



Reporting the human dimensions of climate change in the developing world



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Posted by: Yvonne Bokhour Posted date: June 20, 2012 In: Impact | comment : 0

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the world’s foremost international body assessing global climate conditions. Established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the IPCC has for years coordinated research activities among thousands of scientists in over one hundred countries. In 2007, it shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore for its efforts. Additionally, its conclusions are referenced by government and other agencies worldwide.

The IPCC’s latest report, issued in March 2012, is entitled “Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation.” Hundreds of scientists examined internationally derived scientific and socio-economic data to formulate this Special Report, which has already become an essential policy resource. Here are report highlights regarding possible climate change impacts:

Virtually Certain (99-100 Percent Probability)

- It is virtually certain the world will experience an increase in warm daily temperature extremes, as well as a decrease in cold extremes, through the 21st Century.

Very Likely (90-100 Percent Probability)

- It is very likely most land areas will see an increase in the length, frequency and/or intensity of heat waves.
- It is very likely the average sea level will rise.
- It is also very likely the mean sea level rise will add to upward trends in extreme coastal high water levels.

Likely (66-100 Percent Probability)

- The frequency of heavy precipitation is likely to increase over the course of this century through many regions.
- The average maximum wind speed of typhoons and hurricanes (also known as tropical cyclones) is likely to increase as well, although not necessarily in every ocean.
- It’s also likely we’ll see a decrease or no change in the number of tropical cyclones.

The IPCC has attached relative terms such as “low,” “medium,” and “high” to certain findings “based on the assessment of underlying scientific evidence and agreement.”

High Confidence



- Overall, economic losses due to climatic disasters have increased, although they vary by year and place. Developed countries have the highest losses.
- Deaths from natural disasters occur most often in developing countries (95 percent from 1970 to 2008).

Medium Confidence

- The evidence suggests with medium confidence that droughts will intensify through the 21st Century in many regions. It's been difficult to define droughts and factor in all possible influences, however. Observational data is also limited.

Low Confidence

- While projected changes for temperature and precipitation might suggest changes in floods, there is low confidence regarding global changes in the size and frequency of river flooding. This is because evidence is limited and regional variations are complicated.



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