

Foreword

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was jointly established by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1988. Its terms of reference include (i) to assess available scientific and socio-economic information on climate change and its impacts and on the options for mitigating climate change and adapting to it and (ii) to provide, on request, scientific/technical/socio-economic advice to the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). From 1990, the IPCC has produced a series of Assessment Reports, Special Reports, Technical Papers, methodologies and other products that have become standard works of reference, widely used by policy-makers, scientists and other experts.

This volume, which forms part of the Third Assessment Report (TAR), has been produced by Working Group I (WGI) of the IPCC and focuses on the science of climate change. It consists of 14 chapters covering the physical climate system, the factors that drive climate change, analyses of past climate and projections of future climate change, and detection and attribution of human influences on recent climate.

As is usual in the IPCC, success in producing this report has depended first and foremost on the knowledge, enthusiasm and co-operation of many hundreds of experts worldwide, in many related but different disciplines. We would like to express our gratitude to all the Co-ordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors, Contributing Authors, Review Editors and Reviewers. These individuals have devoted enormous time and effort to produce this report and we are extremely grateful for their commitment to the IPCC process. We would like to thank the staff of the WGI Technical Support Unit and the IPCC Secretariat for their dedication in co-ordinating the production of another successful IPCC report. We are also grateful to the governments, who have supported their scientists' participation in the IPCC process and who have contributed to the IPCC Trust Fund to provide for the essential participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. We would like to express our appreciation to the governments of France, Tanzania, New Zealand and Canada who hosted drafting sessions in their countries, to the government of China, who hosted the final session of Working Group I in Shanghai, and to the government of the United Kingdom, who funded the WGI Technical Support Unit.

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