

David Suzuki Foundation calls on Canadians to support climate action in response to latest assessment report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

VANCOUVER, Sept. 27, 2013 /CNW/ - Scientists are more certain than ever that human activity -- in particular the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation -- is causing climate change, according to the First Installment of the Fifth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The report confirms that by contributing to droughts, flooding, severe weather events and ocean acidification, the impacts of global warming are already being felt around the world.

The David Suzuki Foundation is calling on all Canadians to support action on climate change as the report also shows it is possible to prevent the most serious risks of climate change, but the window of opportunity is closing and the response needs to be more urgent and far-reaching.

"This year in Canada, we experienced numerous extreme weather events, such as the floods in Calgary and Toronto," said David Suzuki Foundation science and policy manager Ian Bruce.

"This shows how vulnerable our communities are if climate change is allowed to intensify. The IPCC report suggests that if we continue with business as usual in terms of rising carbon emissions, we will become even more vulnerable. But the report says we still have a choice; we can act to reverse the trend in emissions growth."

"If you were 95 per cent certain your house was at risk of catching fire, and if there was something you could do to prevent it, you would do it," Bruce said.

The latest IPCC scenarios show temperatures could rise from 0.3 Celsius to almost five degrees this century, with the outcome largely dependent on how much action is taken to reduce emissions. The current rising global emission trajectory, mainly from overuse of fossil fuels, is dangerous as this is more likely to cause more dramatic temperature increases (at the upper temperature range) and extreme weather events in the future. The global average

temperature has already risen almost one degree Celsius since the start of the 20th century (since 1901).

"This may not seem like much, but it is," Bruce said. "Keep in mind that there is only a five degree difference between the Ice Age and our current climate, which can be likened to Goldilocks conditions -- just right for human habitation, not too hot and not too cold."

"Our parents' generation didn't know about the risk of global warming and climate change, but we do," Bruce said. "It's unfair to leave this problem to our children and grandchildren to deal with the dire consequences."

Background on the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report

The IPCC produces the most comprehensive scientific reports about climate change globally, based on the greatest consensus of international scientists. The IPCC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. On September 27 (for the summary) and September 30 (for the full report), 2013, the first of four installments of the Fifth Assessment Report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are being released from Stockholm

. The report collates current understanding of how the world's natural systems that support human life are changing and will continue to change as a result of the unprecedented amounts of carbon pollution being released into the atmosphere. The previous assessment, the Fourth Assessment Report, was released in 2007 and sparked serious global debate on climate change action. This first installment of the Fifth Report is on the physical science of climate change. Subsequent installments of the Fifth Report will be released over the coming year. They assess the best available research worldwide on climate impacts (second installment) and mitigation strategies (third installment), followed by a synthesis report bringing together the three chapters.

The summary for policy-makers report was released today and the full report will be released on Monday.

For IPCC media release and report: <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Worst impacts of climate change still avoidable if we act now

Written by Australian Business

David Suzuki Foundation media backgrounder is available here: http://www.davidsuzuki.org/media/news/downloads/DSF_IPCC_WG1_Backgrounder.pdf

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