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09 August 2021

New York

Secretary-General's statement on the IPCC Working Group 1 Report on the Physical Science Basis of the Sixth Assessment

Today's IPCC Working Group 1 Report is a code red for humanity. The alarm bells are deafening, and the evidence is irrefutable: greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel burning and deforestation are choking our planet and putting billions of people at immediate risk.

The internationally agreed threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius is perilously close.

We are at imminent risk of hitting 1.5 degrees in the near term. The only way to prevent exceeding this threshold is by urgently stepping up our efforts, and pursuing the most ambitious path.

We must act decisively now to keep 1.5 alive.

We are already at 1.2 degrees and rising. Warming has accelerated in recent decades. Every fraction of a degree counts. Greenhouse gas concentrations are at record levels.

The viability of our societies depends on leaders from government, business and civil society uniting behind policies, actions and investments that will limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The solutions are clear. Inclusive and green economies, prosperity, cleaner air and better health are possible for all if we respond to this crisis with solidarity and courage.

We need immediate action on energy. Without deep carbon pollution cuts now, the 1.5-degree goal will fall quickly out of reach. This report must sound a death knell for coal and fossil fuels, before they destroy our planet.

Climate impacts will undoubtedly worsen. There is a clear moral and economic imperative to protect the lives and livelihoods of those on the front lines of the climate crisis.

The climate crisis poses enormous financial risk to investment managers, asset owners, and businesses. These risks should be measured, disclosed and mitigated.

If we combine forces now, we can avert climate catastrophe. But, as today's report makes clear, there is no time for delay and no room for excuses.

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