

Director of HKO hosts academic session with United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group Co-chairs

The Director of the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO), Mr Shun Chi-ming, jointly hosted an academic session with two Working Group (WG) Co-chairs of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), namely Professor Panmao Zhai of WG I and Professor Hans-Otto Pörtner of WG II, on the impact of climate change yesterday (October 17).

The session, which was attended by about 80 local academics and government engineers, was held during the Co-chairs' visit to Hong Kong. Featuring the salient points of the three Special Reports published by the IPCC in the past year, the session provided participants with the opportunity to discuss and exchange views on the latest scientific findings in the field of climate change and its relevance to Hong Kong.

The three IPCC Special Reports are the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, the Special Report on Climate Change and Land and the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, which summarised the impacts of climate change on land, ocean, the cryosphere and ecosystems. According to the reports, the land surface air temperature has risen nearly twice as much as the global average temperature since the pre-industrial period, leading to more frequent and intense weather extremes. Furthermore, if global carbon emissions continue to show no signs of abating, the global mean sea level rise for 2100 is projected to be 10 centimetres higher than that in the previous assessment, representing a 14 per cent increase. Extreme El Niño and La Niña events are also expected to occur more frequently in future.

In respect of Hong Kong, citing the destructive power of storm surges brought by Super Typhoons Hato and Mangkhut in 2017 and 2018, Mr Shun stressed that Hong Kong is not immune to the impacts of climate change, and mitigation, adaptation and resilience measures are most important in combating climate change.

Mr Shun added that the HKO, as a member of the Government's Steering Committee on Climate Change, will continue to provide scientific input in support of the work of the relevant bureaux and departments. The HKO will also make ongoing efforts to help raise public awareness of climate change and its impacts through outreach and educational activities with a view to enhancing the community's preparedness and resilience.

The IPCC was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, with an aim of

providing governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies. The IPCC work is shared among three WGs, a Task Force and Task Groups. WG I assesses the physical science of climate change; WG II looks after the impacts, adaptation and vulnerability aspects; and WG III covers mitigation of climate change.