Twitter Thread by Eric Holthaus



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The world's top climate scientists are about to announce that—without radical coordinated action—the world has locked in warming of at least 1.5°C.

Heroic efforts are now necessary to save the world from catastrophic climate change.
Be a hero.
Watch live: https://t.co/hKTSlTMD7k

IPCC: Limiting climate change to below 1.5°C would require "unprecedented transitions in all aspects of society."

(Less than 400 people worldwide are watching this lifestream right now.)

IPCC: The world has already warmed 1.0°C above pre-industrial levels.

On our current path, the world will reach 1.5°C warming in as little as 12 years.

IPCC: Limiting warming to less than 1.5°C would save 10 million people from sea level rise displacement vs. warming of 2°C and *several hundred million* people from climate-related extreme poverty.

several hundred million people.

IPCC: The world would need to reduce emissions by about half from current levels by 2030 to be on track for limiting warming to 1.5°C

The current pledges in *every country in the world* are not enough.

IPCC (paraphrased): Creating a better world is necessary to limit warming to 1.5°C

This is the world we need. This is also the world we want.

First question, from BBC: What's different about this report?

IPCC: "It's very clear that half a degree matters."

2nd Q, German press agency: Is 1.5C feasible? How optimistic are you on a scale from 1-10?

IPCC: We identified 6 different conditions we'd need to meet to hit 1.5C. Is it possible within the laws of physics? Yes. But the political feasibility? Frankly, that's up to politicians.

3rd Q, Associated Press: What is the impact of the US withdraw from Paris?

IPCC: We don't look at individual countries. We have sent a clear signal to the collectivity of countries. Feasibility isnt something for the scientists to decide, that's up to the countries of the world.

IPCC: We can tell countries what would need to happen to limit global warming to safe levels. But the question of what will happen... that's up to the 195 sovereign countries of the world.

IPCC: "We are at the crossroads. What is going to happen between now and 2030 is critical."

"If we don't act now" it will be essentially impossible to limit warming to 1.5°C.

"The only linking word you can use is 'and' in order to achieve the level of ambition necessary."

IPCC: "It's a tremendous collective endeavor."

"We did feel the weight of working on this report. ... We exist in this shrinking space of possibilities."

"This report comes with wishful thinking that the message is being taken up by public and policy makers."

IPCC: "It's very clear just how important this report is."

Q: What message do you have for small island nations, who have staked their very existence on limiting warming to less than 1.5°C?

IPCC: "It is within the scope of what humans can achieve."

Q: How soon do coal, oil, and natural gas need to be phased out entirely?

IPCC: "The report is quite clear ... all pathways require quite significant changes in the pattern of fossil fuel use. ... Coal will have to be reduced very, very substantially by mid-century."

IPCC (paraphrased): Carbon pricing might be most useful in motivating the now-necessarily massively vast carbon removal that needs to happen by mid-century.

IPCC: This report could become an anchor for sustainable development globally.

Really important question from @blkahn: "What about geoengineering?"

IPCC: We didn't consider the possible impact of geoengineering in this report. "We have to follow the literature," and there is essentially no reliable information to know what would happen.

Q: "What about aviation and shipping?"

IPCC: Aviation and shipping aren't part of the UNFCCC. But, it's very difficult to keep planes in the air without petroleum or biofuels. This report shows drastic reductions in petroleum use by mid-century.

IPCC: Remember, hundreds of millions of people will benefit from meeting the 1.5°C goal. The cost of radically reshaping human society to achieve this goal is less than the cost of not meeting it.

IPCC press conference is over.

It's me again.

Folks, if the world takes this announcement seriously, it would become quite simply one of the most important moments in human history. If the world doesn't take it seriously -- our civilization itself is at stake. Stark, but true.