



Joint WCP-Water/ DWC Statement on the Need for Increased Emphasis on Water Resources within the IPCC

This statement was made on behalf of the WMO/UNESCO World Climate Programme - Water (WCP-Water) and the Dialogue on Water and Climate (DWC) on the basis of the two documents that have been distributed to the Delegates for the 19th Session of the IPCC.

2. Of all the effects of climate variability and change, those related to hydrology and water resources have perhaps the greatest human and environmental significance. Potential effects in all water-related sectors, stem largely from climatic impacts on water resources availability. Prospective increases and decreases in the distribution, quantity and quality of, and demand for water should be assessed in the context of the climate induced variability and change of water resources in order to meaningfully and successfully prepare for, and adapt to climate change.
3. Both nationally and internationally, a science-based knowledge of trends, variability and change of water resources availability as well as changes in the frequencies and magnitude of extreme hydrological events such as floods and drought is indispensable for the development of national and regional response and mitigation strategies. These strategies are an essential base for the creation or maintenance of social, economic and political stability.
4. Yet, a sound and well consolidated information and scientific basis, tailored to the needs of (inter)national water policies as well as the ones by water management sectors is currently missing.
5. Accordingly, water-related issues require greater visibility within, and more active advocacy on the part of international organizations and programmes, particularly the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).
6. The infrastructure of the IPCC provides an incomparable mechanism for facilitating the assessment of climate-related water resources conditions and trends, in a more systematic and comprehensive manner than has been achieved to date.
7. A major aspect of the joint WCP-Water/Dialogue on Water and Climate strategy is to closely collaborate with a consortium of organizations including WMO, UNESCO, Global Water Partnership, World Bank, World Water Council, World Conservation Union, among many others and to engage IPCC more directly with applications of state-of-the-art climate science to applied water resources management.
8. Main activities of WCP-Water and the Dialogue aim to addressing priority societal issues that could benefit from an improved understanding of how hydrology and water resources respond to climatic events, variations and changes.

9. In this regard, WCP-Water and the Dialogue on Water and Climate have proposed a number of priority climate and water-related issues that are in critical need of assessment on a regional, sub-regional and even river basin basis. These include impacts of climate variability and change on water resources and extreme hydrological events such as floods and droughts, including adaptation strategies.
10. There is a need for specific assessment of regions, sub-regions and river basins that, because of a scarcity of water resources and associated limited coping strategies, are particularly vulnerable to even modest climatic excursions.
11. Now is it opportune and appropriate to initiate a comprehensive assessment of the linkage between climate, water and critical societal and environmental sectors as they currently exist and as they may evolve in the coming decade or two.
12. **WCP-Water and the Dialogue on Water and Climate therefore propose, that the IPCC initiate a special report on water and climate, wherein water both in terms of hydrology including extreme events and water resources is considered in its central societal and environmental role. The assessment and analysis of impacts and response options in a changing natural and societal environment are seen as a central feature of such a report, in as much as specific regional and sub-regional assessments. This report could be a specific input to the 4th World Water Forum to be held in 2006.**
13. **The initiation and development of an IPCC special report on water and climate may also lead to an enhanced science-based intergovernmental awareness of water-related issues in a rapidly changing environment.**