

## **IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation**

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPORT**

#### **Why was this report written?**

Following the completion of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report in 2007, many governments, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and other organizations requested more information on the risks of extreme weather and climate events and options for managing related impacts and disasters in a changing climate. A proposal was introduced at a meeting of the IPCC Panel in September 2008. In April 2009, it was agreed that IPCC Working Groups I and II would jointly prepare the *Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation* (SREX), with Working Group II holding the overall responsibility.

#### **What is the objective of the report?**

The objective of the report is to assess the state of knowledge on the occurrence of extreme weather and climate events, and on approaches for managing associated impacts and disasters. The report evaluates the role of climate change in altering the frequency and severity of extreme events. It also assesses experience with a wide range of options used by institutions, organizations, and communities to reduce exposure and vulnerability, and improve resilience, to climate extremes. Overall, the report's emphasis is on the factors that make people vulnerable to extreme events, on recent and possible future changes in climate extremes, on approaches for managing the risks of disasters, and on the implications for sustainable development.

#### **Who wrote the report?**

The SREX involved experts from many different academic disciplines, including climate science, impacts science, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk management. 220 authors from around the world collaborated in preparing the SREX, including 87 coordinating lead authors and lead authors, 19 review editors, and more than 100 contributing authors.

#### **How were the authors and review editors chosen?**

Governments and IPCC Observer Organizations were asked to nominate experts, and the Working Group I and II Bureaus then selected the coordinating lead authors, lead authors, and review editors, taking into consideration a number of criteria including expertise, differing viewpoints and perspectives, geographic balance, and gender, as well as the inclusion of people new to the IPCC. This is in accordance with agreed IPCC guidelines ([http://www.ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/extremes-sr/extremes\\_documents/ipcc-principles-appendix-a.pdf](http://www.ipcc-wg2.gov/AR5/extremes-sr/extremes_documents/ipcc-principles-appendix-a.pdf)).

#### **How was the report reviewed?**

The IPCC depends on scientific reviews by independent experts. The SREX went through two extensive rounds of open expert and government review. The first 'Expert Review' took place during the summer of 2010. 220 sets of comments were submitted by independent reviewers, with 7,080 review comments in all. A second review, the 'Expert and Government Review,' took place in the spring of 2011. Independent reviewers, 23 Governments, and 8 Observer Organizations provided 162 sets of comments, totaling 10,570 comments.

All comments, with corresponding reviewer information and author responses, will be posted on the Working Group web sites after the underlying chapters are made public.

**What process was followed for the development of the report?**

The report was prepared in strict compliance with the IPCC Principles and Procedures, which specify each step from scoping and nomination of authors through multiple steps of drafting and review until final approval and acceptance. The process followed is depicted in detail here: <http://ipcc-wg2.gov/SREX/ipcc-process>.

**What information does the report draw on?**

Author teams assessed thousands of sources of scientific, technical, and socioeconomic information, including peer-reviewed scientific literature, industry journals, reports from governments and international bodies, and other relevant literature. Author teams evaluated sources used in their chapters to ensure consistency with the guidelines on the use of literature agreed by the IPCC. In order to be included in the SREX, sources had to be published by 31 May 2011, to allow time for assessment. In some instances this means that the most recent events could not be included because they had not been studied and published upon prior to the literature cut-off date.

**Why is there a gap in time between the release of the SREX SPM and the underlying chapters?**

The gap between the release of the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) and the full report is needed to ensure that edits made to the SPM during the approval meeting are reconciled with the underlying chapters, as well as to complete copyediting and layout. The full report of the SREX is divided into 9 chapters and will be approximately 800 pages long. During the approval process, which took place in Kampala, Uganda, from 14-17 November 2011, numerous edits were made. These included reordering presented information, further defining terminology, and ensuring clarity of characterization of information cited. One example of a change is that the definition of 'disaster risk' was made more parallel with the definition of 'disaster.'

Following the approval process, the chapter authors of the report are asked to ensure full consistency of their chapters with the approved edits in the SPM; this is referred to as the 'trickleback' process. Sufficient time is required to ensure that the tricklebacks are addressed systematically and in all of the interacting parts of the report.

Unlike most efforts to produce scientific reports, the IPCC process is an interface between science and policy making and this is one of its strengths. The release of the SPM before the underlying chapters is unusual, but ensures the scrutiny and rigor that characterizes IPCC reports.

**Does the IPCC conduct its own research?**

No, the IPCC does not conduct its own research. It reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical, and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change.

**Does the report offer policy solutions to governments?**

IPCC reports are policy relevant, but never policy prescriptive. It is the role of the IPCC to inform governments about the most up-to-date scientific thinking on an issue and, where appropriate, to highlight policy options to overcome challenges, but the IPCC never promotes one set of policy options over another.