

Foreword

'*Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*', the Working Group II contribution to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report presents a comprehensive assessment of the current state of knowledge of the observed impacts and projected risks of climate change as well as the adaptation options. The report confirms the strong interactions of the natural, social and climate systems and that human-induced climate change has caused widespread adverse impacts to nature and people. It is clear that across sectors and regions, the most vulnerable people and systems are disproportionately affected and climate extremes have led to irreversible impacts. The assessment underscores the importance of limiting global warming to 1.5°C if we are to achieve a fair, equitable and sustainable world. While the assessment concluded that there are feasible and effective adaptation options which can reduce risks to nature and people, it also found that there are limits to adaptation and that there is a need for increased ambition in both adaptation and mitigation. These and other findings confirm and enhance our understanding of the importance of climate resilient development across sectors and regions and, as such, demands the urgent attention of both policymakers and the general public.

As an intergovernmental body jointly established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the IPCC has provided policymakers with the most authoritative and objective scientific and technical assessments. Beginning in 1990, this series of IPCC Assessment Reports, Special Reports, Technical Papers, Methodology Reports and other products have become standard works of reference.

This Working Group II contribution to the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report contains important new scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge that can be used to produce information and services for assisting society to act to address the challenges of climate change. The timing is particularly significant, as this information provides a new impetus, through clear assessment findings, to inform the first Global Stocktake under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

This Working Group II assessment was made possible thanks to the commitment and dedication of many hundreds of experts worldwide,




Petteri Taalas
Secretary-General
World Meteorological Organization

representing a wide range of disciplines. WMO and UNEP are proud that so many of the experts belong to their communities and networks. We express our deep gratitude to all authors, review editors and expert reviewers for devoting their knowledge, expertise and time especially given the challenges created by the Covid pandemic. We would like to thank the staff of the Working Group II Technical Support Unit, the WGII Science Advisor and the IPCC Secretariat for their dedication.

We are also grateful to the governments that supported their scientists' participation in developing this report and that contributed to the IPCC Trust Fund to provide for the essential participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. We would like to express our appreciation to the government of Ethiopia for hosting the scoping meeting for the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report, to the governments of South Africa, Nepal, Portugal and Guatemala for hosting drafting meetings of the Working Group II contribution and to the government of Germany for hosting the Twelfth Session of Working Group II held virtually for approval of the Working Group II Report. The generous financial support by the government of Germany and the logistical support by the Alfred Wegener Institute Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (Germany), enabled the smooth operation of the Working Group II Technical Support Unit in Bremen, Germany. Additional funding from the Governments of Germany, Norway and New Zealand provided key support to the Technical Support Unit office in Durban, South Africa.

We would particularly like to thank Dr Hoesung Lee, Chairman of the IPCC, for his direction of the IPCC and we express our deep gratitude to Dr Hans-Otto Pörtner and Dr Debra Roberts, the Co-Chairs of Working Group II for their tireless leadership throughout the development and production of this report.

Climate change is a long-term challenge, but the need for urgent action now is clear. The conclusion of the report's Summary for Policymakers summarizes this succinctly. 'The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.' We couldn't agree more.



Inger Andersen
Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme

