

## **OPERATIONAL NOTE:**

### **UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD NEWS OFFICE**

#### **First major international conference to discuss the science behind the 1.5 °C climate goal**

**CONFERENCE:** '1.5 degrees: Meeting the challenges of the Paris Agreement'

**LAUNCH:** 5pm on 20 September 2016 (conference runs 20-22 Sept)

**VENUE:** Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford, OX1 1BX

The ambition of the 2015 Paris Agreement of the 21st Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change caught the world by surprise. The largest emitters, the United States and China, have already signed up to the agreement, which sets the goal of limiting global warming to 'well below' 2 degrees, with an aim possibly as low as 1.5 degrees Celsius. The University of Oxford's Environmental Change Institute (ECI) will host a conference attended by over 200 scientists, policymakers and business people to understand its implications, looking particularly at how this goal could be achieved. Findings will contribute to a Special Report on 1.5 degrees that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) will produce in 2018.

Keynote speakers launching the conference on 20 September include some of the figures behind the Paris climate agreement: Janos Pasztor, Senior Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on Climate Change; and Laurence Tubiana, French climate ambassador.

'The Paris Agreement was a great achievement,' says Janos Pasztor, 'but it was only the beginning. Governments made it clear where they would like to go, but the details of how to get there still need to be worked out. Success depends on implementation: what countries do to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change. The academic community has a responsibility and an opportunity here to think outside the box and come up with new ideas on pathways and implications of rapid climate stabilisation.'

'Scientists were surprised and impressed by the ambition of the 1.5°C goal. Many are asking what it actually means, and whether it can still be achieved,' says conference organiser Myles Allen, Professor of Geosystem Science at the University of Oxford's Environmental Change Institute and IPCC Lead Author. 'We aren't there yet – but although 1.5°C will clearly be a challenge, we must be careful to avoid a self-fulfilling prophecy. If, as academics, we don't explore the implications of these ambitious goals, then governments won't feel confident in pushing them. Frankly, I'd much rather research the implications of different degrees of climate ambition than different degrees of climate failure.'

Dr Saleemul Huq, Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) in Bangladesh and visiting speaker at the Oxford conference, also calls for action: 'The challenge before the world is to now achieve the long-term temperature goal of 1.5°C which was agreed in Paris in December even if it is hard to do.'

To mark the start of the conference, the ECI will launch a new website: <http://globalwarmingindex.org>, showing the current level of human-induced climate change, to track progress over coming decades to limiting warming to 1.5°C.

The day after the launch of the Oxford conference, Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, will welcome leaders from 175 countries at a special ratification event in New York. His aim will be to accelerate the entry into force of the Paris Climate Agreement.

In addition to ECI, the Oxford conference is supported by the Centre for International Climate and Environmental Research – Oslo, the Priestley International Centre for Climate at the University of Leeds, the Met Office, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Tyndall Centre for Climate Impacts

Research, FutureEarth, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and the University of Cape Town.

*Professor Myles Allen (ECI), Janos Pasztor (Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs) and Dr Saleemul Huq (ICCCAD) will be available to talk to media about the Oxford conference, including the policy options for discussion. For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact the University News Office at [news.office@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:news.office@admin.ox.ac.uk); or Tel: +44 (0)1865 280534.*

#### **NOTES FOR EDITORS:**

\*Media who want to attend any part of the conference: '1.5 degrees: Meeting the challenges of the Paris Agreement' should register in advance with Helen Morley, Information and Communications Officer: [helen.morley@ouce.ox.ac.uk](mailto:helen.morley@ouce.ox.ac.uk)

\*Live webcasts of the public keynote talks (17:00 GMT, 20 September) and the main conference talks (09:00-17:15 GMT, 21 – 22 September) can be live streamed at <http://www.1point5degrees.org.uk/1-5-live>

\*The launch event is at Oxford Town Hall. There may be opportunities for media interviews with Janos Pasztor and Laurence Tubiana.

\* A video of Professor Myles Allen called 'Is 1.5c possible?' is available to use on news websites. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUCCRd-qQIM>

\*For more information about the conference, go to <http://www.1point5degrees.org.uk/>

\*The Environmental Change Institute (ECI) was founded in 1991 in The University of Oxford "to organise and promote interdisciplinary research on the nature, causes and impact of environmental change and to contribute to the development of management strategies for coping with future environmental change." With a portfolio of 50 active projects, 350 partners and 60 researchers working across 40 countries, the ECI is an active and influential player in environmental and climate change science. The ECI is home to the world's biggest climate prediction, citizen science climate modelling and weather attribution programme.

\*The UN Press Release <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2016/07/un-secretary-general-invites-all-member-states-to-event-on-21-september-aimed-at-accelerating-paris-agreement-entry-into-force/>

\* Images from the event will be available to media afterwards.

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