

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 includes: (i) to assess available scientific and socioeconomic 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/socioeconomic 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 policymakers, scientists, and other experts.

This volume, which forms part of the Third Assessment Report (TAR), has been produced by Working Group II (WGII) of the IPCC and focuses on the environmental, social, and economic consequences of climate change and potential adaptation responses. It consists of 19 chapters covering the sensitivity, adaptive capacity, and vulnerability of natural and human systems to climate change, and the potential impacts and adaptation options at regional and global scales.

As is usual in the IPCC, success in producing this report has depended first and foremost on the knowledge, enthusiasm, and cooperation of many hundreds of experts worldwide, in many related but different disciplines. We would like to express

our gratitude to all the Coordinating Lead Authors, Lead Authors, Contributing Authors, Review Editors, and Expert 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 WGII Technical Support Unit and the IPCC Secretariat for their dedication in coordinating the production of another successful IPCC report.

We are also grateful to the governments that have supported their scientists' participation in the IPCC process and that 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 Australia, Japan, Malta, Morocco, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United States that hosted drafting sessions in their countries, to the government of Switzerland that hosted the Sixth Session of Working Group II in Geneva, and to the government of the United States that funded the WGII Technical Support Unit.

We would particularly like to thank Dr. Robert Watson, Chairman of the IPCC, for his sound direction and tireless and able guidance of the IPCC, and Prof. James McCarthy and Dr. Osvaldo Canziani, the Co-Chairmen of Working Group II, for their skillful leadership of Working Group II through the production of this report.

G.O.P. Obasi

Secretary-General
World Meteorological Organization

K. Töpfer

Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme
and
Director-General
United Nations Office in Nairobi

