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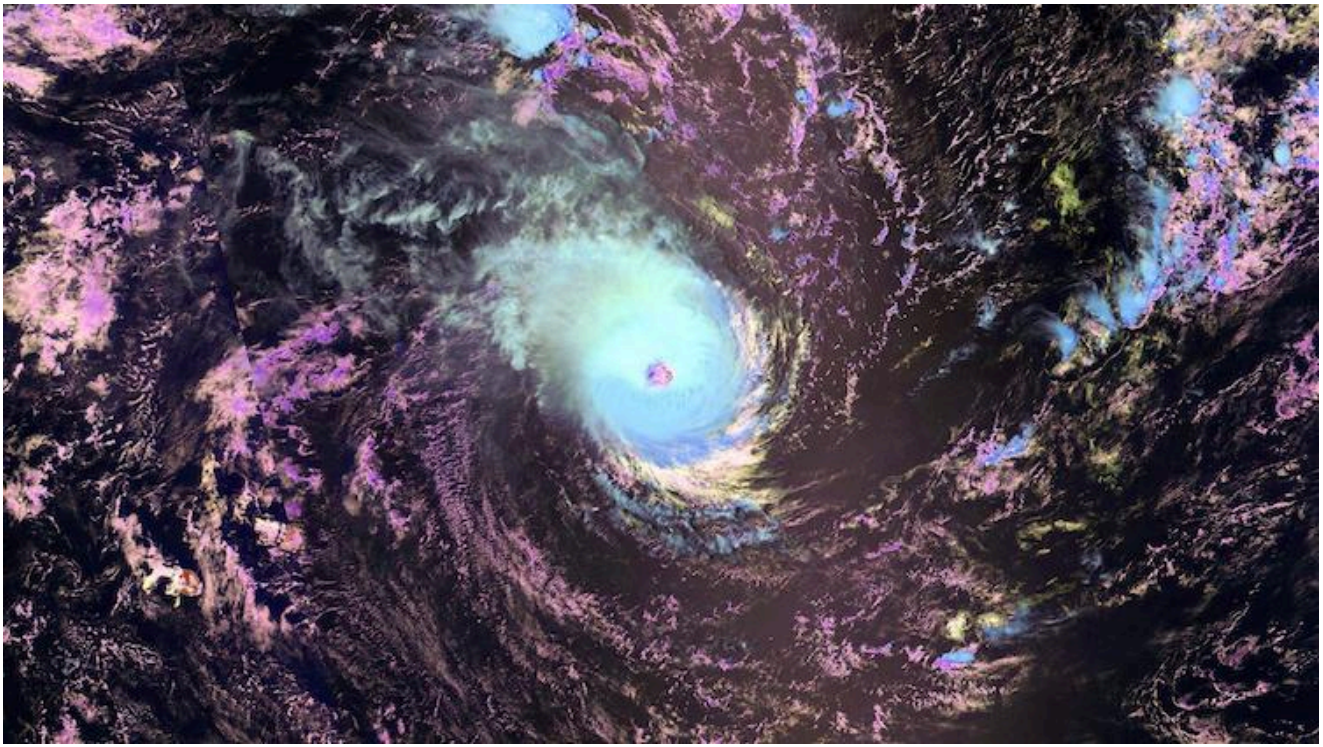


Image: Record-breaking Tropical Cyclone Freddy. Source: Eumetsat

Climate Change Poses Existential Threat to the World's Poorest

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Plea for Radical Reduction in Global Emissions

By Rita Joshi

BONN, 21 March 2023 (IDN) — “We’re running out of time but not out of options to address climate change,” declared Simon Stiell, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary, commenting on the [IPCC’s Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Report](#), released on 20 March.

“We are not doing enough, and the poor and vulnerable are bearing the brunt of our collective failure to act,” said Madeleine Diouf Sarr, Chair of the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group commenting on the Synthesis Report. “The world cannot ignore the human cost of inaction,” she maintained.

She pointed out that just last week, Cyclone Freddy resulted in hundreds of deaths and displaced thousands of people in Malawi, Mozambique and Madagascar.

The solutions are well-known: Renewables, storage, electrification—they are already gaining place in many parts of the world. “But not enough. We need to move faster, with rich countries leading the way,” Ms Sarr warned.

Since the last round of IPCC reports, science has progressed and we can see that the risks we face—drought, rising seas, floods—are happening, and will happen, at lower levels of warming.

She expressed disappointment that climate finance growth has slowed since 2018, when it should have accelerated. “The largest gaps are in the developing world. But so too are the largest opportunities. We must shift these flows and increase access to finance to advance our collective prosperity and reach net zero.”

The Synthesis Report, noted Stiell, adds more clarity and detail to a simple truth: “we have to do more on climate change now”, he said. Because we are in a critical decade for climate action. Global emissions need to be reduced by nearly 43 per cent by 2030 for the world to achieve the Paris Agreement’s goal to limit global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The Synthesis Report highlights just how far off-track we are. “Yet it’s not too late,” said Stiell. The IPCC clearly demonstrates that it is possible to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius with rapid and deep emissions reductions across all sectors of the global economy. It has given us many feasible, effective and low-cost mitigation and adaptation options to scale up across sectors and countries.

Ms Sarr said “we must halve our emissions in this decade and limit warming to 1.5°C. We must bend the emissions curve down, global emissions need to peak before 2025”.

Without stronger mitigation and adaptation, the world is relegating the Least Developed Countries to poverty, she warned. Our ability to adapt lessens as temperatures rise. Adequate and accessible funding for adaptation is critical to ensure our communities can build resilience and future-proof their development.

Loss and damage is also a critical part of this story. We must get the Loss and Damage fund up and running by the end of this year so that resources can get to those in need, said Chair of the LDC group.

“Climate change is a vicious cycle but we will never be able to make more of a difference than now.” For this reason, all governments must come forward with new, more ambitious NDCs ahead of the COP28 this year. The United Nations Secretary General’s ambition summit is important. Governments, therefore, must use it to build momentum for change. “We are running out of time.”

“If we are to halve emissions by the end of the decade, we need to get specific now,” Stiell added. This year’s so-called Global Stocktake—a process under which countries assess progress towards the Paris goals—is a moment for countries to agree on the concrete milestones that will take us to our 2030 targets.

This roadmap must include detailed steps for all sectors and themes, including climate adaptation, loss and damage, finance, technology and capacity building, he declared.

By giving us not only a plan based on available options, but also finance reform and a renewed sense of political and corporate accountability on climate change, COP28 can be the moment where we start to course correct to collectively meet the Paris goals.

The 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP28) from 30 November to 12 December 2023 at the Expo City in Dubai, “can be the moment where we start to course correct to collectively meet the Paris goals”, Stiell said. [IDN-InDepthNews]

Image: Record-breaking Tropical Cyclone Freddy. Source: Eumetsat

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