

Our ref.: 5242-21/IPCC/AR6

To designated IPCC Focal Points and
Ministries of Foreign Affairs
(if no focal point has been designated)

COPY

Geneva, 7 December 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) I am addressing you again on the subject of the Fifty-fifth Session of the IPCC and of the Twelfth Session of Working Group II (IPCC-55 & WGII-12), as well as the Fifty-sixth Session of the IPCC and the Fourteenth Session of Working Group III (IPCC-56 & WGIII-14).

Following the consultation conducted with IPCC Focal Points through the Consultation Paper, (Letter 5221-21/IPCC/AR6) on the format for the upcoming approval sessions, the Secretariat has received 35 written responses¹ and has taken note of the feedback and views received. We thank you very much for your views and constructive feedback.

The responses received show that, out of 35 responses, 17 Member countries expressed their preference for holding the IPCC-55 & WGII-12 and of IPCC-56 & WG III-14 in a virtual format. Of the remaining responses the hybrid format was the next preferred format followed by the physical.

The worrying health situation caused by the newly emerged COVID-19 variant known as “omicron” coupled with coronavirus cases spiking across Europe and other parts of the world, with many countries strengthening the entry requirements or banning travel in response to it, makes any meeting format that involves travel infeasible in terms of compliance with the IPCC’s standards regarding transparency, inclusiveness and equality.

Also, the Secretariat recognizes the challenges to ensure risk minimization and control, including maintenance of COVID-19 compliant testing, sanitary standards and hygiene protocols.

Given the proximity of the IPCC-55 & WGII-12 and IPCC-56 & WGIII-14 approval sessions and similarity regarding the risks and concerns posed, combining the preparations for the sessions is seen as the most feasible and effective approach under the current circumstances.

In light of the above and in fulfilling our mandate of supporting and organizing IPCC sessions, we would like to inform you that the IPCC-55 & WGII-12 and IPCC-56 & WGIII-14 will take place in the two-week long virtual format identified as the safest and the most compliant format with IPCC principles towards a timely and successful approval session. Therefore, IPCC-55 & WGII-12 and IPCC-56 & WGIII-14 are scheduled to take place from 14 to 25 February 2022 and 21 March to 1 April 2022 respectively.

¹ All the responses received including those received after the deadline have been made available on the IPCC Focal Point Portal.

The success of the 54th Session of the IPCC and the 14th Session of Working Group (IPCC-54 & WGI-14), held in virtual format and your feedback through the survey on the session showed that all countries were provided the opportunity to participate and engage on an equal basis through the same meeting platform which is a vital principle of IPCC. The virtual format allowed for the participation of delegations that may have not otherwise done so and involved a lower risk of COVID-19 infection.

Building on the lessons learnt from the IPCC-54 & WGI-14 and the feedback from the survey on the same session, the Secretariat will work together with respective Co-Chairs, Technical Support Units and the host countries to prepare for both sessions with the view to improve them as much as possible.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts made by all delegates in the face of the exceptional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic with the view to ensure that the IPCC work continues in a timely manner while addressing the challenges faced and capitalizing on opportunities arising from virtual meetings.

Thank you in advance for your continued support in these challenging times.

A copy of this letter is being sent for information to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to the Permanent Representatives from your country to the World Meteorological Organization and to the United Nations Environment Programme.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Mokssit', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(Abdalah Mokssit)
Secretary of the IPCC