

UN REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE SETS OFF ALARM BELLS

Relevant for: Environment & Disaster Management | Topic: Environmental Degradation - GHGs, Ozone Depletion & Climate Change

Climate change is a ticking bomb counting down to 2052, the zero year after which even a half degree increase in global temperature will lead to searing heat waves, heavy rainfall, droughts, floods and other extreme weather conditions that will lower agricultural yield, cause food and water scarcities and push millions into poverty, the world's leading climate scientists have warned. The world is already 1°Celsius warmer than the pre-industrial levels and, if present trends continue, the rise in average temperatures will breach the critical barrier of 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052. All countries must make rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes across sectors to keep the increase to within 1.5°C over pre-industrial levels (1850-1900) to stop the devastating consequences of climate change, said the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report in its most dire risk assessment ever. Even a fraction of additional warming would worsen the impact, said the report, warning that the world is off track to meet its 2015 Paris Agreement commitment to keep the average global temperatures "well below" 2°C.

The unprecedented flooding in Kerala, drought in Cape Town and searing heat waves in Europe are signs that climate change is already happening. Limiting warming to 1.5°C by making green changes in energy consumption, land and water use and transportation can help mitigate the potential damage to an extent.

To ensure the planet is liveable, global CO₂ emissions have to be reduced by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030 and renewables must provide up to 85% of global electricity by 2050 to meet targets. All this would need an annual average investment of around \$2.4 trillion in energy systems to move from coal to renewables between 2016 and 2035. Keeping emissions down, however, will boost economic growth and save the expenditure on catastrophic fallouts of climate change. That means putting money into saving the planet before it reaches tipping point. That makes ecological and economic sense.

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