
News

With representatives from nearly 200 countries at the UN Climate Summit underway in the United States, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) made public a special report. It underlined the dire changes taking place in oceans, glaciers and ice-deposits on land and sea.

About the report

- The ‘Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate’ was prepared following an IPCC Panel decision in 2016 to prepare three Special Reports.
- It follows the Special Reports on Global Warming of 1.5°C (SR1.5), and on Climate Change and Land (SRCCL).

Unprecedented conditions ahead:

- Over the 21st century, the ocean is projected to transition to unprecedented conditions with increased temperatures, further ocean acidification, marine heatwaves and more frequent extreme El Niño and La Niña events,” according to the report.
- It is virtually certain that the global ocean has warmed unabated since 1970 and has taken up more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system (high confidence).
- Since 1993, the rate of ocean warming has more than doubled.
- Marine heatwaves have very likely doubled in frequency since 1982 and are increasing in intensity, the report notes.
- The Southern Ocean accounted for 35%–43% of the total heat gain in the upper 2,000 m global ocean between 1970 and 2017, and its share increased to 45%–62% between 2005 and 2017.

Sea level rise:

Globally sea levels are estimated to rise 1.1 metre by 2100, if countries are not able to restrict emissions “well below” 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

This is likely to have a direct impact on the lives of 680 million people living in low-lying coastal zones.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):

- The IPCC is an intergovernmental body of the UN dedicated to providing the world with an objective, scientific view of climate change, its natural, political and economic impacts and risks, and possible response options.
- The IPCC was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and was later endorsed by the UNGA.
- Membership is open to all members of the WMO and UN.
- The IPCC produces reports that contribute to the work of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the main international treaty on climate change.
In addition to climate assessment reports, the IPCC publishes Special Reports on specific topics.