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4/28/17

Collective Global Climate Statement

Climate developments demand enhanced evidence-based action

Scientific evidence

The scientific evidence is now overwhelming: our planet is warming, largely due to emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities. A recent report from the World Meteorological Organization highlights that in 2016 a new record for global average temperature was set (approximately 1.1°C above the pre-industrial level), sea ice extent reached record lows, global sea level increased to a new record, and a wide range of extreme climatic events displaced hundreds of thousands of people across the world. Greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere have now also reached a record level with carbon dioxide surpassing 400 parts per million, about 44% higher than in the pre-industrial era.

The Paris Agreement needs to be implemented urgently

The social, environmental and economic impacts of climate change will continue to grow unless action is taken now. Meeting the challenge effectively and efficiently requires an immediate and collective global response that is fit for the scale and urgency of the threat, is supportive of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and is implemented through appropriate policies informed by evidence.

To avoid the largest risks we urge governments to implement fully and urgently the commitments they made in Paris in 2015 to ensure the future global temperature increase is limited to well below 2°C above the pre-industrial levels, to pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C and to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero[1] in the second half of this century.

A global, evidence-based response is essential

A key element of the Paris Agreement is a commitment from governments to review collective progress periodically, as new science and the experiences of implementing the agreement accrue. Policies can only be informed by robust evidence if there is a sustained, global, collaborative commitment to maintaining and developing an appropriate scientific evidence base.

Evidence includes the monitoring of the state of the climate through the Global Climate Observing System and the assessment with models of the risks to human societies and the natural world at local, regional and global levels associated with different levels of future emissions. New evidence and knowledge needs to be evaluated independently and synthesized for it to be useful for policymakers and governments. All such efforts, including the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, must continue to receive the appropriate funding and resources to enable them to provide the necessary scientific advice.

Role of meteorological and climate services

Meteorological and climate services are an essential element of the response to climate change. They provide early-warning information and understanding of present-day climate variability, projections of future changes, and they inform mitigation and adaptation options. We encourage national meteorological services and private meteorological bodies to continue to develop effective tools and systems for use by decision makers.

Development opportunities

Tackling climate change and addressing the Sustainable Development Goals together presents the opportunity for improving the quality of people's lives in many different ways. This includes protection of the natural environment and the services it provides, improvement to people's health and the development of new services and technologies bringing jobs and prosperity.

Prompt action is required now to build the foundations of our future success. That will require the widest possible cooperation and collaboration, between countries, business sectors, civil society and science, including education, research and innovation.

[1] Net-zero balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases.