists and government representatives have met in Paris for the release of the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, the first since 2001.

The 500 IPCC delegates have drawn up a summary for submission to policy makers, outlining in around ten pages the thousands of pages of their fourth assessment report. The text, which been negotiated line-by-line before being adopted by consensus, is undergoing a final review before its release in Paris on 2 February.

Drafts of the report forecast that the average global temperature rise from 1990 to 2100 will be in the range of 2.0 to 4.5 degrees Celsius, narrower than the previous report's range of 1.5 to 5.8 degrees.

IPCC chairman Rajendra Pachauri says the report comes as concerns about climate change and public awareness of the subject reach an all-time high.

“I hope this report will shock people, governments into taking more serious action as you really can't get a more authentic and a more credible piece of scientific work. So I hope this will be taken for what it's worth,” Pachauri says.

“I hope policies and action will be formed to address the problem. I think, based on the awareness that is growing very rapidly in every part of the globe, you will see a certain political resolve developing,” he says.

The IPCC says it is at least 90 per cent sure that human activities, led by the burning of fossil fuels, are to blame for global warming over the past 50 years. US scientist, Professor Stephen Schneider, who has been involved in the IPCC process and has more recently worked with governments to address the issue, says the US and Australian Governments' response to climate change was still too slow but the recent jump in the level of consciousness surrounding the topic was a positive.

“I'm more optimistic that the feds are finally going to get in the act than I was six months ago ... the pressure from the bottom up is quite palpable and federal governments can't continue to ignore it,” Schneider says.

Two other IPCC volumes will be issued in April and May focusing on the impacts of climate change and on the social-economic costs of reducing greenhouse gases.

The report is the fourth by the IPCC since it was established by the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organisation in 1988. It draws on research by 2500 scientists from more than 130 countries and has taken six years to compile.

In recent years, actual concentrations of carbon dioxide for example, have followed almost exactly the projections of the 2001 IPCC report, while actual temperatures were at the high end of the predicted range and sea levels have actually risen faster than predicted in 2001.

[Source esaa news]