

## INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS HEAR SOUTHERN AFRICA A CLIMATE CHANGE 'HOT-SPOT'

Delegates attending the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) held at the Durban ICC.  
Picture: Motshwari Mofokeng/African News Agency (ANA)

DURBAN – Southern Africa is on the frontline of rising global temperatures and is in need of greater research and assessment to quantify the likely effects of climate change, the department of environmental affairs (DEA) said on Monday.

DEA deputy director-general Dr. Tsakani Ngomane urged delegates at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) -- a United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change -- to discuss “climate change adaptation in the developing world”.

Ngomane was addressing experts on the first day of their week-long meeting at Durban’s Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre.

He said the IPCC special report, titled SR1.5 and finalised in October 2018, made a clear case for why global temperatures must be restricted to an increase of 1.5 °C.

“A first key message of the report is that there are substantial benefits to be achieved in terms of avoiding the climate change impacts if global warming can be restricted to 1.5 °C,” said Ngomane.

He said in the regional context, the South African interior temperatures were already about 2 °C higher than a century ago and were rising at a rate “twice the global rate of temperature increase”. This was due to systemic anthropogenic-induced climate change (induced by humans), he said.

“Further to the north, over Botswana, temperatures are rising at a rate of about 3 °C per century -- Botswana is in fact one of the regions with the highest rate of temperature increase in the entire southern hemisphere,” said Ngomane, pointing out that this had led to crop failure and the death of livestock.

He said the drought in Cape Town from 2015 to 2018 was a stark reminder of “regional climate change impacts” and that while the Mother City averted so-called day zero, when it would run out of water “...a recently published climate change attribution study tells us that the risk for droughts of this magnitude occurring in Cape Town has already increased by a factor of three, as a consequence of man-made climate change”.

“I was thus not surprised to note that SR1.5 has identified southern Africa as a climate change hot-spot region. The report clearly indicates that under 2 °C of global warming substantial increases in heat-waves, high fire-danger days and more frequent drought are likely in southern Africa. This will impact on our agriculture and water security and constrain economic growth. However, if we can restrict global warming to 1.5 °C, many of these impacts can be reduced or even avoided,” said Ngomane.

He urged the delegates to discuss “climate change adaptation in the developing world” with attention paid to assessments of “projected impacts and vulnerabilities” in areas such as “agriculture, water security, energy demand, human health and biodiversity”.

“Rapid urbanisation is expected in Africa over the next few decades and into the 21st century, and how this growth can be sustained under climate change is a critical question,” said Ngomane.

The gathering of experts, known as the “IPCC Working Group II” will deal with the impacts, adaptation and vulnerability to climate change.

The working group is made up of more than 250 delegates from around the world. Their deliberations will contribute to the “Sixth Assessment Report (AR6)” which will focus on the impacts of “climate change on natural and human systems and their vulnerabilities”.

Expected to be finished in 2021, the AR6 will be used, along with other reports, at the 2023 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to assess progress under the Paris Agreement.

