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Independent Study & Mentorship

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Subject: IPCC 2023 Press Release

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Urgent Climate Action Can Secure a Liveable Future for All,

www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/press/IPCC_AR6_SYR_PressRelease_en.pdf.

Accessed 22 Nov. 2024.

Assessment:

Based on my previous interview with Mr. Bruce McCarl, I decided to look at an Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) press release. In the 2023 climate change report, I decided to specifically look at their message to the press in order to see what the IPCC is trying to convince the media (and the public) of what is happening. In the press release, IPCC introduced the 2023 report as optimistic, reporting that there are “multiple, feasible and effective options” to reduce emissions and “adapt to human-caused climate change.” The statement of several convenient options raised a question of, why are individuals not acting more upon this easy-to-access information? It was interesting to read a report that opened with a calm, peaceful statement that climate change is easy to reverse. However, after reading more of the report, my expectations turned into a reality. The IPCC Chair, Hoesung Lee, emphasized the importance of taking more action in order to “secure a liveable sustainable future for all.” Thus, I began to question, if there was less initiative action, will we not have a sustainable future?

The IPCC provided key summaries of their synthesis report, educating the public about what is happening to our environment and any actions we should take. The IPCC still mentions that it supports the increasingly difficult challenge of keeping global warming to 1.5°C, or 2.7°F. Additionally it notes that the past century has burned too many fossil fuels and conducted too many unsustainable practices, leading to a warming of 1.1°C, or 2.0°F “above pre-industrial levels,” leading to extreme weather events that become even more difficult problems, like heat waves, heavy rainfalls, dehydration, and food and water insecurity. It was interesting to also see the IPCC noting the influence of “pandemics or conflicts” causing adverse events. Although pandemics lead to a decreased amount of circulation in the economy, I believe that unsustainable energy and burning fossil fuels have a far greater impact than conflicts in society. Perhaps hindsight and rising apprehension caused the press release to key the COVID-19 pandemic as a large influencer.

Through reading the press release, I discovered a meaningful quote that highlights the disproportionate effect climate change has on different communities. Quoting Aditi Mukherji, an author in the synthesis report, Mukherji highlights that “Climate justice is crucial because those who have contributed least to climate change are being disproportionately affected.” Mukherji’s quote did not shock me, as I saw similar findings in other research papers. However, it was shocking to realize that over half of the world’s population lives in places that are “15 times higher in highly vulnerable regions.” So, a solution that the IPCC poses is climate resilient development. I believe that implementing access to clean energy, helpful technologies, and quality air would effectively reduce emissions due to climate change being a human-driven problem. Thus, marginalized communities can also benefit from government-subsidized aid too.

After reading the IPCC Press Release, I understood that analyzing climate change policies requires many different components, including political commitment, international cooperation, and funding will aid in the almost-inevitable effects of climate change. IPCC remarks that we only need a staggering less than half of Earth's planet to be sustainable to act against climate change. I now therefore understand the complicated nature of environmental economics, and consequently decided to avoid the subjective nature of analyzing trends myself. For my original work, I plan to analyze the most recent synthesis report to gain an understanding of the status of current causes and effects of climate change and policymaking.