



World Meteorological Organization  
Organisation météorologique mondiale

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Weather • Climate • Water  
Temps • Climat • Eau

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GENEVA, 14 June 2013

Annex: 1

Subject: Launch of *The Physical Science Basis*, the first volume of IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5)

Dear Sir/Madam,

The WMO/UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will launch *The Physical Science Basis*, the first volume of its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), on 27 September in Stockholm. I am writing to encourage you to take full advantage of this launch to promote greater awareness of climate change science and the role that WMO Members play in providing the underlying observations and analyses.

The IPCC warmly welcomes efforts by NMHSs to raise awareness of the report and its rigorously reviewed and up-to-date findings. It recognizes that the WMO community's ability to reach decision-makers and the general public with trusted information about weather, climate and water is an invaluable asset. The IPCC report can also be used by NMHSs to communicate more effectively about weather, extreme events, water resources and related issues.

The EC-65 decision on the IPCC, therefore, calls on WMO and its Members to play a proactive role in the outreach programme for the AR5 to ensure the widest dissemination of its findings among policy-makers at all levels. As part of the Secretariat's efforts to facilitate the work of Members, I attach a document describing practical information, ideas and resources that you may find helpful. We would be pleased to work with you to help plan your outreach activities in support of the IPCC and climate science. In this regard, do not hesitate to contact the Communications and Public Affairs office at [cpa@wmo.int](mailto:cpa@wmo.int).

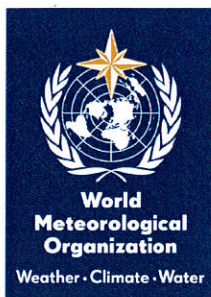
Yours faithfully,

A blue ink signature of M. Jarraud, written in a cursive style.

(M. Jarraud)  
Secretary-General

To: Permanent Representatives (or Directors of Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services) of Members of WMO (PR-6702)

cc: IPA Focal Points (for information)



# Raising climate change awareness through the launch of the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report

## Ideas and resources for NMHSs

### An opportunity

The period 2013 through 2015 will likely see increased public interest in the global climate. The WMO/UNEP Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will approve and launch its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) starting in September 2013, while the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will negotiate a major new agreement for adoption in 2015. Signs of environmental change, such as extreme events, Arctic ice melting and new global temperature records, would draw further attention to the risks posed by climate change.

Given their role in monitoring and forecasting the weather and climate, and their regular interaction with the public, National Meteorological and Hydrological Services are well positioned to raise awareness of climate change and the IPCC's scientific findings. The IPCC report also provides an opportunity to highlight the critical role of NMHSs in providing many of the climate observations that scientists use in their models and research. This brief set of guidelines has been developed by the WMO Secretariat to support WMO Members in their efforts to reach out to decision-makers and the general public on climate change and the IPCC report.

### Plans and activities

The information and suggestions below may prove useful for taking full advantage of the opportunity presented by the upcoming launch of the Fifth Assessment Report.

1. Scheduling. Given the challenges of coordinating a timely response to the AR5 launches, advance preparation is essential. The IPCC launch schedule is as follows:
  - The Physical Science Basis: The contribution of Working Group I to the AR5 – 27 September 2013 in Stockholm
  - Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: The contribution of Working Group II to the AR5 – on or around 30 March 2014 in Yokohama.
  - Mitigation of Climate Change: The contribution of Working Group III to the AR5 – on or around 14 April 2014 in Berlin.
  - The AR5 Synthesis Report – on or around 1 November 2014.
2. Planning. In addition to the four launch events, the IPCC report will provide an enormous amount of information that can be presented to diverse audiences over the following months and years. Advance planning is essential both for supporting the launches in the short term and for implementing an effective and sustained long-term outreach effort. Key advance actions could include:
  - Develop a written plan. This document should outline goals, messages, activities, audiences, resources and timelines. Coordinating with other national departments and agencies, including the national IPCC Focal Point, may be useful for promoting the AR5 launches at the national level and preparing a longer term series of workshops to reach out to legislators, industry, farmers, resource managers and other sectors.

- Establish a national outreach team. Identifying IPCC authors and other climate experts with their contact details, in advance, is critical for responding to press queries and for scheduling presentations and workshops.
  - Identify and make early contact with key broadcast meteorologists, weather presenters and other journalists.
  - Contact WMO. The WMO Secretariat is working closely with the IPCC, which strongly welcomes the engagement of NMHSs in promoting the AR5. WMO can facilitate efforts to engage IPCC authors at the national level and to align national outreach activities with the IPCC's global outreach programme.
3. Supporting the launches. The IPCC will organize and webcast international press conferences to launch each of the four volumes of the AR5. NMHSs may be able to complement these international events by organizing or co-organizing national press conferences to introduce the reports to national journalists. It is essential to make available speakers and materials in the national language(s). Texts and images provided by the IPCC, WMO and others will be available for using, translating or adapting. Simplifying climate science without distorting it can be a challenge, but it can be highly successful and effective if done carefully and with integrity. WMO can facilitate contacts with IPCC authors and experts and assist with the preparation of outreach activities.
  4. Sustaining the outreach. The IPCC is preparing a schedule of workshops and presentations to take place around the world during the months following each launch. NMHSs may also wish to consider developing a long-term outreach programme to promote the IPCC findings. Different audiences will have different levels of understanding and different interests, particularly as regards the findings of the AR5 volume on impacts and adaptation. Rolling out a series of half-day national or regional workshops, offering to give presentations at conferences planned by others, and supporting exhibits and events organized by museums, libraries and other public venues may all be considered. AR5 outreach may also be linked to the promotion of national climate services developed through the Global Framework on Climate Services.
  5. Crafting messages. Well prepared messaging can make climate change more accessible and compelling. It can also position NMHSs as authoritative sources of information about climate variability and climate change. The most effective messages will touch upon the realities of people's lives. The link to national priorities and concerns, such as existing vulnerabilities to storms, food shortages, floods, droughts, and coastal erosion or flooding, can be emphasized. Climate communicators increasingly believe that positive messages rather than frightening scenarios are most effective – climate change is a major problem, but there are solutions and actions we can take to address it.

Also important are simple and consistent messages in jargon-free and non-technical language that non-specialists can understand. While the IPCC reports assess the most up-to-date science, it should be recalled that many people are still not familiar with the fundamentals of climate variability, change, prediction, science, impacts, risk reduction and services.

In addition to presenting the AR5's substantive findings, which will only be publicly available on the launch dates, the AR5 launch offers an opportunity to emphasize broader messages that are already well established, such as:

- Climate scientists have confirmed that human-induced climate change is already taking place and will pose major challenges in the future.
- The IPCC produces the best available and most credible assessments of the current state of knowledge about climate change.
- Many of the observations that underpin climate science are provided by the world's National Meteorological and Hydrological Services.



- Key international programmes on climate observation and research are coordinated through the World Meteorological Organization.
- While some commentators question the reality of human-induced climate change, amongst climate scientists who publish peer-reviewed research there is a strong consensus that the global climate is changing and that human activities contribute significantly.
- The consensus view on climate change and greenhouse gases is based on multiple lines of evidence, including basic physics, many different kinds of observations of both past and present climate conditions, and highly sophisticated models that project future climate conditions.
- The scientific understanding of the climate system, climate change impacts and vulnerabilities, and mitigation options has advanced rapidly in recent years and will continue to do so.
- Actionable information and predictions now available through climate services can empower decision-makers to respond to the risks and opportunities posed by climate variability and climate change.
- NMHSs provide information and services that improve the lives and livelihoods of the people who are most vulnerable to climate variability and climate change.
- Frameworks for climate services at the national level will transform the most up-to-date knowledge about climate change impacts and adaptation into actionable information and predictions for decision-making.

## **On-line resources**

The following resources are available on-line from WMO and the IPCC and may be useful for promoting the IPCC report and for climate outreach in general.

1. Media Relations. “Getting your message across: Media Guide for WMO Information and Public Affairs Focal Points at NMHSs”  
[ftp://ftp.wmo.int/Documents/MediaPublic/Media\\_guides/WMO\\_mediaguide\\_en.pdf](ftp://ftp.wmo.int/Documents/MediaPublic/Media_guides/WMO_mediaguide_en.pdf)
2. Social Media. “Guidelines on the Strategies for use of Social Media by National Meteorological and Hydrological Services.” When communicating about the report via Twitter the use of the hashtags #climatechange and #AR5 is recommended.  
[http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/amp/pwsp/documents/1086\\_PWS-24\\_NMHSs\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/amp/pwsp/documents/1086_PWS-24_NMHSs_report_en.pdf)
3. Popularizing the science. “A summary of current climate change findings and figures: a WMO information note.” This public information note contains simplified, popular language for presenting climate change science. This text will be updated shortly after the 27 September launch to reflect the newly adopted Physical Science Basis volume of the Fifth Assessment Report and to provide WMO-reviewed language for making the science of climate change more easily accessible.  
[www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/factsheet/documents/ClimateChangeInfoSheet2013-03final.pdf](http://www.wmo.int/pages/mediacentre/factsheet/documents/ClimateChangeInfoSheet2013-03final.pdf)
4. Climate facts. WMO’s reports on the “Global Climate 2001-2010: A Decade of Extremes”, complemented by the annual “WMO Statement on the Status of the Global Climate” for 2011 and 2012 provide useful facts about recent climate trends and events.  
[URLs to come](#)
5. Graphs and photos. Downloadable graphs and photos will be available at a later date.  
[URLs to come](#)
6. Editorial. An editorial article by the WMO Secretary-General (possibly with a co-author) will be made available to NMHSs on 27 September. NMHSs are invited to translate the article

and submit it to a national media outlet.

7. Powerpoint presentation. Official IPCC powerpoint presentations are expected to be available on the Internet after the various launches.  
[URL to come](#)
8. Other IPCC resources. The IPCC website contains valuable information about the history of the IPCC, the procedures and rules that guide the IPCC's work, links to earlier reports, and more.  
[www.ipcc.ch](http://www.ipcc.ch)
9. GFCS. The Global Framework for Climate Services supports national efforts to develop and implement practical solutions for adapting to the impacts of climate variability and climate change. The GFCS website contains a growing amount of useful information on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability.  
[www.wmo.int/pages/gfcs/index\\_en.php](http://www.wmo.int/pages/gfcs/index_en.php)
10. Calendars of international climate meetings. International climate change meetings and events may also offer useful opportunities or news hooks for promoting climate awareness. A number of calendars are available on the Internet.  
<http://unfccc.int/meetings/items/6240.php>  
[www.iisd.ca/upcoming/upcomingmeetings.aspx?id=5](http://www.iisd.ca/upcoming/upcomingmeetings.aspx?id=5)  
[www.rtcc.org/rtccs-2013-climate-change-calendar/](http://www.rtcc.org/rtccs-2013-climate-change-calendar/)

**For more information, please contact:**

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