

Our ref.: 5278-20/IPCC/P53

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

COPY

Geneva, 28 September 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

On behalf of the Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) I am addressing you on the subject of the Fifty-third Session of the IPCC (IPCC-53) which was scheduled to take place from 1 to 4 October 2020 in Nairobi, Kenya.

In light of the COVID-19 situation worldwide it will not be possible to hold IPCC-53 in a face-to-face format as initially planned. In fulfilling its mandate of supporting and organizing sessions for the IPCC Panel¹, and in consultations with the IPCC Executive Committee, the IPCC Secretariat has explored and assessed several options² with the aim to continue delivering the work programme with as little disruption as possible in this challenging period.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on international travel the Secretariat has given due consideration to the electronic format including the Fifty-eighth Session of the IPCC Bureau (19-20 May 2020) and Working Group III Lead Authors (e-LAM) meeting. Building on such experience, the Fifty-ninth Session of the IPCC Bureau will also take place by electronic means on 13-14 October 2020.

Taking into account the operational limitations of holding a virtual plenary session of the IPCC, lesson learnt from similar events and the feedback received from many Focal Points, the Secretariat is suggesting to hold IPCC-53 as a hybrid plenary session scheduled to take place by both electronic and written means during the week of 7 to 13 December 2020. At the IPCC-53 Session, the Panel may wish to consider very essential agenda items which fit to the hybrid format such as the IPCC Trust Fund Programme and Budget. It is proposed all other items that were due to be considered at IPCC-53 to be deferred to the future plenary sessions so that nothing is lost.

According to this hybrid format, the Chair will open the session in writing and will invite the Financial Task Team (FiTT)³ co-chaired by New Zealand and Maldives to take place virtually. Based on the recommendations of the FiTT, a decisions paper prepared by the Secretariat will be submitted for approval in writing to the head of the delegations. The document will be posted ahead of the Session.

¹ IPCC 35th Session, Geneva Switzerland (6-9 June 2012) Decisions taken with respect to the Review of IPCC Processes and Procedures Governance and Management, Functions of the IPCC Secretariat, see (a), (c).

²Options identified include: (i) virtual plenary to be held in December 2020; (ii) physical plenary postponed to next year, tentatively in the first quarter of 2021; (iii) plenary by correspondence to be held in December 2020 and (iv) physical plenary held back to back with WGI approval session (dates to be confirmed).

³ <https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/09/ipcc-principles-appendix-b.pdf>

Nomination of representative(s) of your Government to the Session will be made on official letterhead addressed to the Secretary of the IPCC. The pre-registration portal will be opened to register participants in due course (preferably one per delegation). The details for the session will only be provided to registered participants. An invitation letter as well as further details regarding the Session will be communicated to you at a later stage.

I would like to seek your understanding on the proposed format for the Fifty-third Session. The Secretariat stands ready to respond to questions.

Taking into consideration the uncertainty of how the COVID-19 situation will evolve in the coming months, I would like to inform you that the IPCC Secretariat is identifying modalities for effective engagement with governments for the rest of the IPCC cycle while facilitating regular consultations between the presiding officers of IPCC and UNFCCC about the timing of IPCC inputs to the UNFCCC process.

To keep you updated on regular basis, you can easily find relevant documents and news on the IPCC Focal Points Portal at: <https://apps.ipcc.ch/fp/>.

A summary of the current updates to the AR6 Strategic Planning Schedule that have been approved by the IPCC Executive Committee in consultation with the Bureau is available on the IPCC website at: https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2020/09/Sum_Changes_AR6_Schedule.pdf. These changes are only approved up to the first quarter of the year 2021. The other milestones and deadlines for activities during the AR6 cycle remain under further review.

I trust that we can continue to count on your support in these challenging times and thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter.

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 'Abdalah Mokssit', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(Abdalah Mokssit)
Secretary of the IPCC