



Quaker United Nations Office

13 Avenue du Mervelet
CH-1209 Geneva, Switzerland

Tel +41 (22) 748-4800
Fax +41 (22) 748-4819

QUNO Debrief of the 60th Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Anna Aguto, Human Impacts of Climate Change Programme Assistant

The 60th Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in Istanbul, Türkiye tasked the Panel with critical decisions on the programme of work of the 7th Assessment Cycle (AR7). AR7 follows AR6, which lasted over seven years and produced three Working Group reports, a Synthesis Report, a Methodology Report, and three Special Reports. The session consisted of intense negotiations, which lasted through the night, finally concluding on the morning of January 20th. The Human Impacts of Climate Change Programme at the Quaker United Nations Office has been actively engaged in the IPCC process since 2017; QUNO under Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) remains the only independently accredited faith-based observer in these processes.

At the 60th Session, the Panel, consisting of 195 member states, reflected on lessons learned from AR6, decided on the programme of work for the AR7, and approved the IPCC's finances. Given that the panel already decided upon a Special Report on Cities and Climate Change and a Methodology Report on Short-lived Climate Forcers for AR7, the panel had to decide on an additional Special Report and/or Methodology Report.

Based on input submitted before the plenary, many countries recommended a second Special Report with topics ranging from tipping points to adaptation to systems transformations. Many countries also wrote in favor of a second Methodology Report on carbon dioxide removal (CDR) and/or carbon capture storage (CCS). The IPCC Secretariat advised that the Panel's decisions on additional reports would dictate the timeline of AR7 and thus, impact the availability of all three Working Group reports prior to the second Global Stocktake (GST). The timeline became a tense topic throughout negotiations.

States and observers recognized the crucial impact that AR6 had on the GST, which came out of the UNFCCC's 28th Conference of Parties. Informed by AR6, the GST historically called for a "transition away from fossil fuels in energy system." Given this influence, many States and Observers wanted AR7 to answer the call of the GST and have as many AR7 reports as possible feed into the second GST due in November 2028. Other countries questioned the linking of IPCC work to the UNFCCC, especially as they exist as independent bodies. Among these countries, many developing countries preferred a longer timeline to ensure that AR7 could produce a Special Report on adaptation and adaptation metrics. Small Islands Developing States countered this in favor of a shorter timeline to urgently align with the GST. Many developed States supported a shorter timeline and opposed an adaptation Special Report. With two opposing views, the IPCC Chair, Professor Jim Skea, offered a compromise that would allow Working Group II to create a product, updating the 1994 IPCC Technical Guidelines for Assessing Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation, with distinct branding and publication. To allow for the inclusion of the most up-to-date science and enable a shorter timeline to feed into the GST, this product would be a part of Working Group II scoping rather than follow the process of a Special Report.

While this compromise was well-received and answered the calls of many developing countries for specific attention paid to adaptation, some countries doubted that the IPCC could deliver rigorous,

diverse, and inclusive research by the second GST despite assurances from the chairs of Working Group II of its feasibility. This pushback fueled intense back and forth about the timeline of AR7.

While the timeline dominated negotiations, many States and Observers called attention to the need to engage with Indigenous peoples and knowledges inclusively and meaningfully. One country urged the establishment of a taskforce, highlighting that ethically engaging with Indigenous peoples requires time, intention, and trust-building. Ultimately, the decision text only emphasizes that AR7 will draw on diverse literature including Indigenous Peoples' Knowledge and Local Communities' knowledge.

Some countries expressed concern over a Methodology Report on carbon capture storage (CCS) and/or carbon dioxide removal (CDR). One country raised serious concerns over the sustainability of CCS in maintaining the 1.5 C, in addition to high risks on biodiversity, food and water security, Indigenous Peoples and human rights. Importantly, this country noted that CCS and CDR are different, and it would be incorrect to group them together. CCS refers to technologies that remove carbon dioxide from the emission point such as a power plant while CDR refers to a broad set of approaches that remove carbon from the air, including nature-based solutions such as afforestation. There was brief discussion of the controversial solar radiation management, which one country firmly rejected. While drafts of the decision text stipulated that the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI) would hold an expert meeting on CDR and CCS and then *consider* providing a Methodology Report, States were able to reach a consensus that the TFI would produce a Methodology Report on Carbon Dioxide Removal Technologies, Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage by the end of 2027.

Negotiating through the night and finishing on Saturday at 9:44 am, the plenary closed, deciding on three Working Group Reports, a Synthesis Report, an expert meeting followed by a Methodology Report on CCS and CDR, and a distinct product on adaptation that would update the 1994 Technical Guidelines but would be scoped with WGII. States only reached partial consensus on the timeline. The decision text names 'late 2029' as the completion date of AR7, but the Panel will have to decide the dates of the completion of the three Working Groups Reports in the next session in July 2024, informed by a document prepared by Bureau members on the feasibility of their workload taking into consideration inclusion, diversity, and rigor.