

Only 12 years left to bring global warming to 1.5°C - IPCC 1.5 report and why it matters for Africa

Date: Wednesday 20 March

Time: 13:30 – 14:15

Venue: Committee Hall II, Ground Floor, Accra International Conference Center

Status: Open to all participants attending Africa Climate Week.

Organised by: UNU-INRA and Ghana Climate Innovation Centre (GCIC)

Description:

The recent IPCC report on warming under 1.5 degrees Celsius has far reaching implications for Africa and its small island states. It is a widely and long-held view that Africa is the region most impacted, and will be the hardest hit by the negative impacts of climate change due to its limited adaptive capacity and the fact that its economies are heavily reliant on climate sensitive sectors. Indeed, the report warns that with a 1.5°C and 2°C of global warming, greater proportions of people will be exposed to more climate-induced hardship as millions of people across Africa rely on agriculture and coastal-related economies and livelihoods, much of which will be exposed to the vagaries of climate change and variation as well as to extreme weather events. There is a strong sense amongst IPCC scientists that global warming of 1.5°C (as opposed to 2°C) is projected to reduce climate induced impacts on crop yield and nutritional content in some affected areas of Sub-Saharan Africa (West and Southern Africa). Even with the end of the commodity super-cycle and depressed demands for manufactured goods, some economies are still growing at a relatively fast rate. The continent has outlined some ambitious plans in its Nationally Determined Contributions in an effort to reduce the impacts of climate change. In a region where population growth is often seen through the prism of youth unemployment and rapid urbanization, the IPCC report on 1.5 warming presents several sectoral challenges to Africa as well as geopolitical, economic, environmental and social challenges. What are the major alarm bells that will further complicate matters for Africa if the 1.5 warming goes unnoticed? How can Africa better plan for and anticipate potential shocks, stresses and risks that, if not addressed, will translate into greater poverty for some parts of the region? What are some of the low regrets options that can be considered as safe bets with or without substantive climate change? And how can policy makers, private sector and academia form a reciprocal coalition of partners to identify new pathways and knowledge deficits that can lead toward a climate resilient future?

The event will bring together a set of eminent African experts from academia, the private sector and UN agencies to debate and discuss how Africa can walk towards strong leadership in climate action. Experts will showcase successful initiatives of policies and measures adopted across Africa and will offer provocative thoughts on what it would take for Africa to lead the debate on climate action given the huge burden of responsibility and the fact that in the foreseeable future, it will remain the youngest continent.