Climate Change:
A Risk to Manage with Care

An Overview Based on the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5)

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AXA, Brussels, 12 June 2015

Thanks to the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to my team at the Université catholique de Louvain for their support

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Why the IPCC ?

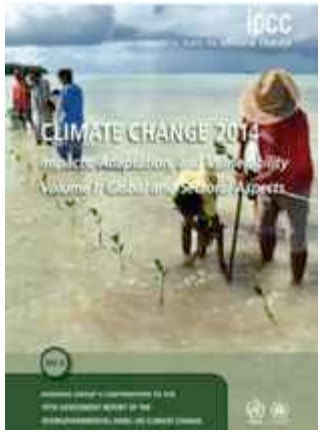
Established by WMO and UNEP in 1988

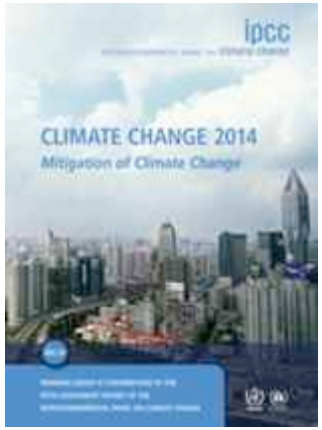
to provide policy-makers with an objective source of information about

- causes of climate change,
- potential environmental and socio-economic impacts,
- possible response options (adaptation & mitigation).

WMO=World Meteorological Organizatior

UNEP= United Nations Environment Programme





What is happening in the climate system?

What are the risks?

What can be done?

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Key messages from IPCC AR5

- Human influence on the climate system is clear
- Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will increase the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems
- While climate change is a threat to sustainable development, there are many opportunities to integrate mitigation, adaptation, and the pursuit of other societal objectives
- Humanity has the means to limit climate change and build a more sustainable and resilient future

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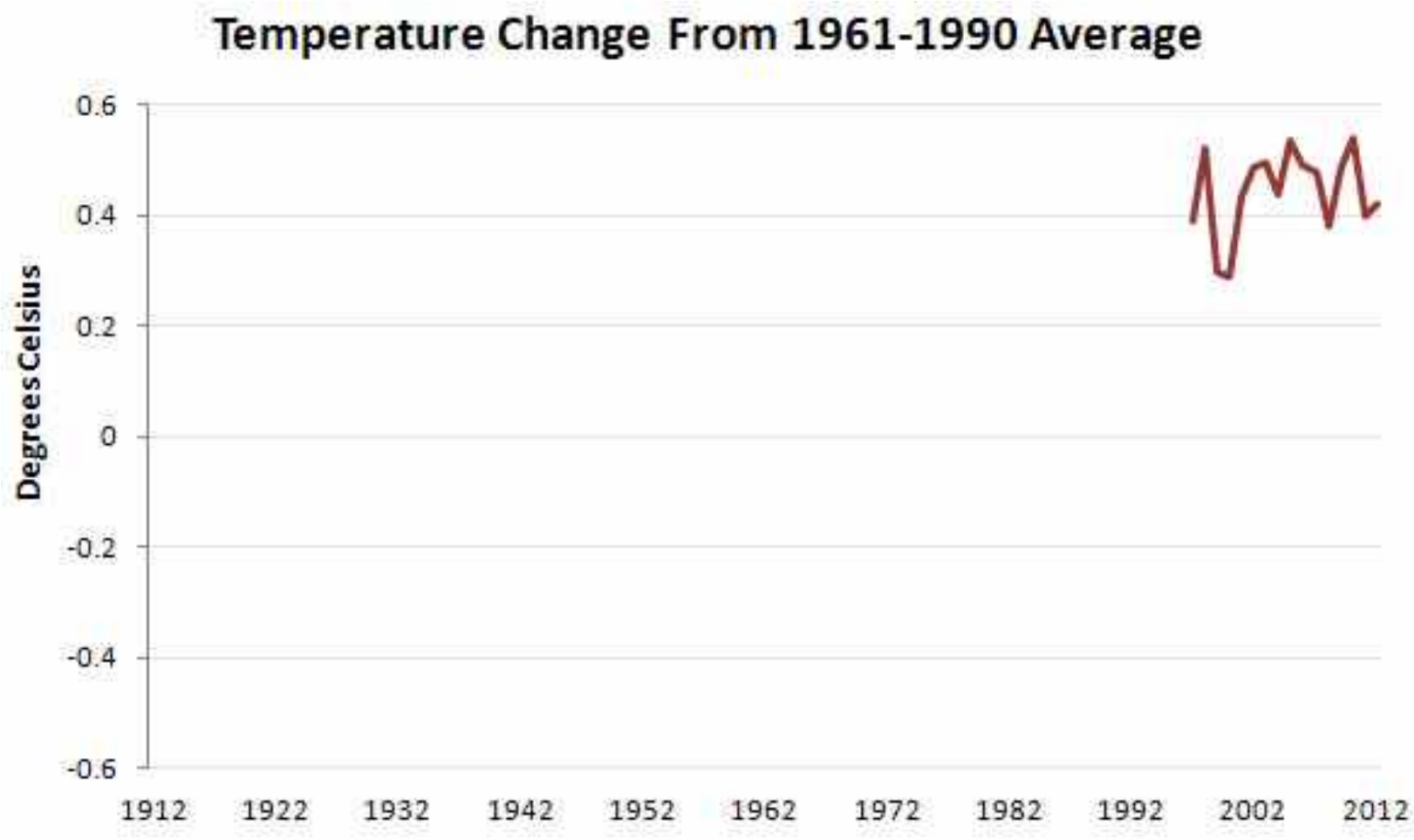
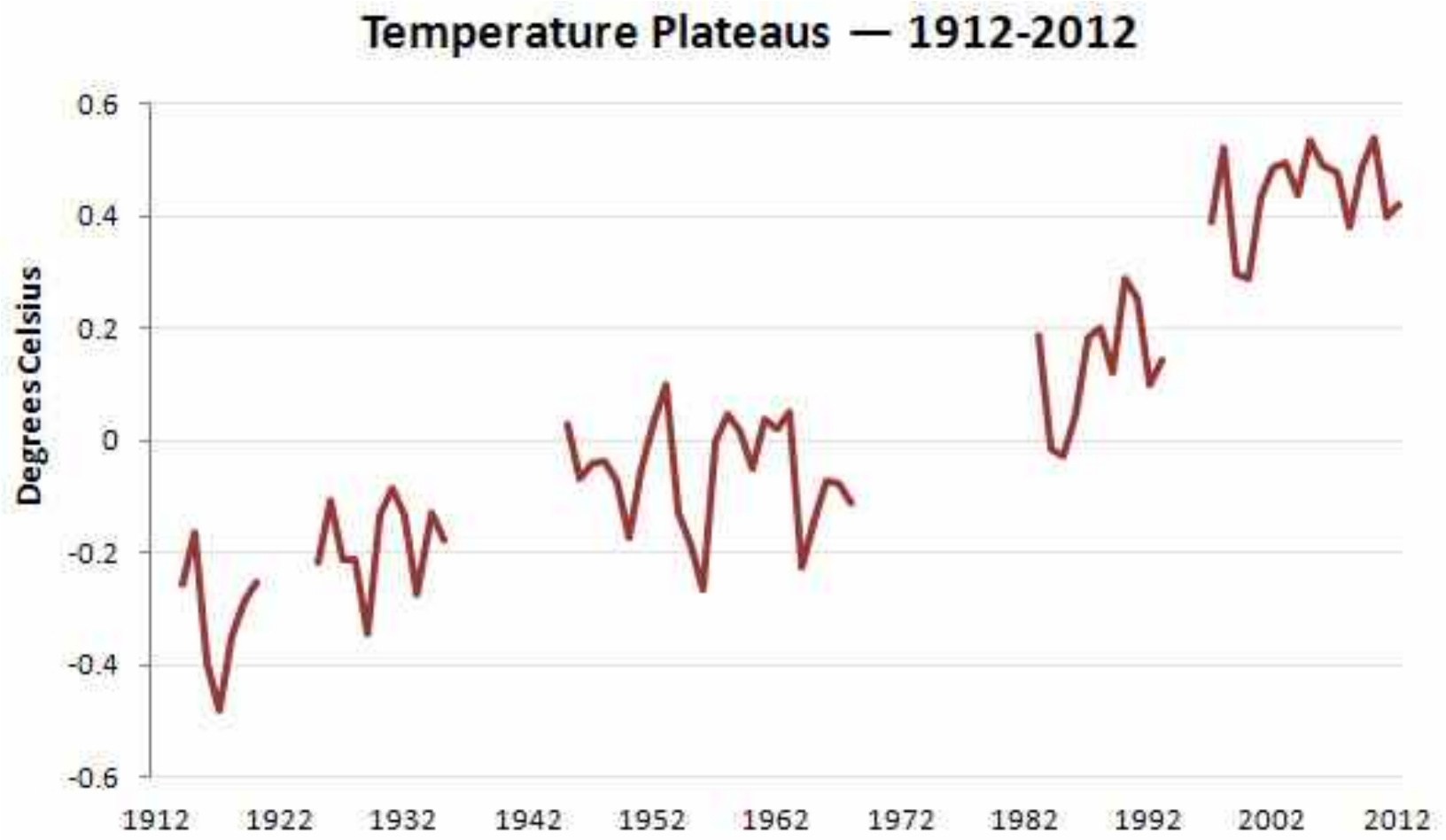


http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2012/10/lying-statistics-global-warming-edition

Lying With Statistics, Global Warming Edition



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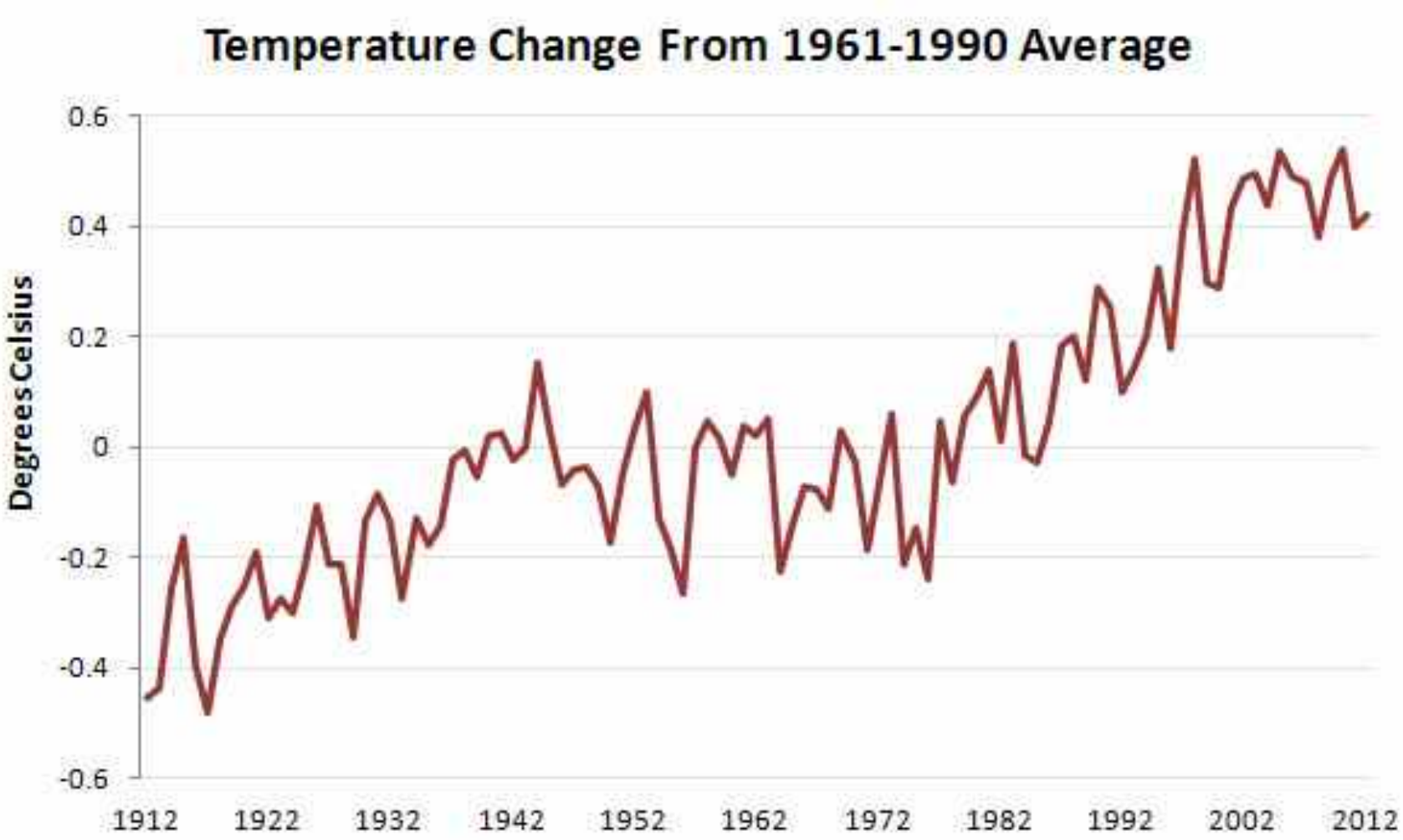


http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2012/10/lying-statistics-global-warming-edition

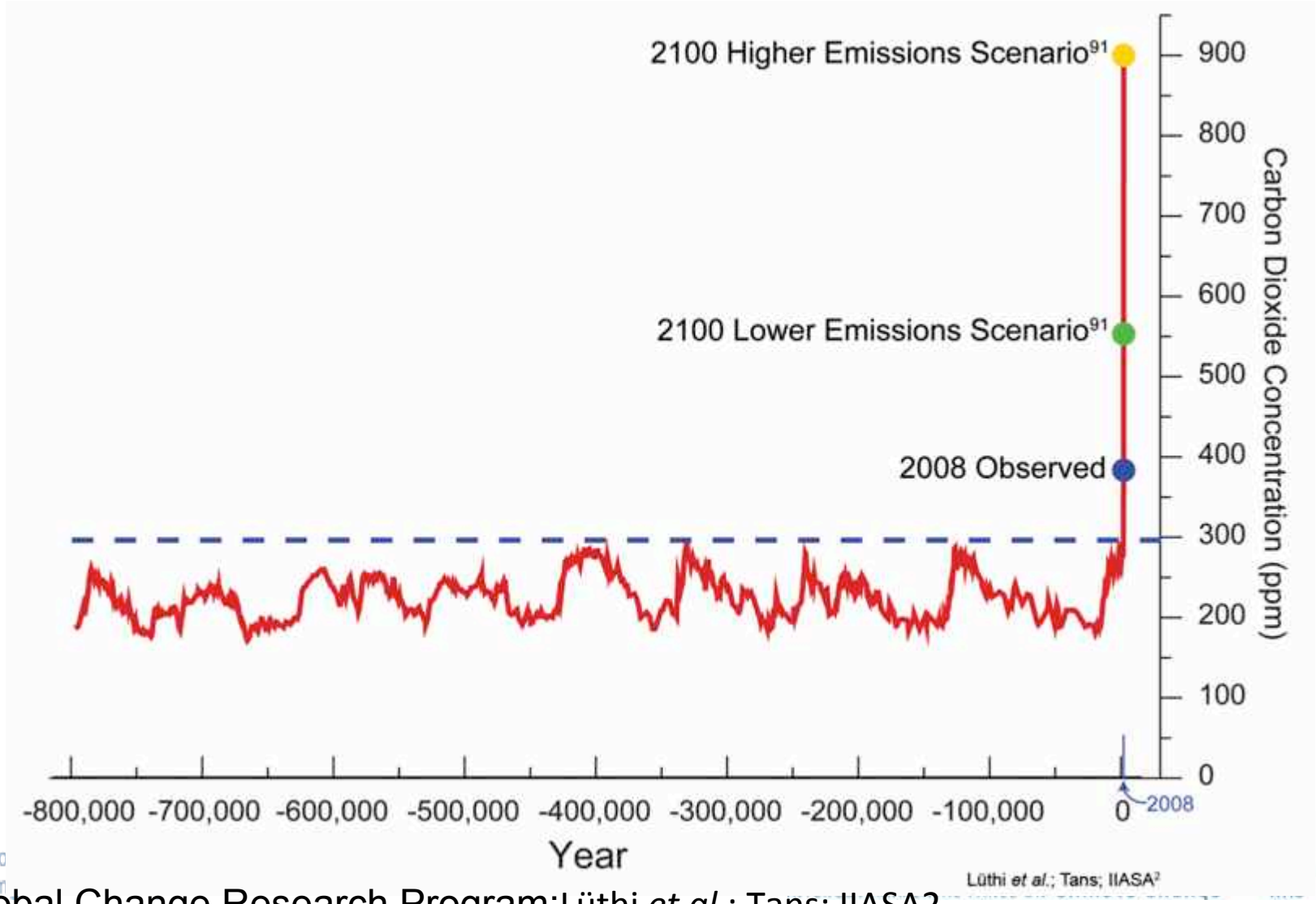
Plateau Glacier (1961)
(Alaska)

http://www.weather.com/news/science/environment/alaskas-glaciers-capturing-earth-changing-our-eyes-20131125?cm_ven=Email&cm_cat=ENVIRONMENT_us_share

Plateau Glacier (2003) (Alaska)

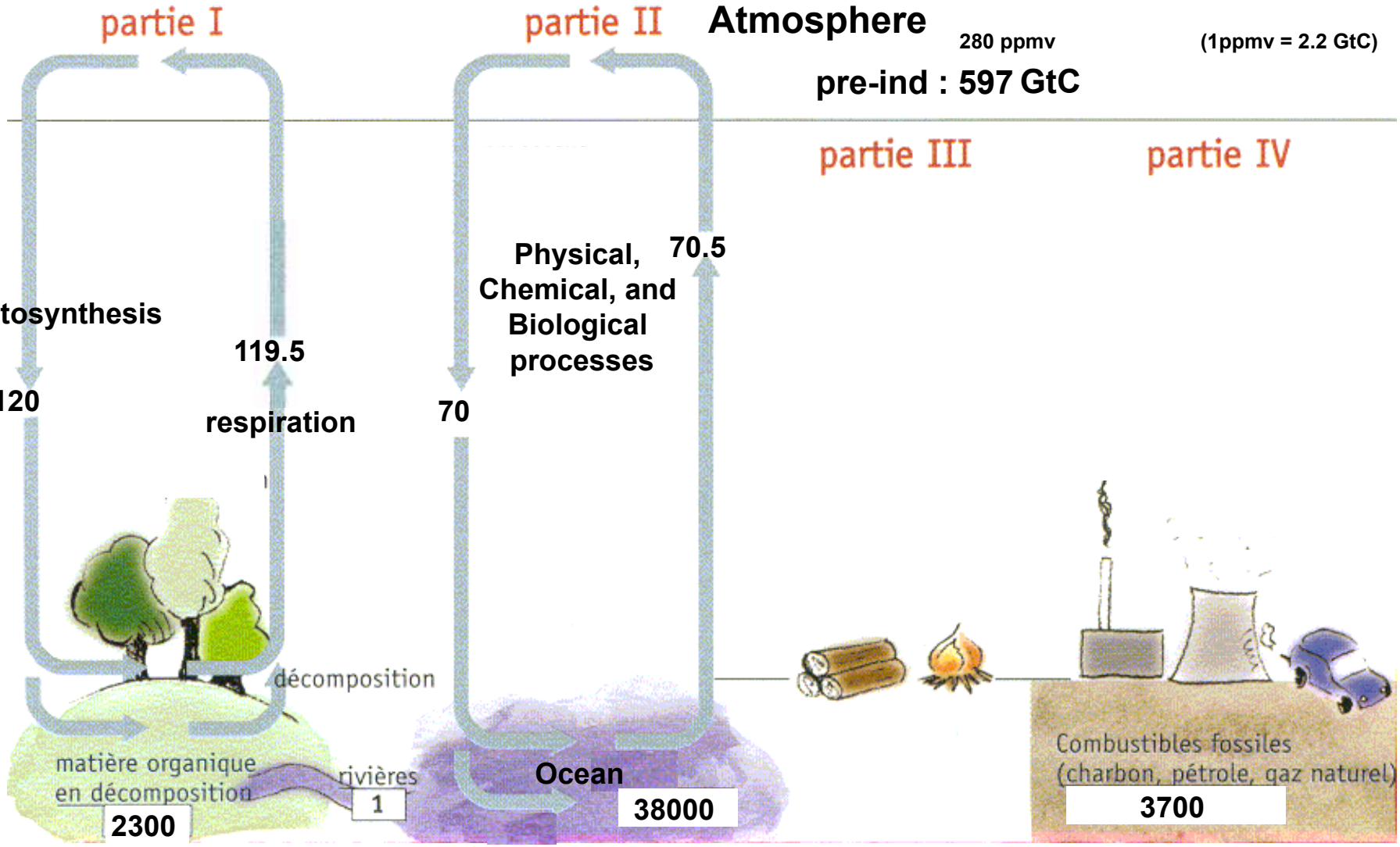
http://www.weather.com/news/science/environment/alaskas-glaciers-capturing-earth-changing-our-eyes-20131125?cm_ven=Email&cm_cat=ENVIRONMENT_us_share

Atmospheric CO_2 over the last 800000 years



U.S. Global Change Research Program:Lüthi *et al.*; Tans; IIASA2

Carbon cycle: unperturbed fluxes

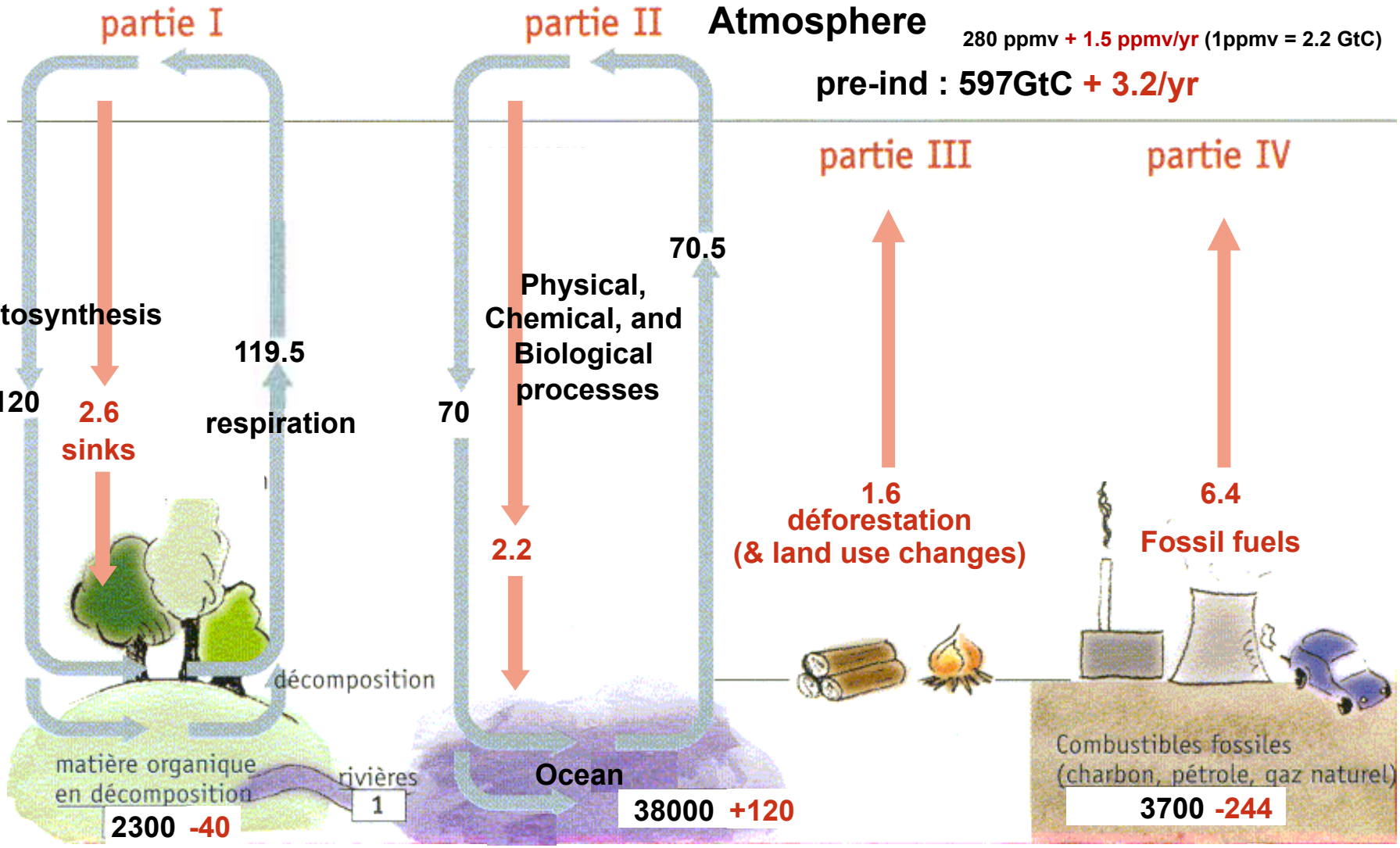


Units: GtC (billions tons of carbon) or GtC/year (multiply by 3.7 to get $GtCO_2$)

vanyp@climate.be

Carbon cycle: perturbed by human activities

(numbers for the decade 1990-1999s, based on IPCC AR4)



Units: GtC (billions tons of carbon) or GtC/year

Stocks!

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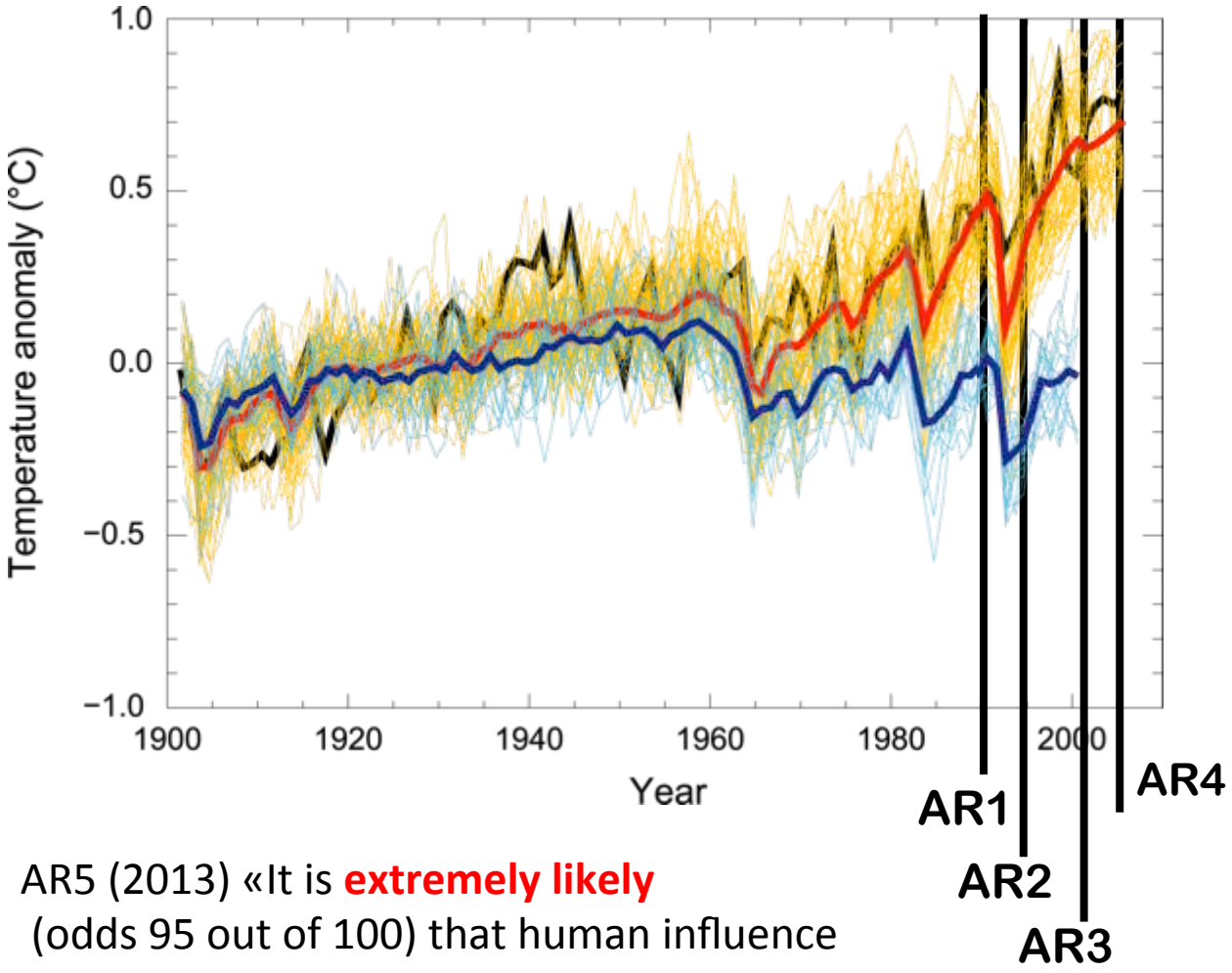
A Progression of Understanding: Greater and Greater Certainty in Attribution

AR1 (1990): "unequivocal detection not likely for a decade"

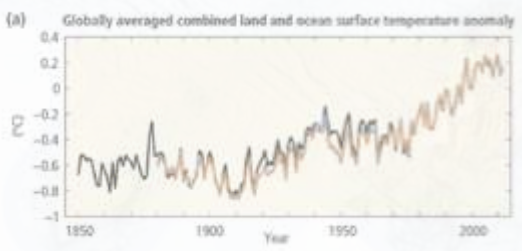
AR2 (1995): "balance of evidence suggests **discernible** human influence"

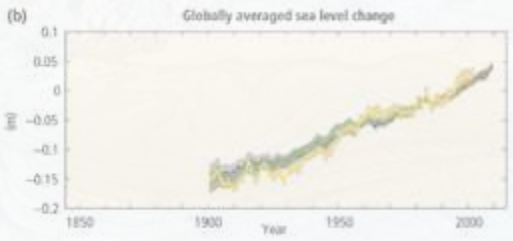
AR3 (2001): "most of the warming of the past 50 years is **likely** (odds 2 out of 3) due to human activities"

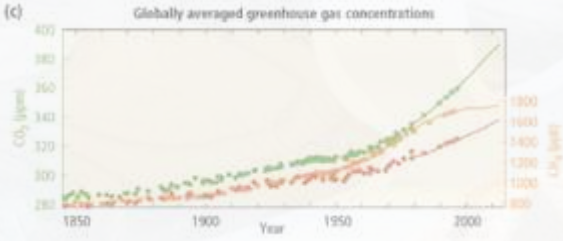
AR4 (2007): "most of the warming is **very likely** (odds 9 out of 10) due to greenhouse gases"

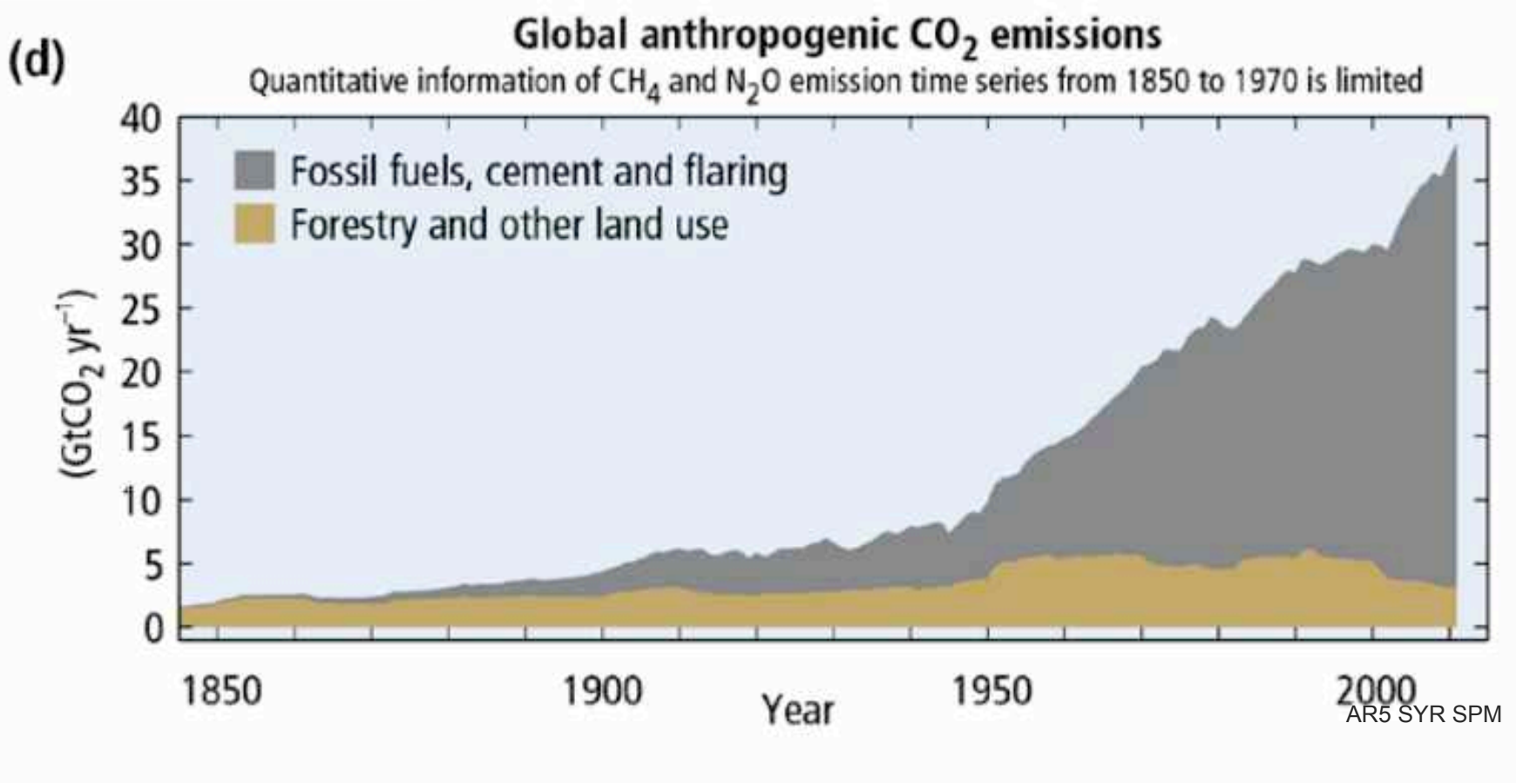


AR5 (2013) «It is **extremely likely** (odds 95 out of 100) that human influence has been the dominant cause… »


(a)
Globally averaged combined land and ocean surface temperature anomaly
°C
Year


(b)
Globally averaged sea level change
Year


(c)
Globally averaged greenhouse gas concentrations
Year


(d)
Global anthropogenic CO_2 emissions
Quantitative information of CH_4 and N_2O emission time series from 1850 to 1970 is limited
Fossil fuels, cement and flaring
Forestry and other land use
$(GtCO_2\ yr^{-1})$
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
1850
1900
1950
2000
Year

AR5 SYR SPM

Sources of emissions

Energy production remains the primary driver of GHG emissions

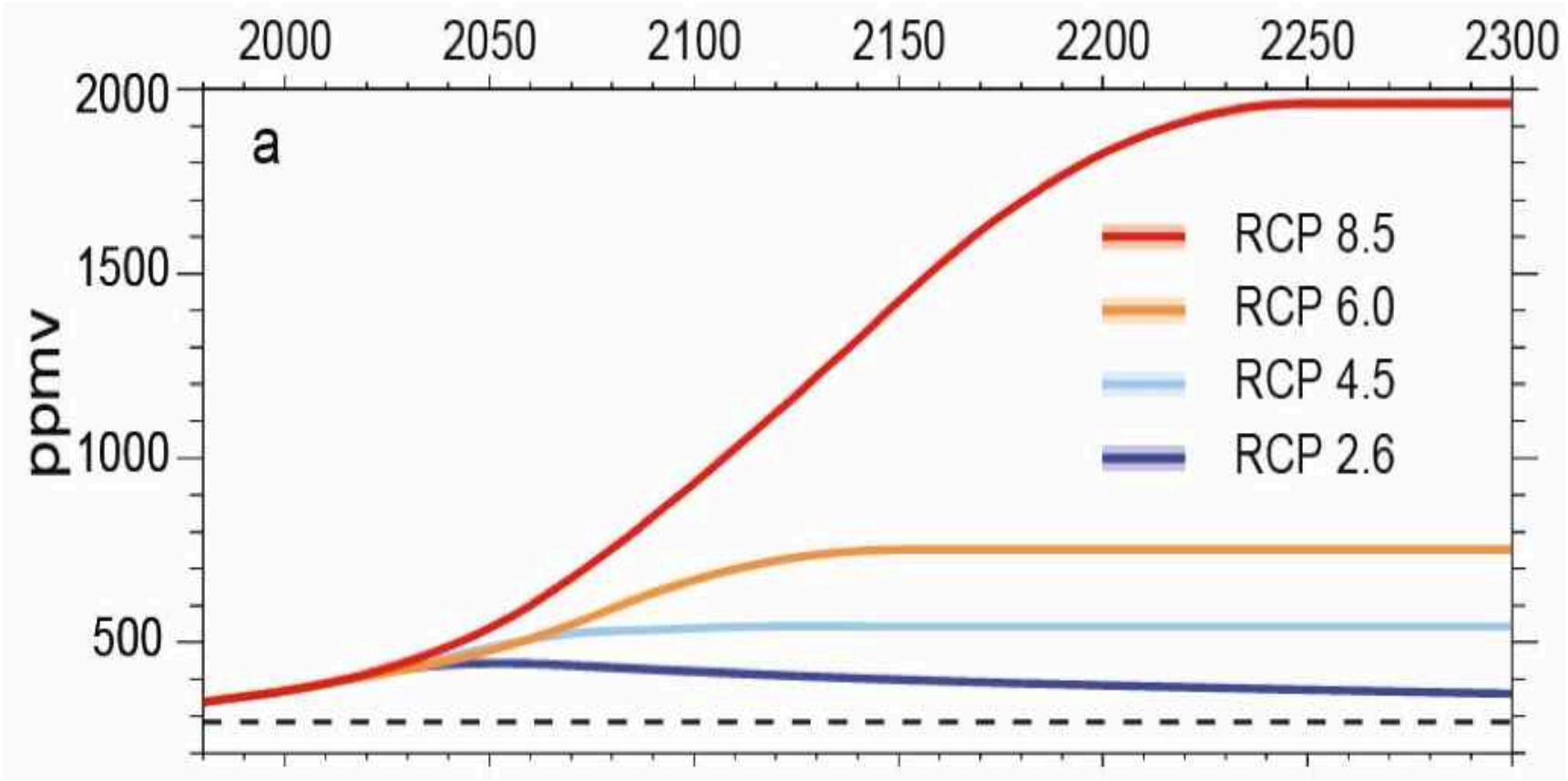
2010 GHG emissions

AR5 WGIII SPM

Since 1950, extreme hot days and heavy precipitation have become more common

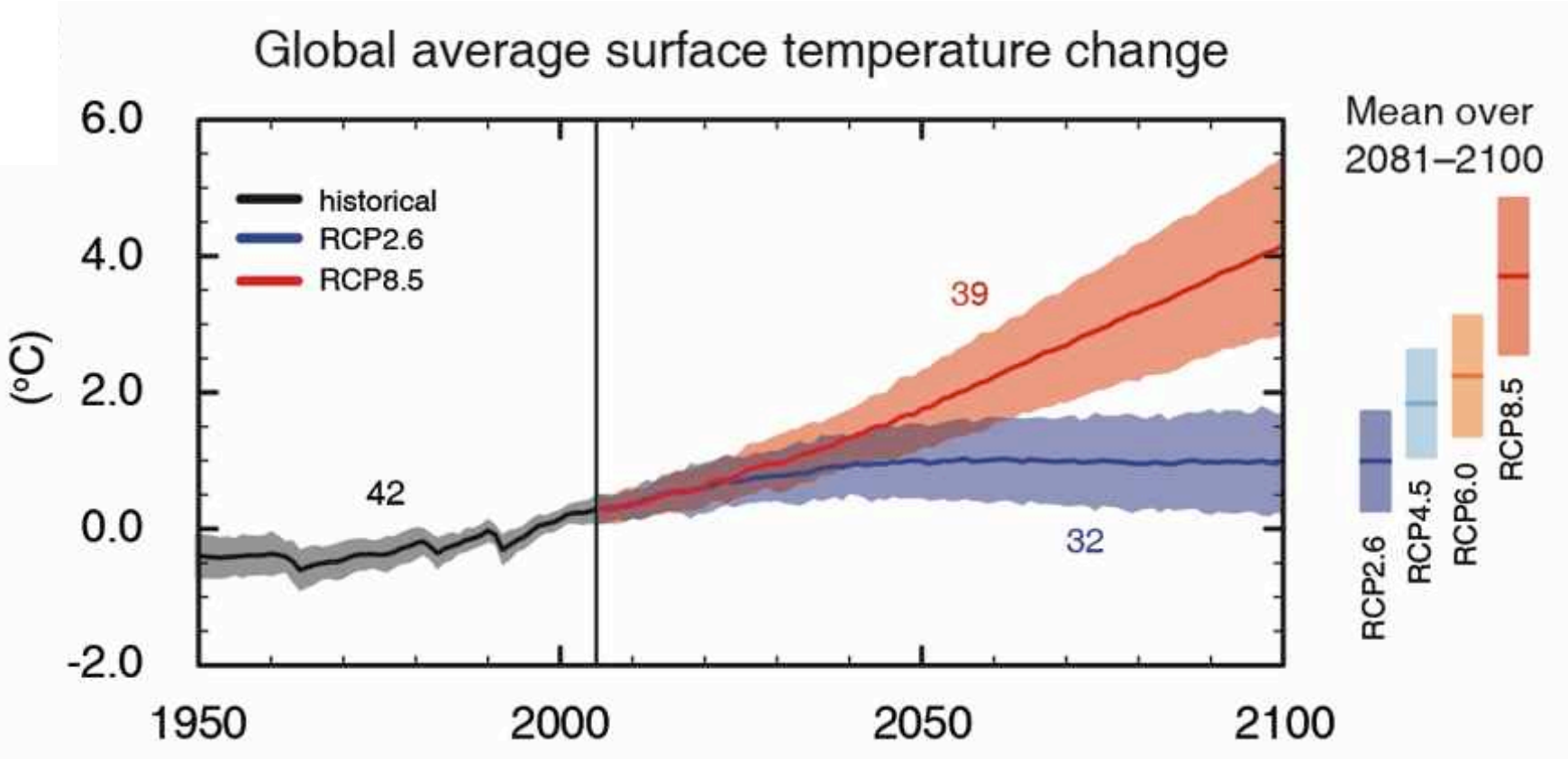
There is evidence that anthropogenic influences, including increasing atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations, have changed these extremes

RCP Scenarios: Atmospheric CO_2 concentration



Three stabilisation scenarios: RCP 2.6 to 6
One Business-as-usual scenario: RCP 8.5

AR5, chapter 12. WGI- Adopted version / subject to final copyedit



(IPCC 2013, Fig. SPM.7a)

Only the lowest (RCP2.6) scenario maintains the global surface temperature increase above the pre-industrial level to less than 2°C with at least 66% probability

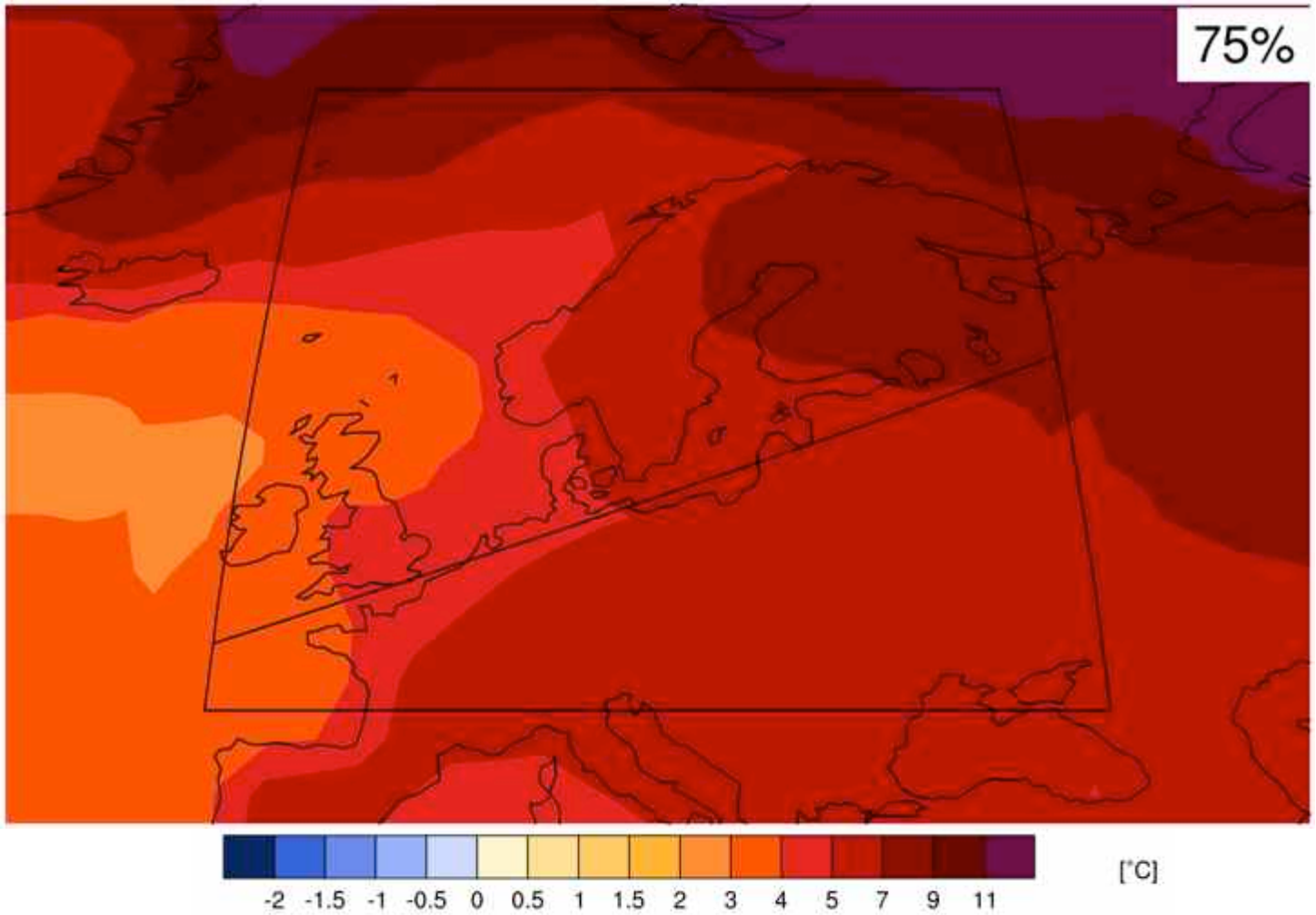
18-20000 years ago (Last Glacial Maximum)

With permission from Dr. S. Joussaume, in « Climat d'hier à demain », CNRS éditions.

Today, with +4-5°C globally

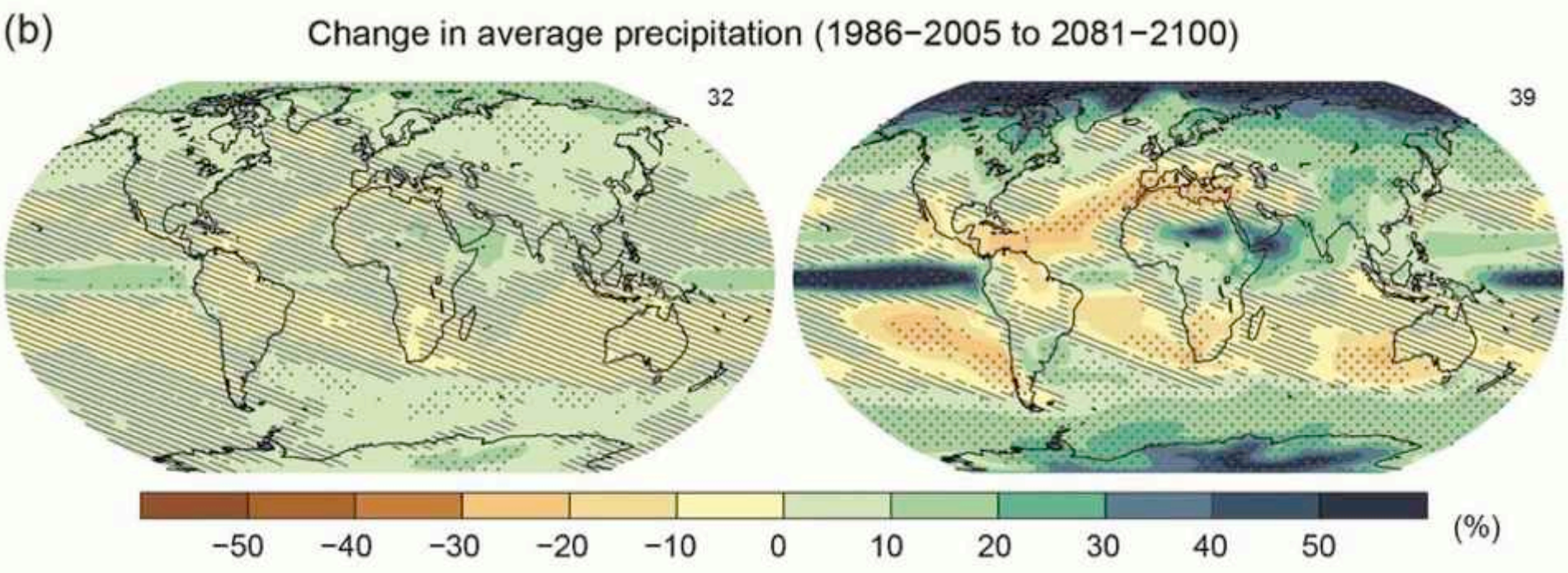
With permission from Dr. S. Joussaume, in « Climat d'hier à demain », CNRS éditions.

North Europe - Map of temperature changes: 2081–2100 with respect to 1986–2005 in the RCP8.5 scenario (annual)

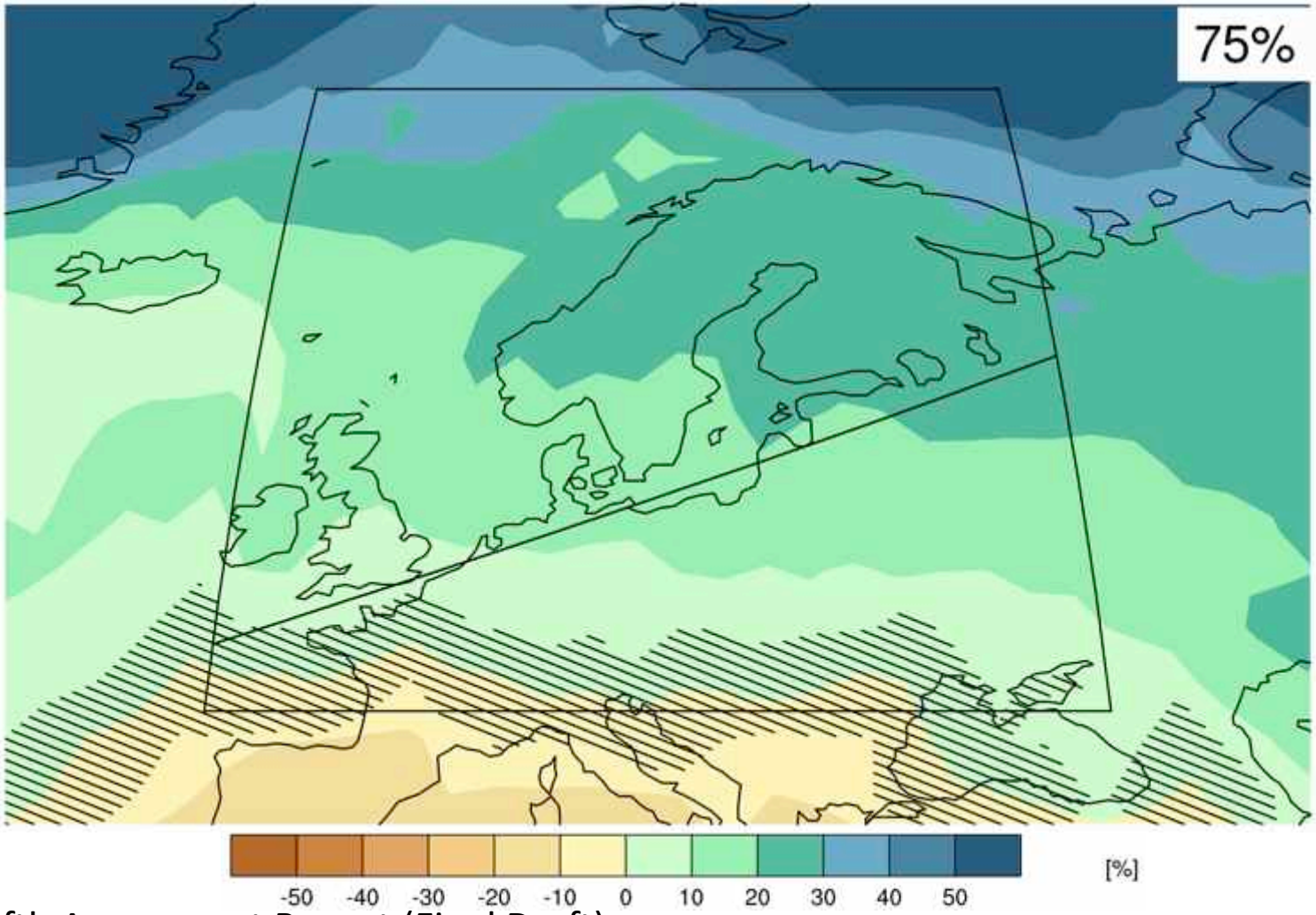


IPCC WG1 Fifth Assessment Report (Final Draft)

Projections de l'évolution du total des pluies



North Europe - Map of precipitation changes in 2081–2100 with respect to 1986–2005 in the RCP8.5 scenario (annual)



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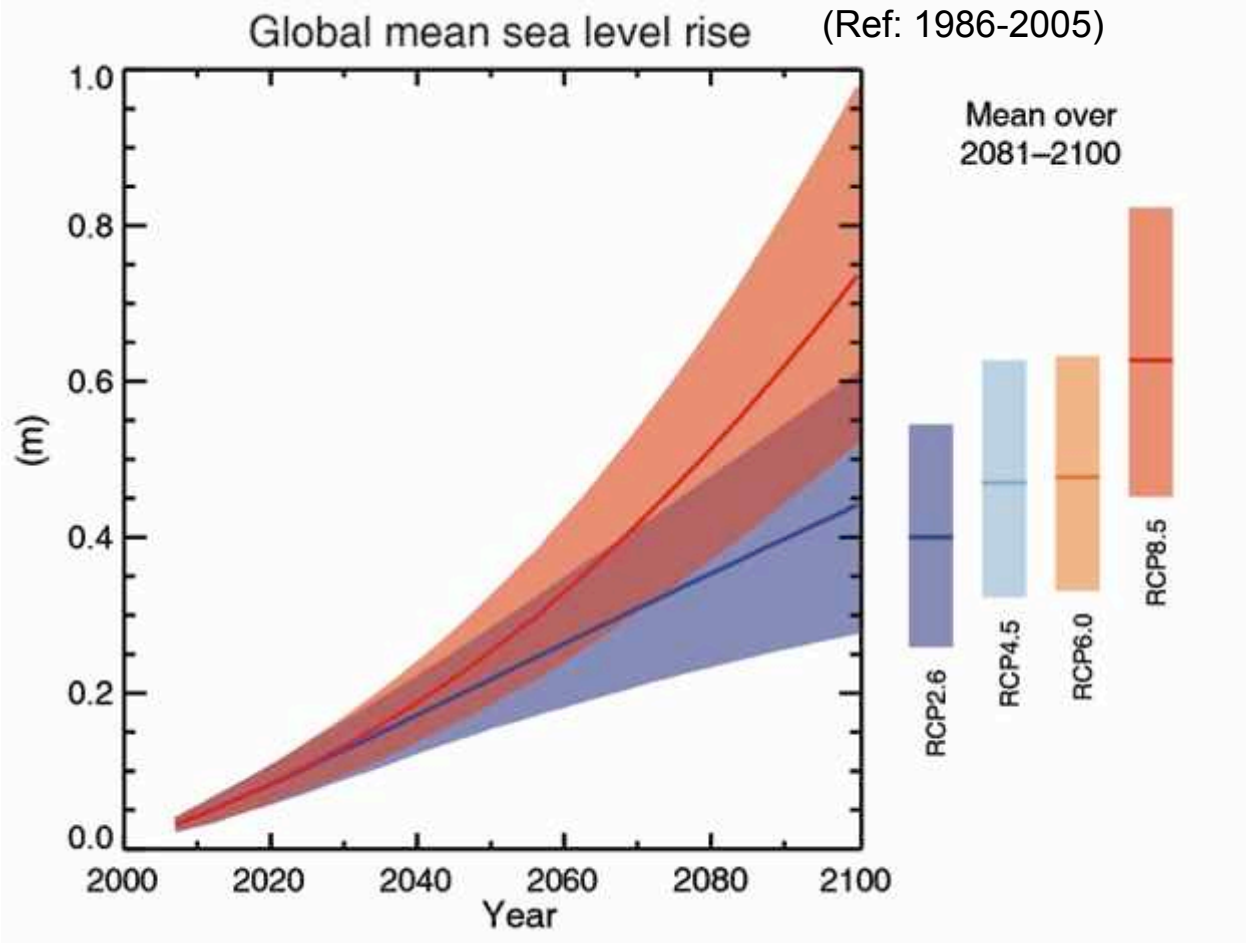


(IPCC 2013, Fig. SPM.9)

Le niveau moyen des mers continuera à s'élever au cours du XXIe siècle

With 1 metre sea-level rise: 63000 ha below sea-level in Belgium (likely in 22nd century, not impossible in 21st century)

(NB: flooded area depends on protection)

Source: N. Dendoncker (Dépt de Géographie, UCL), J.P. van Ypersele et P. Marbaix (Dépt de Physique, UCL)

With 8 metre sea-level rise: 3700 km^2 below sea-level in Belgium (very possible in year 3000) (NB: flooded area depends on protection)

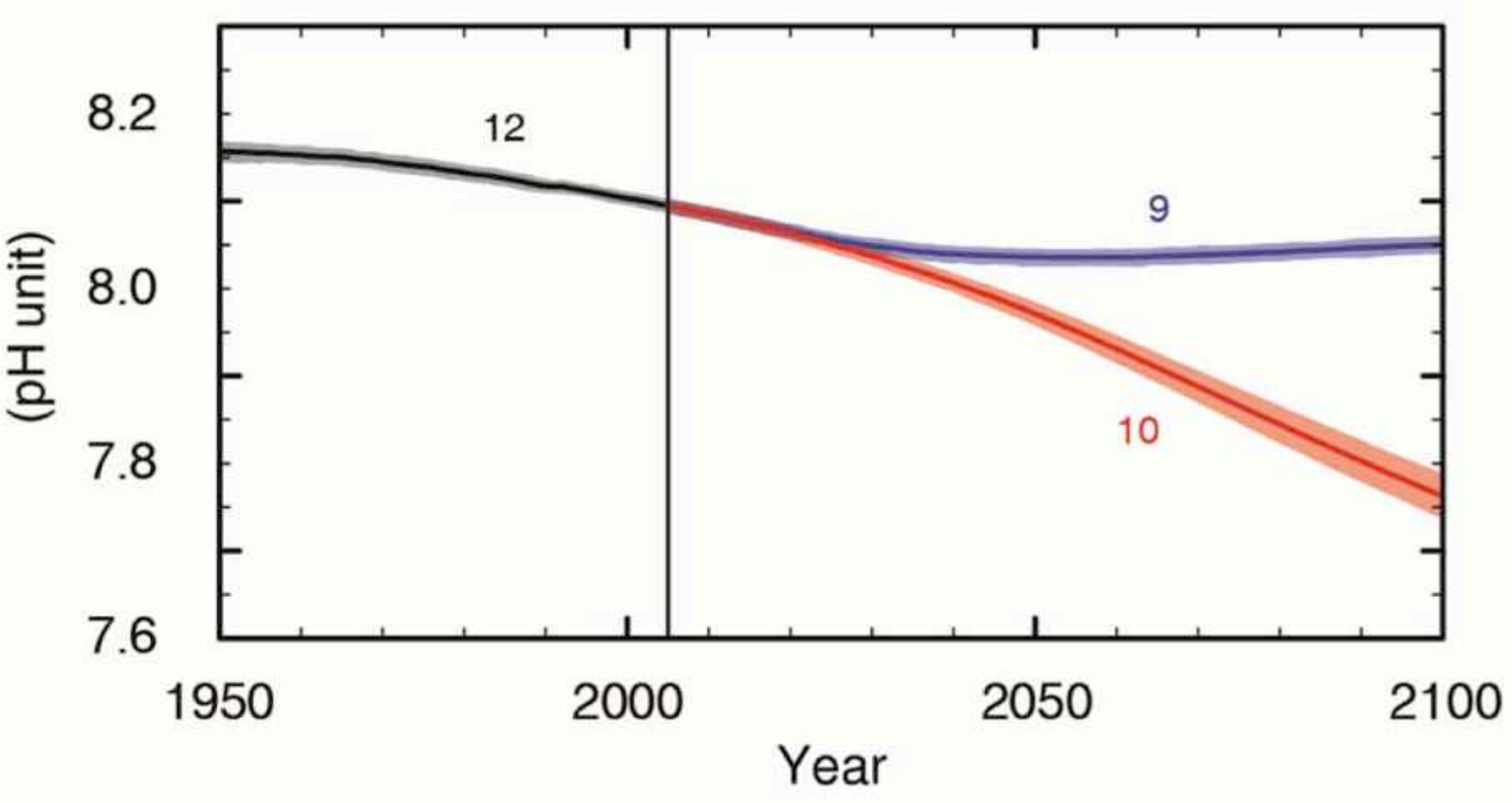
Source: N. Dendoncker (Dépt de Géographie, UCL), J.P. van Ypersele et P. Marbaix (Dépt de Physique, UCL)

Effets sur le Delta du Nil, où vivent plus de 10 millions de personnes à moins d'1 m d'altitude

(Time 2001)

Global ocean surface pH (projections)

Ocean Acidification, for RCP 8.5 (orange) & RCP2.6 (blue)



Impacts are already underway

- **Tropics to the poles**
- **On all continents and in the ocean**
- **Affecting rich and poor countries (but the poor are more vulnerable everywhere)**




AR5 WGII SPM

Potential Impacts of Climate Change

Food and water shortages

Increased displacement of people

Increased poverty

Coastal flooding

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ADAPTATION IS
ALREADY OCCURRING
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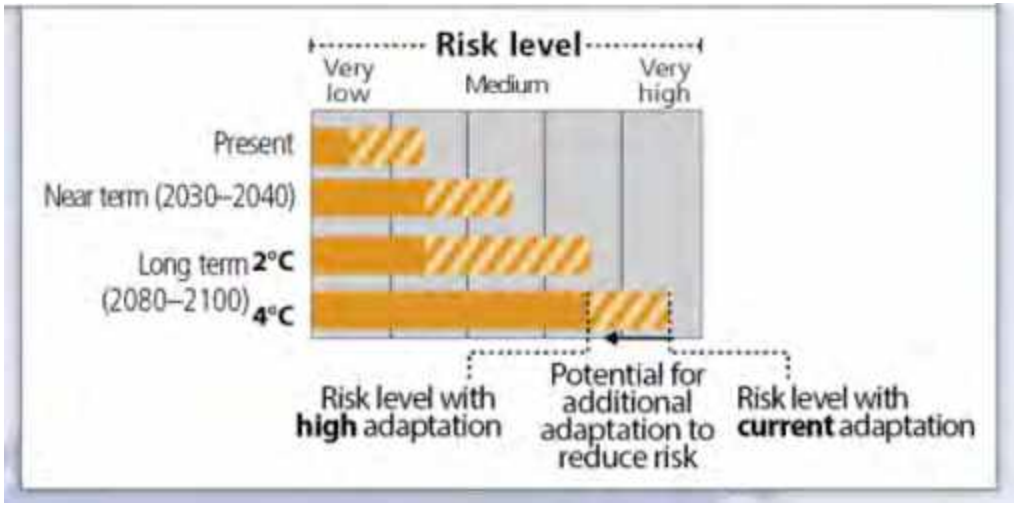
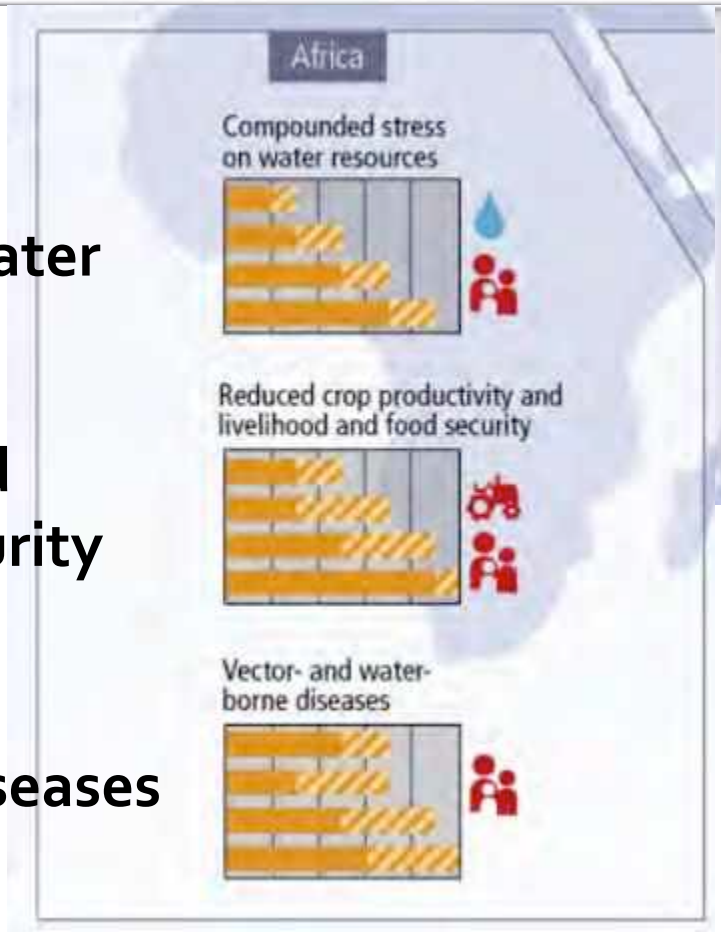
Regional key risks and potential for risk reduction through adaptation



IPCC, AR5, SPM, Figure SPM.8

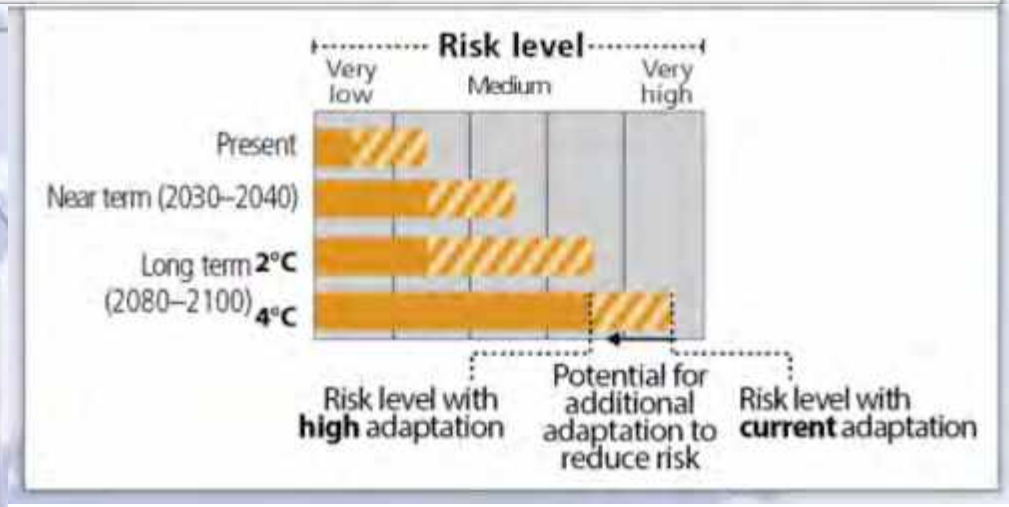
Regional key risks and risk reduction through adaptation



Water

Food security

Diseases



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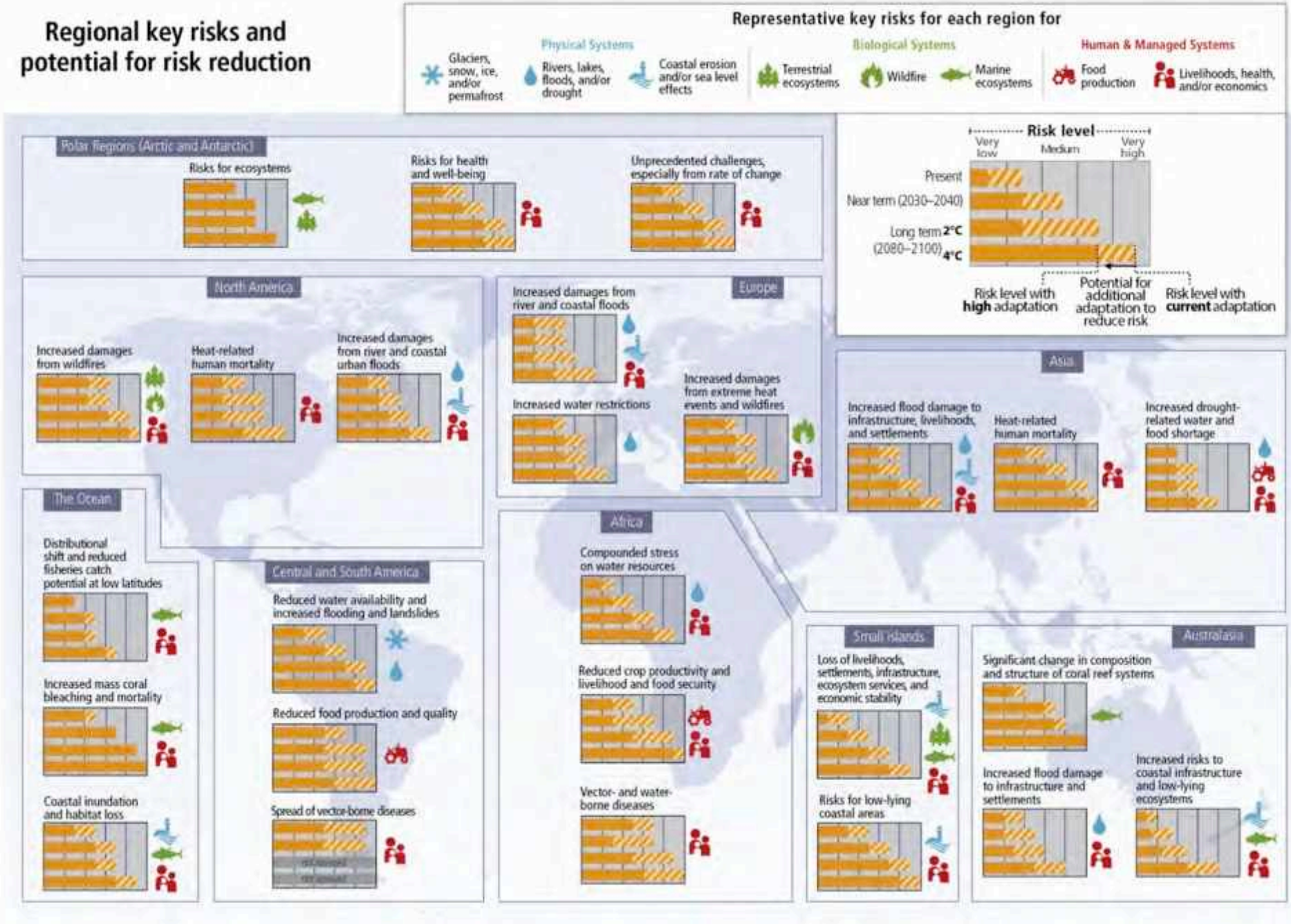
IPCC, AR5, SPM, Figure SPM.8

Regional key risks and potential for risk reduction



IPCC, AR5, SPM, Figure SPM.8

More severe and/or frequent extreme weather events and/or hazard types are projected to increase losses and loss variability in various regions and challenge insurance systems to offer affordable coverage while raising more risk-based capital, particularly in developing countries.

IPCC, AR5, WGII, SPM, p.19

Livelihoods and poverty

Insurance programs, social protection measures, and disaster risk management may enhance long-term livelihood resilience among poor and marginalized people, if policies address poverty and multidimensional inequalities.

Existing and emerging economic instruments can foster adaptation by providing incentives for anticipating and reducing impacts (*medium confidence*). ... Risk financing mechanisms in the public and private sector, such as insurance and risk pools, can contribute to increasing resilience, but without attention to major design challenges, they can also provide disincentives, cause market failure, and decrease equity. Governments often play key roles as regulators, providers, or insurers of last resort.

IPCC, AR5, WGII, SPM, p.26


RISKS OF
CLIMATE CHANGE
INCREASE
WITH CONTINUED
HIGH EMISSIONS
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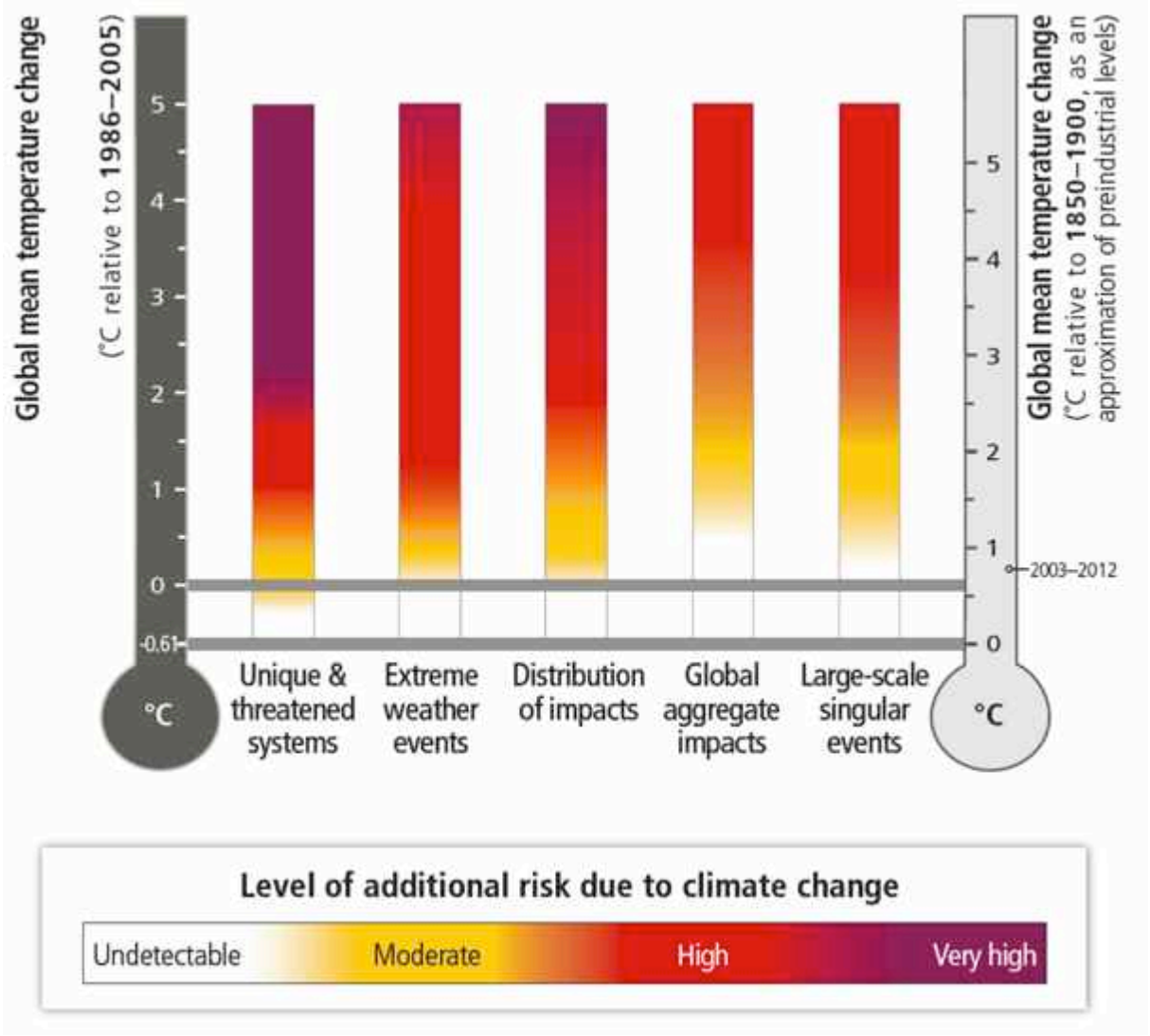
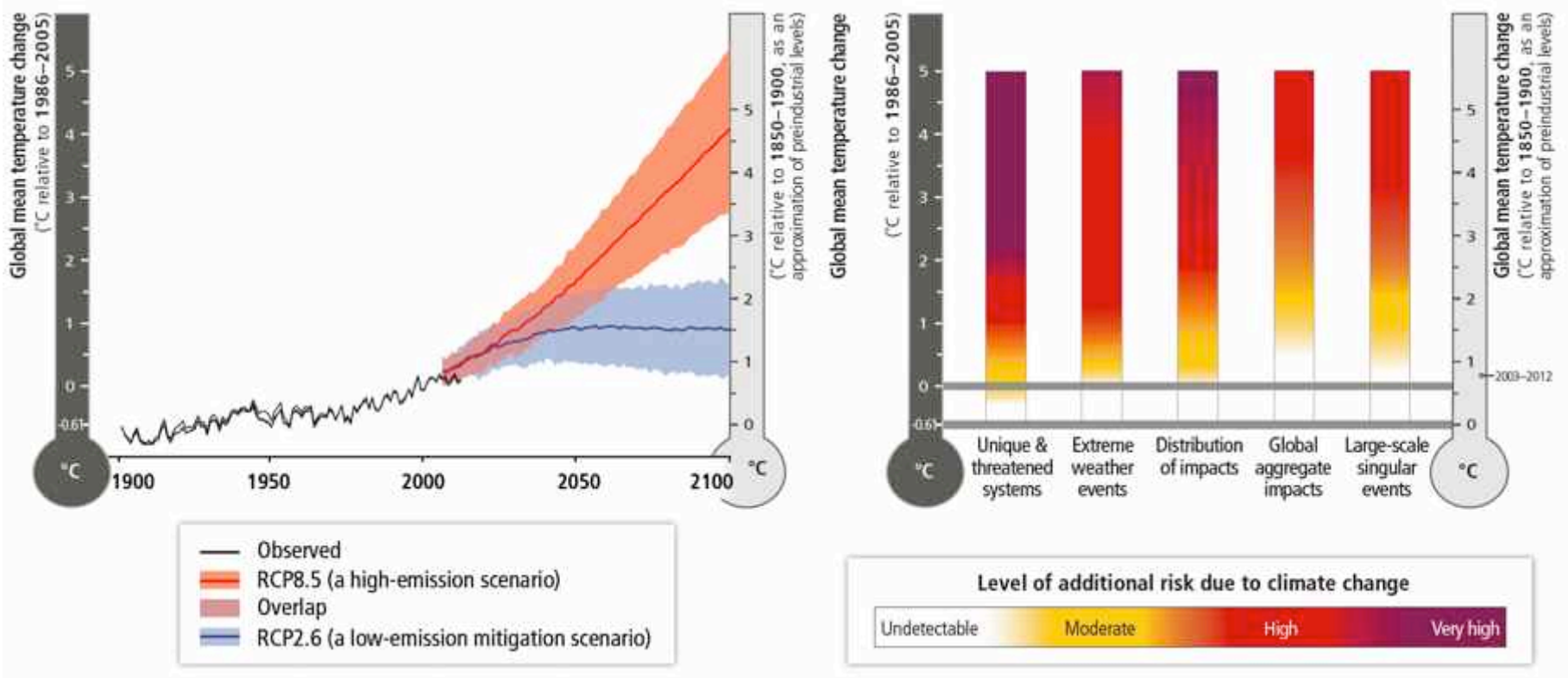


AR5, WGII, Box SPM.1 Figure 1



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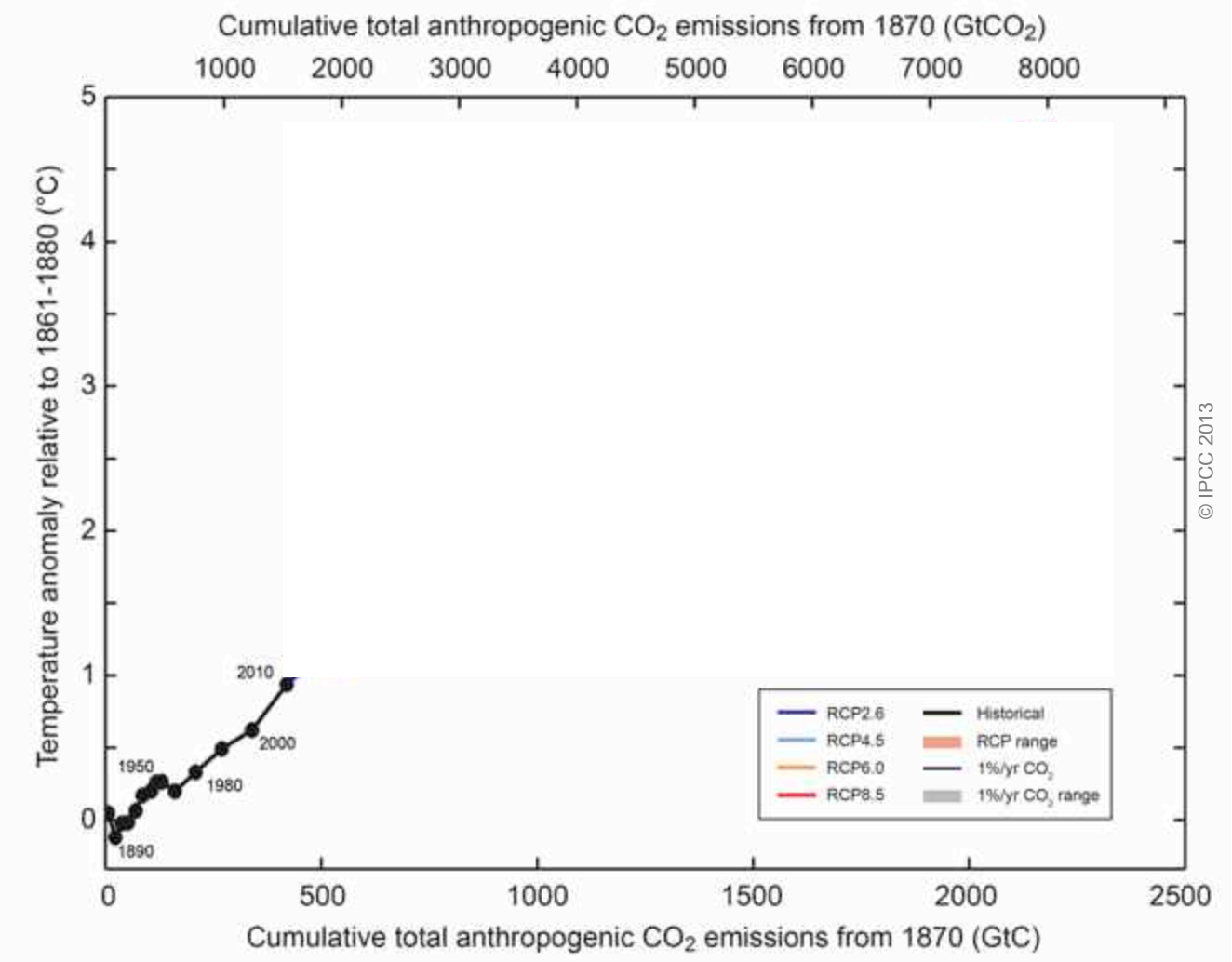


Fig. SPM.10

Cumulative emissions of CO_2 largely determine global mean surface warming by the late 21st century and beyond.

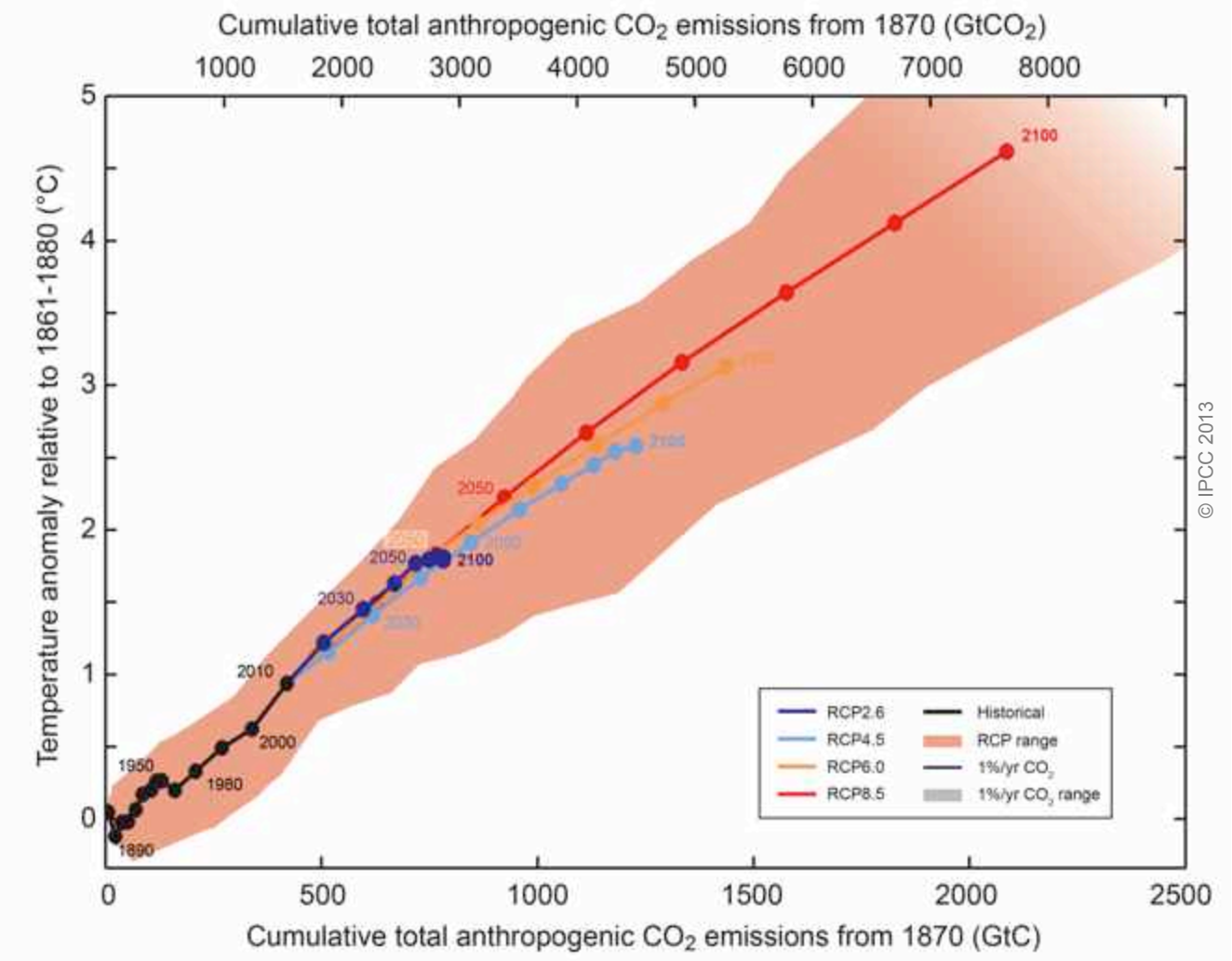
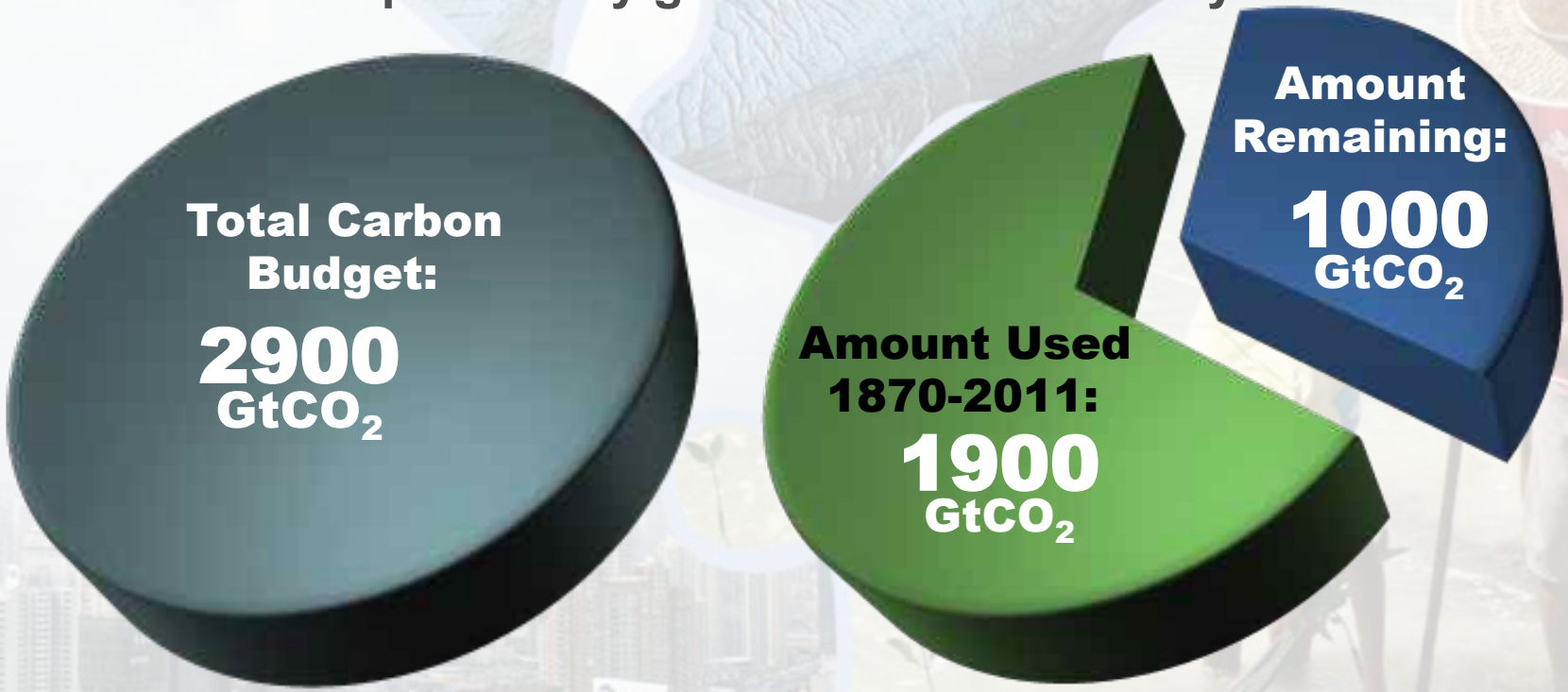


Fig. SPM.10

Limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

The window for action is rapidly closing

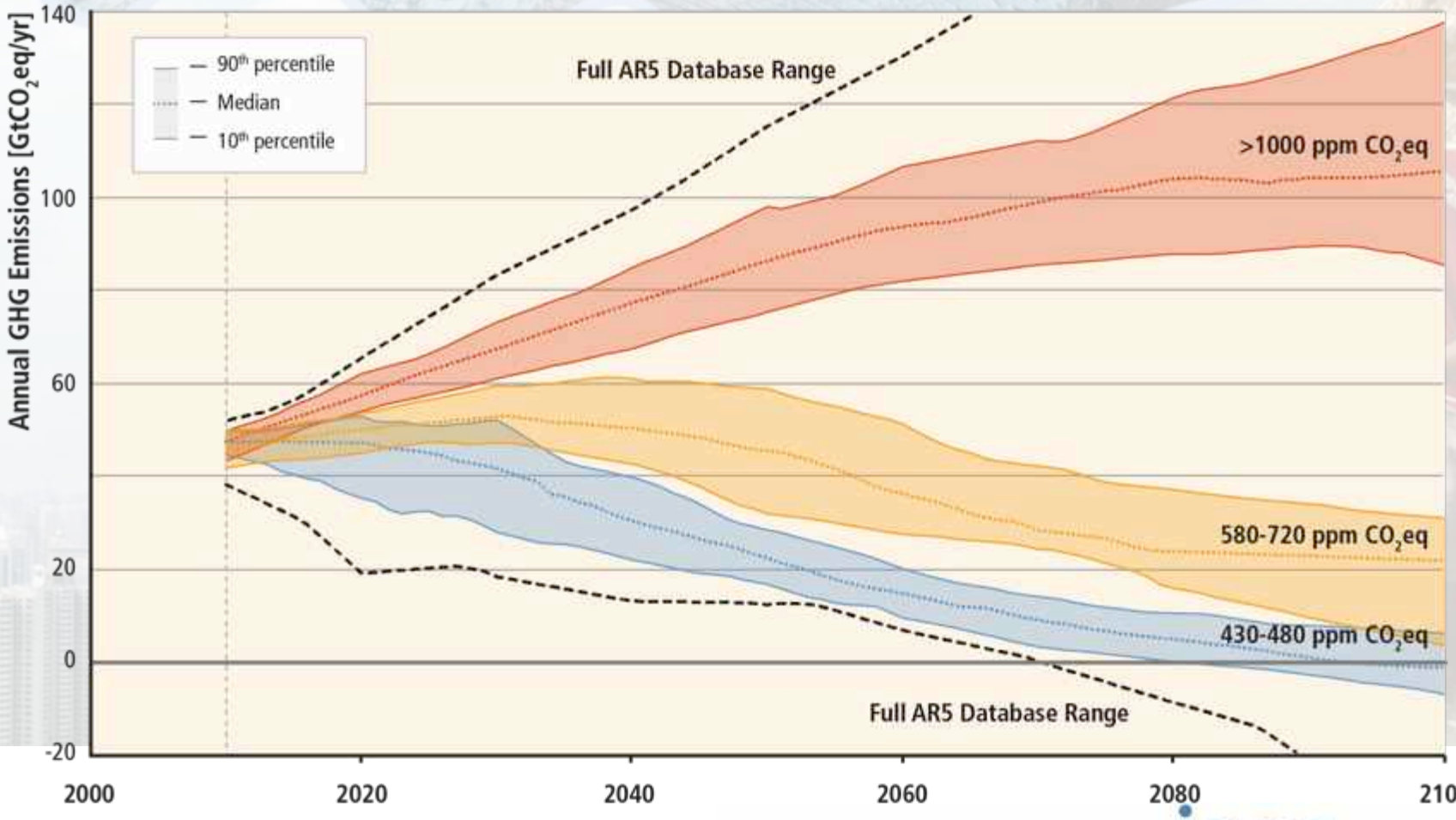
65% of the carbon budget compatible with a 2°C goal is already used
NB: this is with a probability greater than 66% to stay below 2°C



NB: Emissions in 2011: 38 GtCO2/yr

AR5 WGI SPM

Stabilization of atmospheric concentrations requires moving away from the baseline – regardless of the mitigation goal.



Based on Figure 6.7

AR5 WGIII SPM

IPCC AR5 Synthesis Report

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Limiting Temperature Increase to 2˚C

Measures exist to achieve the substantial emissions reductions required to limit likely warming to 2°C

A combination of adaptation and substantial, sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions can limit climate change risks

Implementing reductions in greenhouse gas emissions poses substantial technological, economic, social, and institutional challenges

But delaying mitigation will substantially increase the challenges associated with limiting warming to 2°C

AR5 WGI SPM, AR5 WGII SPM,AR5 WGIII SPM

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Can temperature rise still be kept below 1.5 or 2°C (over the 21st century) compared to pre-industrial ?

- **Many scenario studies confirm that it is technically and economically feasible to keep the warming below 2°C, with more than 66% probability ("likely chance").** This would imply limiting atmospheric concentrations to 450 ppm CO_2-eq by 2100.
- **Such scenarios** for an above 66% chance of staying below 2°C **imply reducing by 40 to 70% global GHG emissions compared to 2010 by mid-century, and reach zero or negative emissions by 2100.**

Can temperature rise still be kept below 1.5 or 2°C (over the 21st century) compared to pre-industrial ?

- **These scenarios are characterized by rapid improvements of energy efficiency and a near quadrupling of the share of low-carbon energy supply (renewables, nuclear, fossil and bioenergy with CCS), so that it reaches 60% by 2050.**
- **Keeping global temperature increase below 1.5°C would require even lower atmospheric concentrations (<430 ppm CO_2eq) to have a little more than 50% chance.** There are not many scenario studies available that can deliver such results, **requiring even faster reductions** in the medium term, indicating how difficult this is.

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Mitigation Measures

More efficient use of energy

Greater use of low-carbon and no-carbon energy

- Many of these technologies exist today
- But worldwide investment in **research** in support of GHG mitigation is small…

Improved carbon sinks

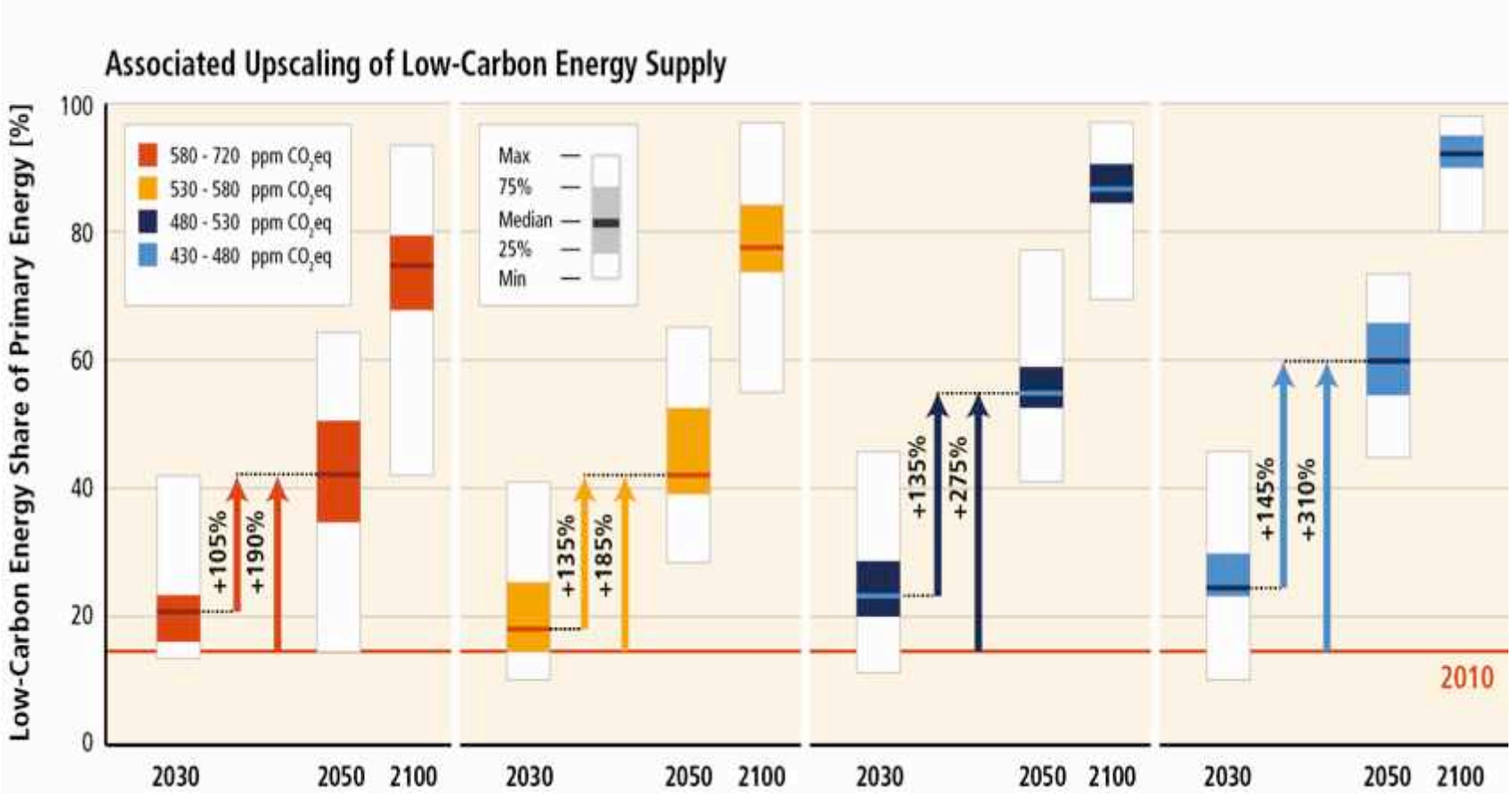
- **Reduced deforestation** and improved forest management and planting of new forests
- **Bio-energy with carbon capture and storage**

Lifestyle and behavioural changes

AR5 WGIII SPM

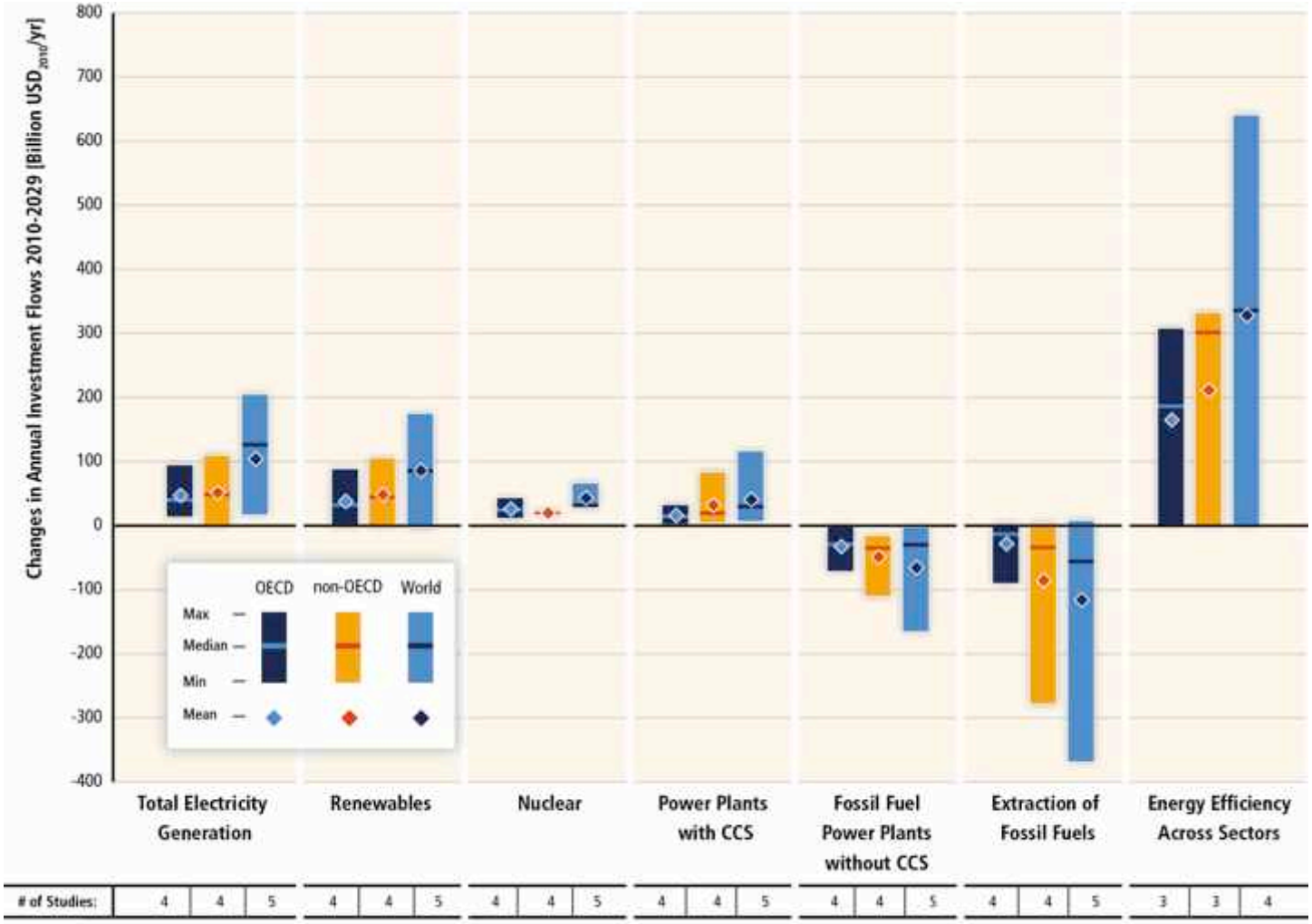
- **Mitigation requires major technological and institutional changes including the upscaling of low- and zero carbon energy (quadrupling from 2010 to 2050 for the scenario limiting warming below 2°C)**

Mitigation requires major technological and institutional changes including the upscaling of low- and zero carbon energy



- **Substantial reductions in emissions would require large changes in investment patterns e.g., from 2010 to 2029, in billions US dollars/year:**
  (mean numbers rounded, IPCC AR5 WGIII Fig SPM 9)
- **energy efficiency: +330**
- **renewables: + 90**
- **power plants w/ CCS: + 40**
- **nuclear: + 40**
- **power plants w/o CCS: - 60**
- **fossil fuel extraction: - 120**

Substantial reductions in emissions would require large changes in investment patterns.



Since AR4, there has been an increased focus on policies designed to integrate multiple objectives, increase co-benefits and reduce adverse side-effects.

- **Sector-specific policies** have been more widely used than economy-wide policies.
- **Regulatory approaches and information** measures are widely used, and are often environmentally effective.
- Since AR4, **cap and trade** systems for GHGs have been established in a number of countries and regions.
- In some countries, **tax-based policies** specifically aimed at reducing GHG emissions–alongside technology and other policies–have helped to weaken the link between GHG emissions and GDP
- The **reduction of subsidies** for GHG-related activities in various sectors can achieve emission reductions, depending on the social and economic context.

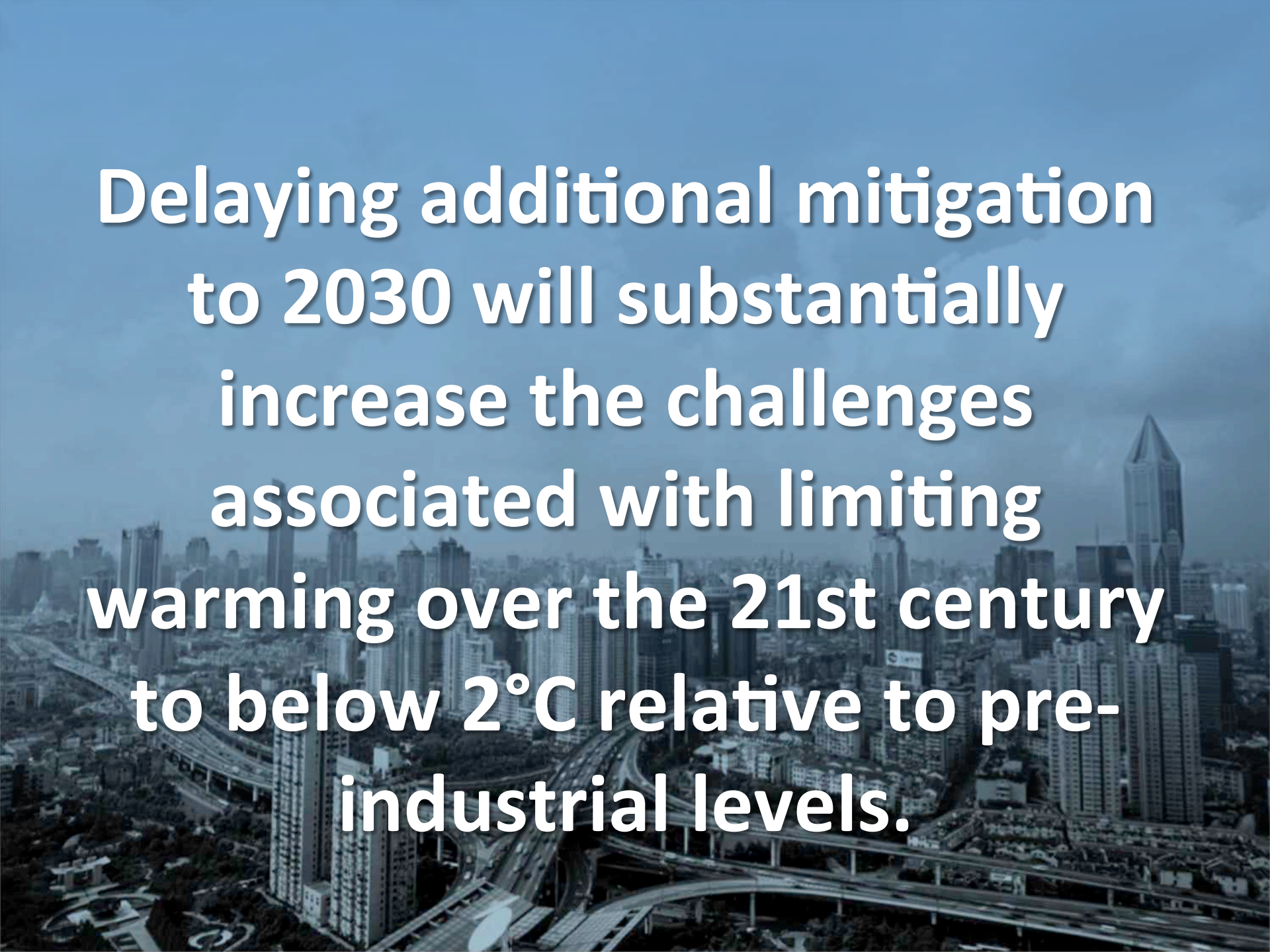
Effective mitigation will not be achieved if individual agents advance their own interests independently.

- Existing and proposed **international climate change cooperation** arrangements vary in their focus and degree of centralization and coordination.
- Issues of **equity, justice, and fairness** arise with respect to mitigation and adaptation.
- Climate policy may be informed by a consideration of a diverse array of risks and uncertainties, some of which are difficult to measure, notably events that are of low probability but which would have a significant impact if they occur.

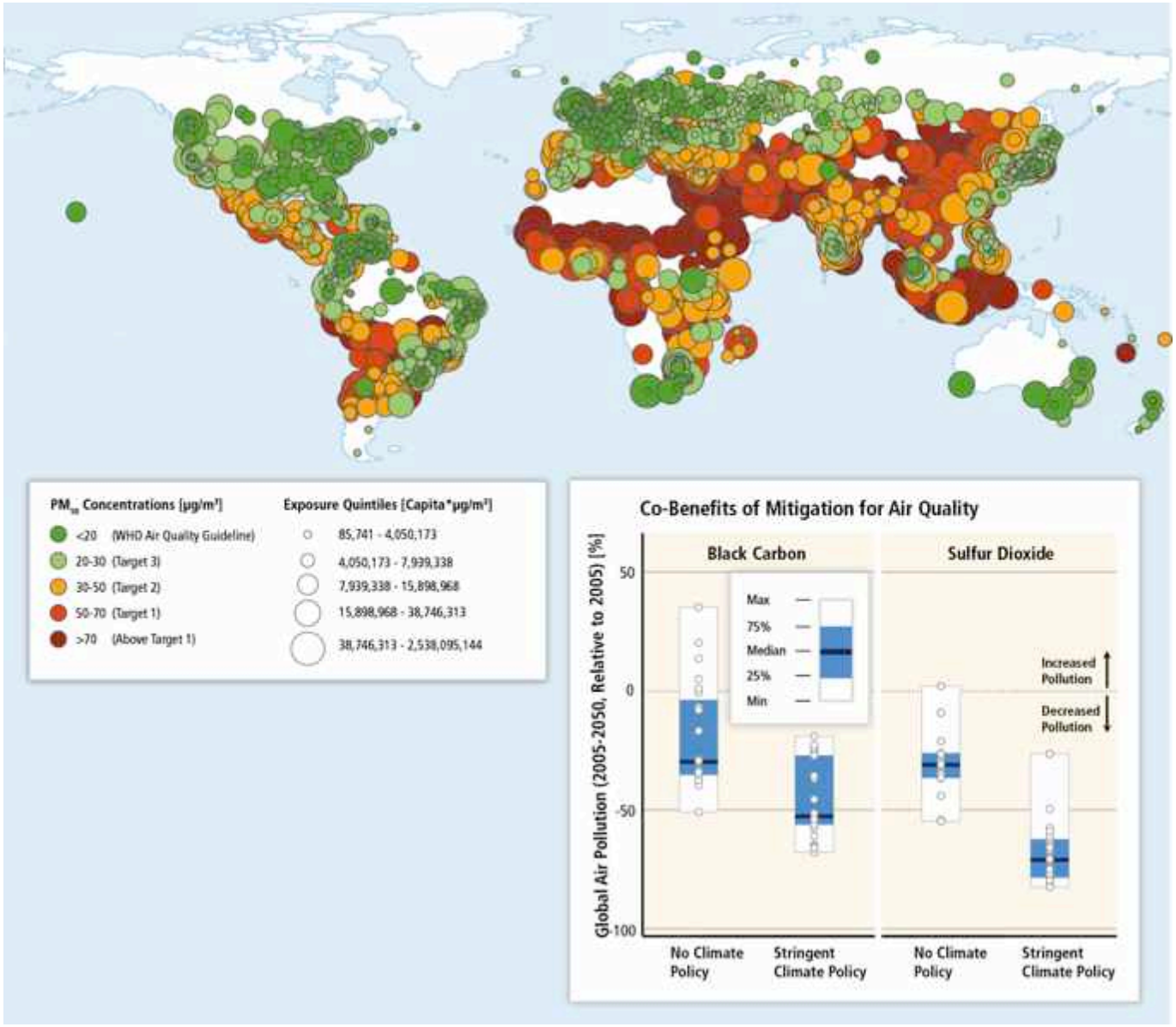
Ambitious Mitigation Is Affordable

- ➜ Economic growth reduced by ~ 0.06%
  (BAU growth 1.6 - 3%/year)
- ➜ This translates into delayed and not forgone growth
- ➜ Estimated cost does not account for the benefits of reduced climate change
- ➜ Unmitigated climate change would create increasing risks to economic growth and efforts to eradicate poverty

AR5 WGI SPM, AR5 WGII SPM


Delaying additional mitigation to 2030 will substantially increase the challenges associated with limiting warming over the 21st century to below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels.

NB: Ambition *before* 2020 is essential as well (lock-in & entrainment effects)

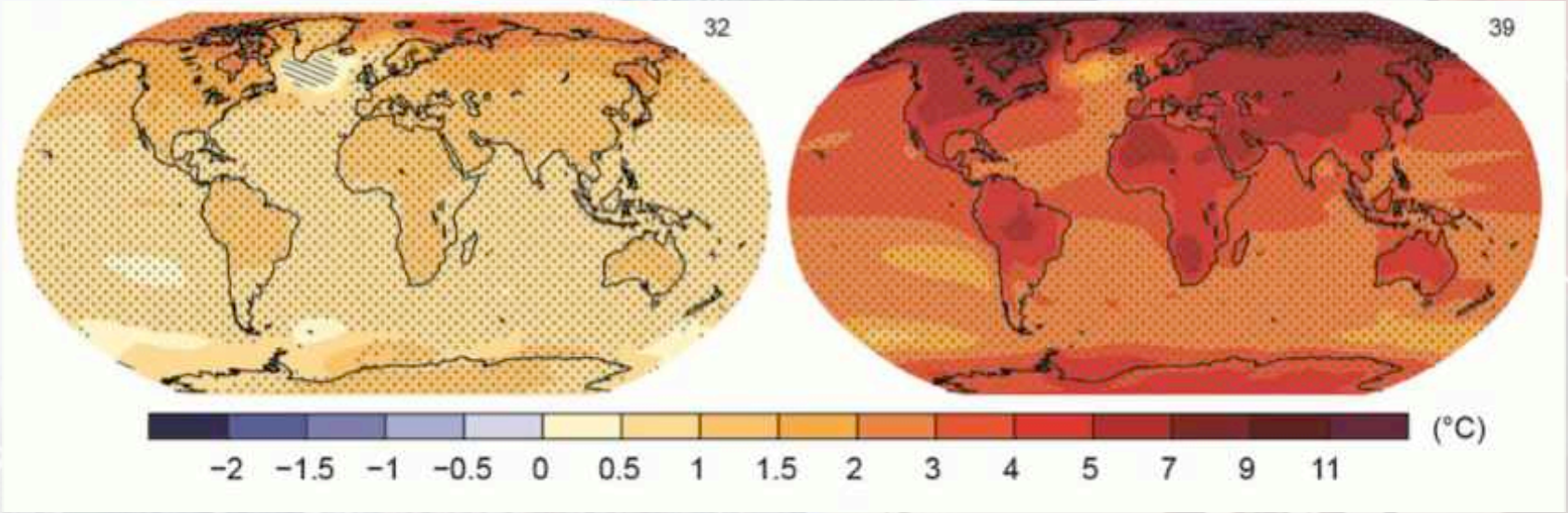


Mitigation can result in large co-benefits for human health and other societal goals.

The Choices Humanity Makes Will Create Different Outcomes (and affect prospects for effective adaptation)

With substantial mitigation

Without additional mitigation



Change in average surface temperature (1986–2005 to 2081–2100)

AR5 WGI SPM

Useful links:

- www.ipcc.ch : IPCC (reports and videos)
- www.climate.be/vanyp : my slides and other documents, including my candidacy
- www.skepticalscience.com: excellent responses to contrarians arguments
- **On Twitter: @JPvanYpersele and @IPCC_CH**