The urgency of the climate change challenge:
Why zero net emissions are needed?

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele

(Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium)

IPCC Vice-Chair from 2008 to 2015

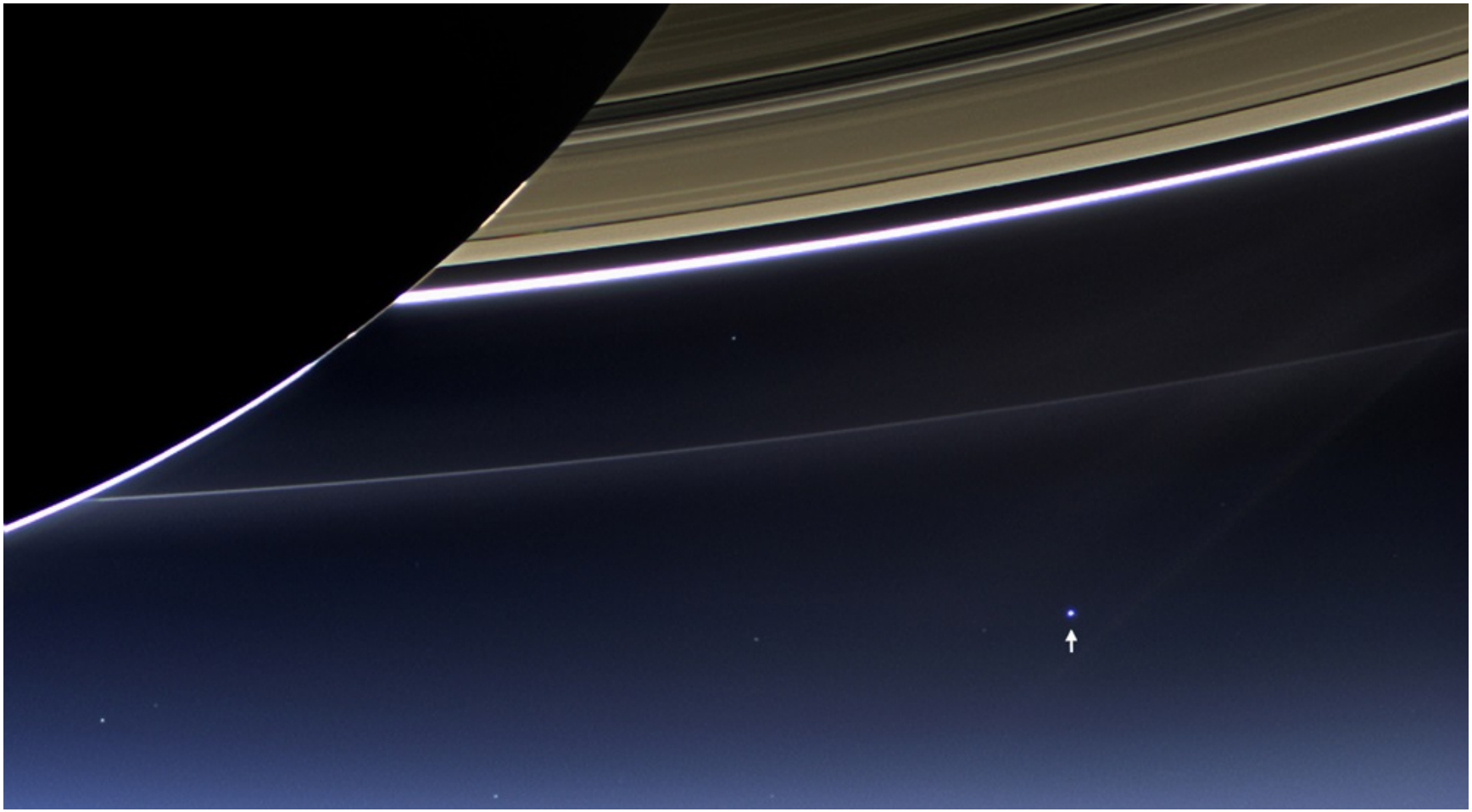
Twitter: @JPvanYpersele

« SunRiseAction.eu Stakeholder Workshop »,
Brussels, 18 June 2019

Thanks to the Walloon government for supporting www.plateforme-wallonne-giec.be & my team at UCLouvain

I want you to panic… **and act**

That small blue dot is the Earth, a seen from Cassini, orbiting Saturn, 1.44 billion km from us, on 19-7-2013

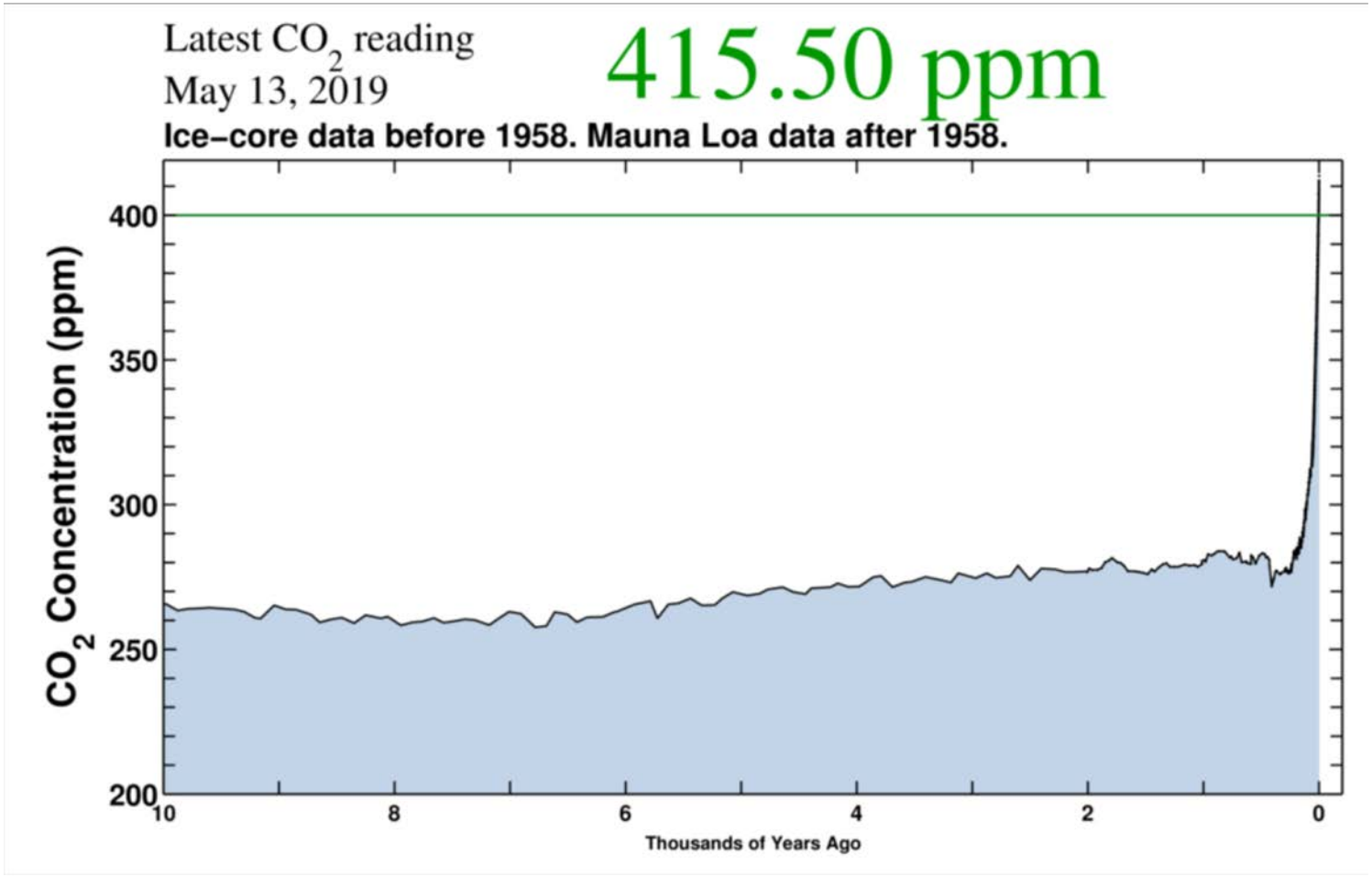


Fact n° 1: Because we use the atmosphere as a dustbin for our greenhouse gases, we thicken the insulation layer around the planet

That is why we must cut emissions to ZERO as soon as possible

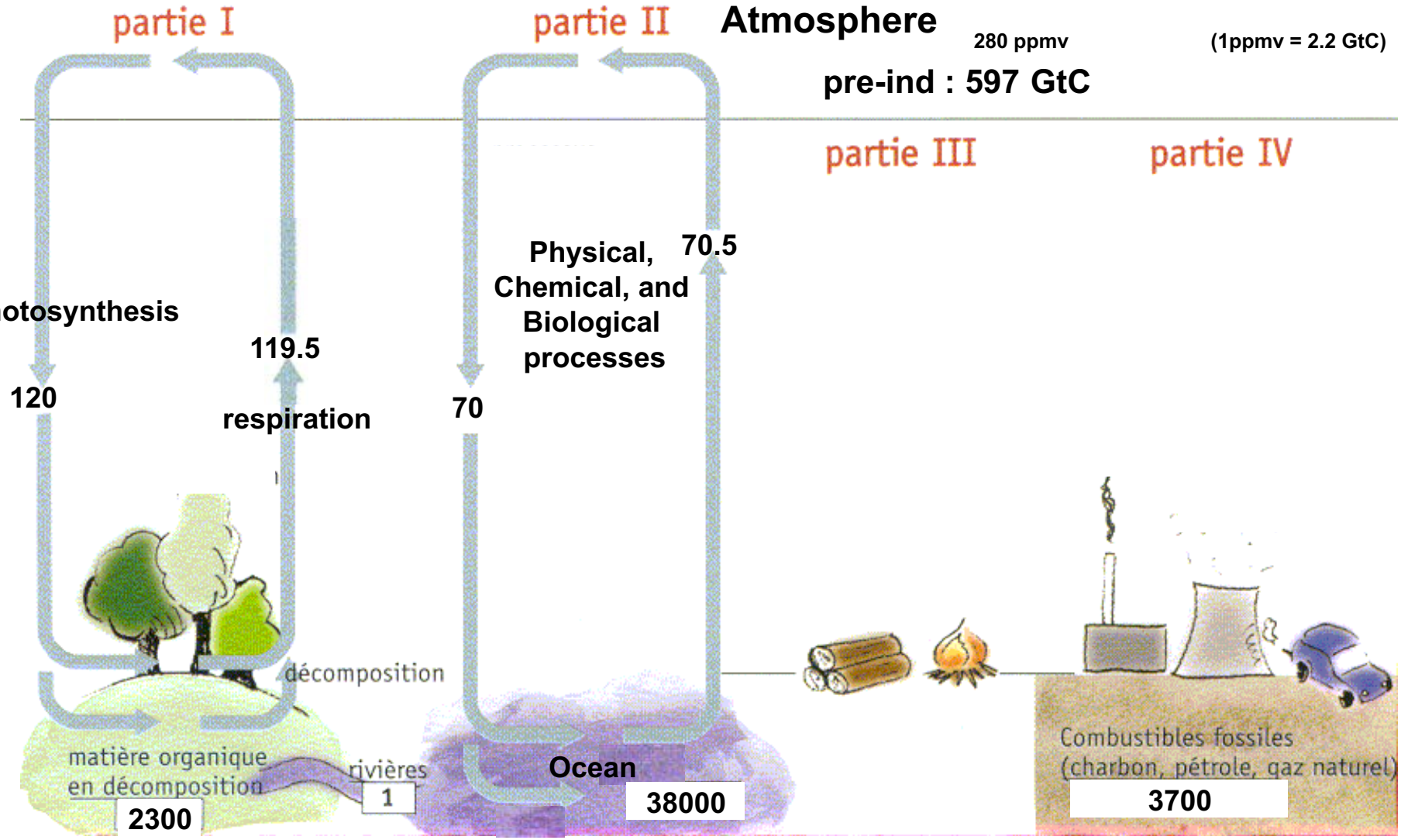
@JPvanYpersele

CO_2 Concentration, 13 May 2019 (Keeling curve)



Source: scripps.ucsd.edu/programs/keelingcurve/

Carbon cycle: unperturbed fluxes

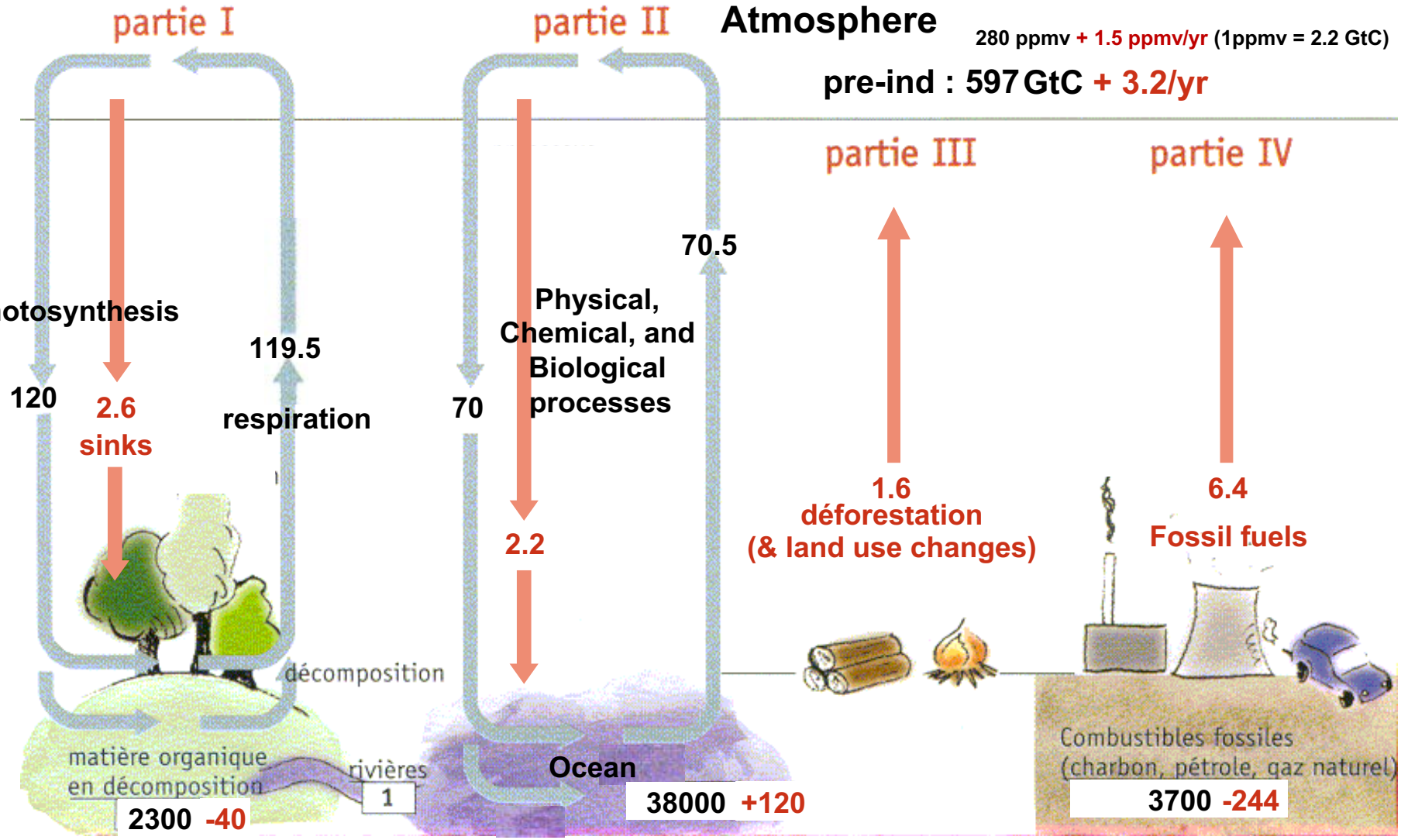


Units: GtC (billions tons of carbon) or GtC/year (multiply by 3.7 to get $GtCO_2$)

vanyp@climate.be

Carbon cycle: perturbed by human activities

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



Stocks!

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

vanyp@climate.be

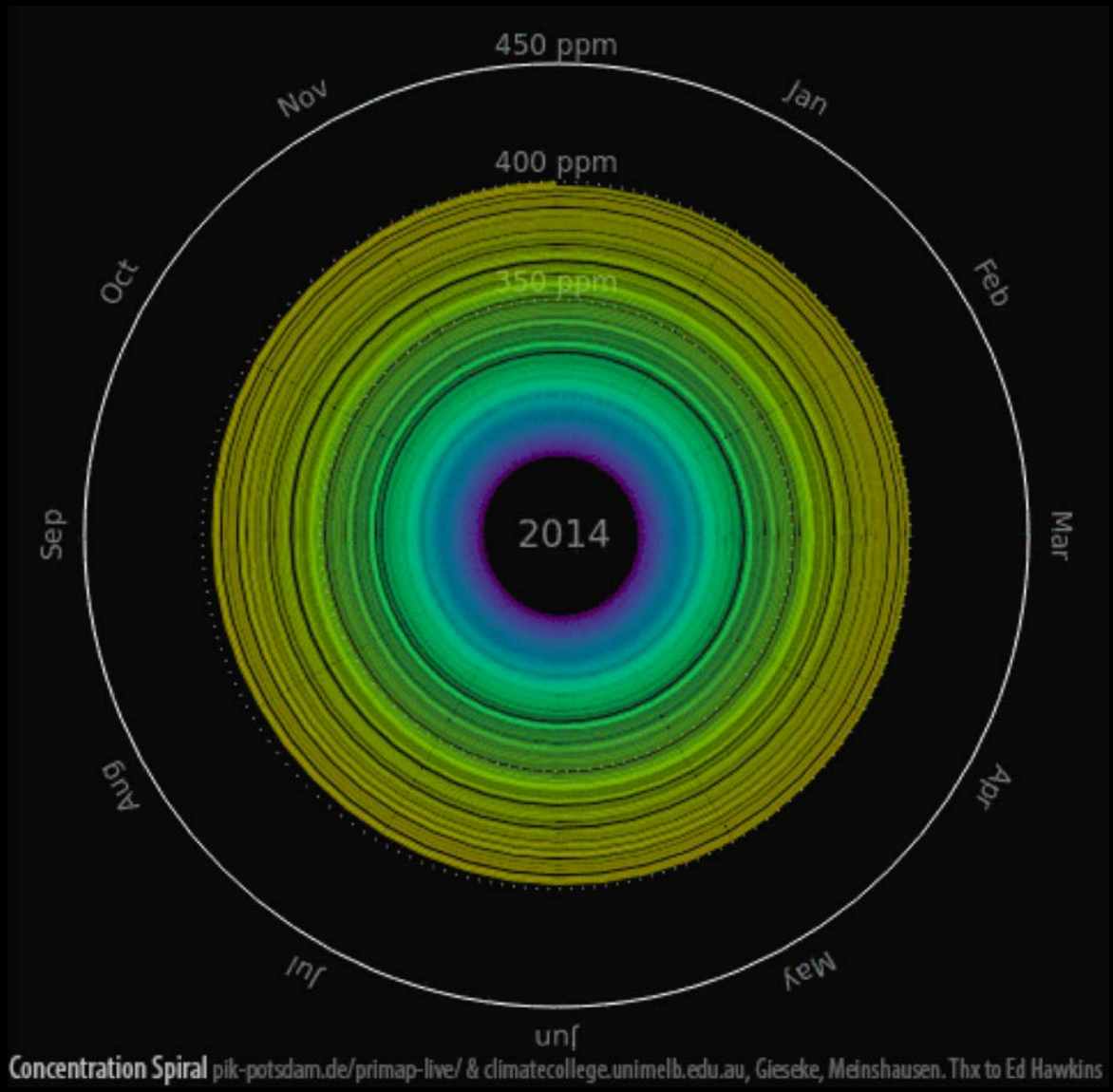
Climatic Change: Are We on the Brink of a Pronounced Global Warming? (Broecker,1975)

Table 1. Reconstruction and prediction of atmospheric CO_2 contents based on fuel consumption data.

Year	Chemical fuel CO_2 ($\times 10^{16}$ g)	Excess atmospheric CO_2* ($\times 10^{16}$ g)	Excess atmospheric CO_2 (%)	Excess atmospheric CO_2 (ppm)	CO_2 content of the atmosphere† (ppm)	Global temperature increase‡ (°C)
1900	3.8	1.9	0.9	2	295	0.02
1910	6.3	3.1	1.4	4	297	.04
1920	9.7	4.8	2.2	6	299	.07
1930	13.6	6.8	3.1	9	302	.09
1940	17.9	8.9	4.1	12	305	.11
1950	23.3	11.6	5.3	16	309	.15
1960	31.2	15.6	7.2	21	314§	.21
1970	44.0	22.0	10.2	29	322§	.29
1980‖	63	31	14	42	335	.42
1990‖	88	44	20	58	351	.58
2000‖	121	60	28	80	373	.80
2010‖	167	83	38	110	403	1.10

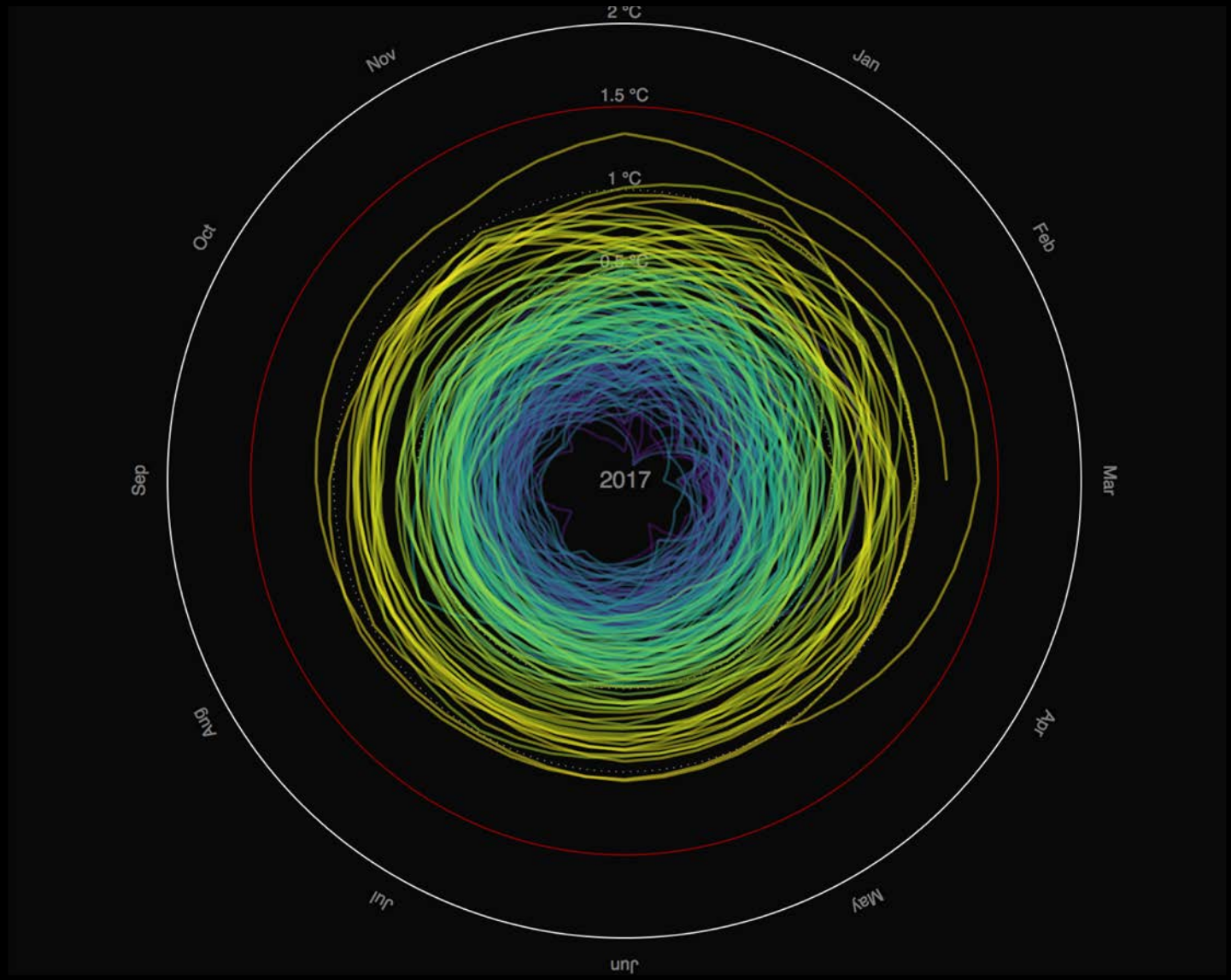
*On the assumption that 50 percent of the CO_2 produced by the burning of fuel remains in the atmosphere. †The preindustrial atmospheric partial pressure of CO_2 is assumed to be 293 ppm. ‡Assumes a 0.3°C global temperature increase for each 10 percent rise in the atmospheric CO_2 content. §Value observed on Hawaii for 1960, 314 ppm; value for 1970, 322 ppm (*8*). ‖Post-1972 growth rate taken to be 3 percent per year.

CO_2 concentration spiral: the insulation thickens!



CO_2 concentration spiral 1851-2014 (ppm), by Gieseke & Meinshausen,
Available on http://pik-potsdam.de/primap-live

Temperature spiral



Global Mean Temperature in °C relative to 1850 – 1900
Graph: Ed Hawkins (Climate Lab Book) – Data: HadCRUT4 global temperature dataset
Animated version available on http://openclimatedata.net/climate-spirals/temperature

Modèles climatiques

Atmosphère et surface

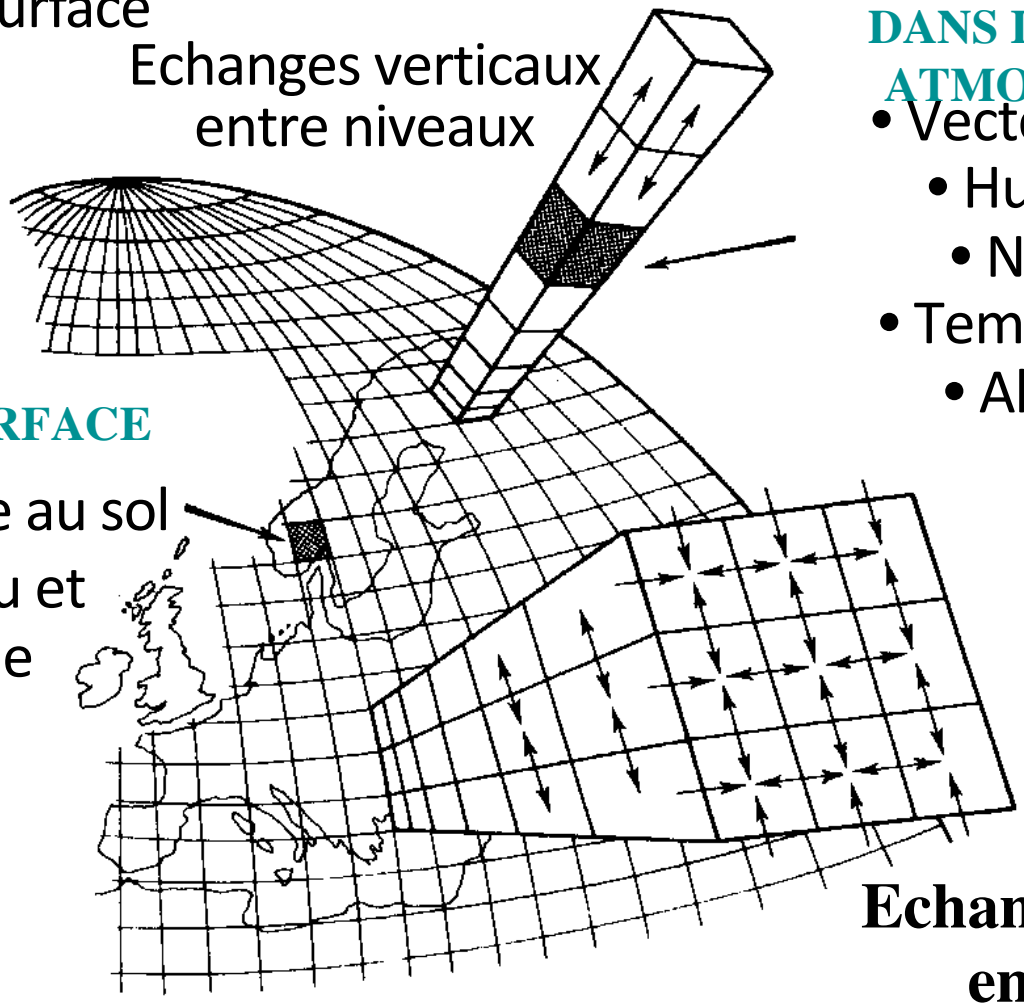
Echanges verticaux entre niveaux

DANS LA COLONNE ATMOSPHERIQUE

- Vecteurs vent
- Humidité
- Nuages
- Température
- Altitude

A LA SURFACE

- Température au sol
- Flux d'eau et d'énergie



Echanges horizontaux entre colonnes

Résolution typique ~ 2°x 2°(modèle global, atmosphère)
Intervalle de temps typique : ≤ 30 minutes

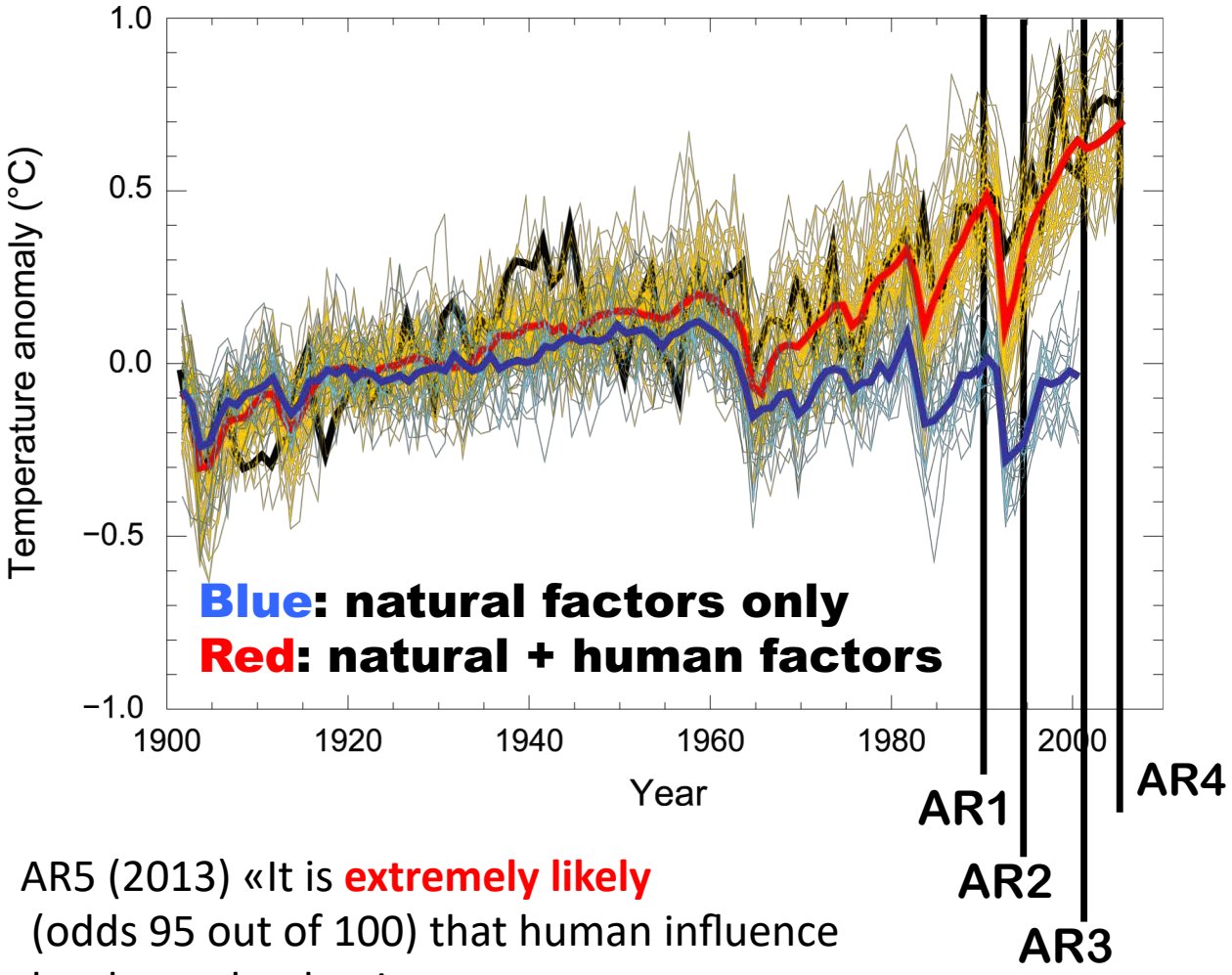
A Progression of Understanding: Greater and Greater Certainty in Attribution

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"



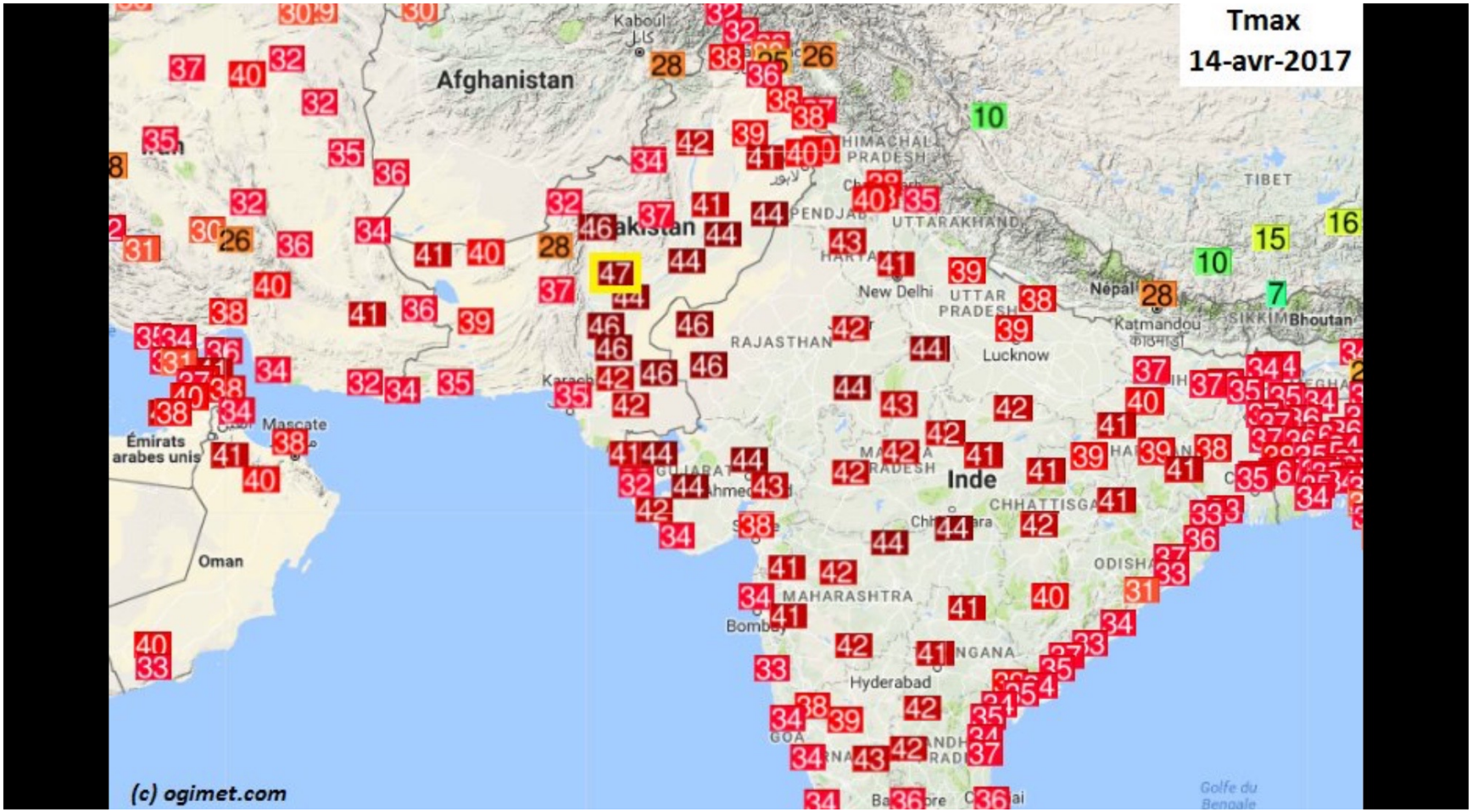
AR5 (2013) «It is **extremely likely** (odds 95 out of 100) that human influence has been the dominant cause… »

Fact n° 2: We have changed the composition of the atmosphere and disturbed the climate system

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

Heat waves kill




RB Chemnitz Hbf

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)

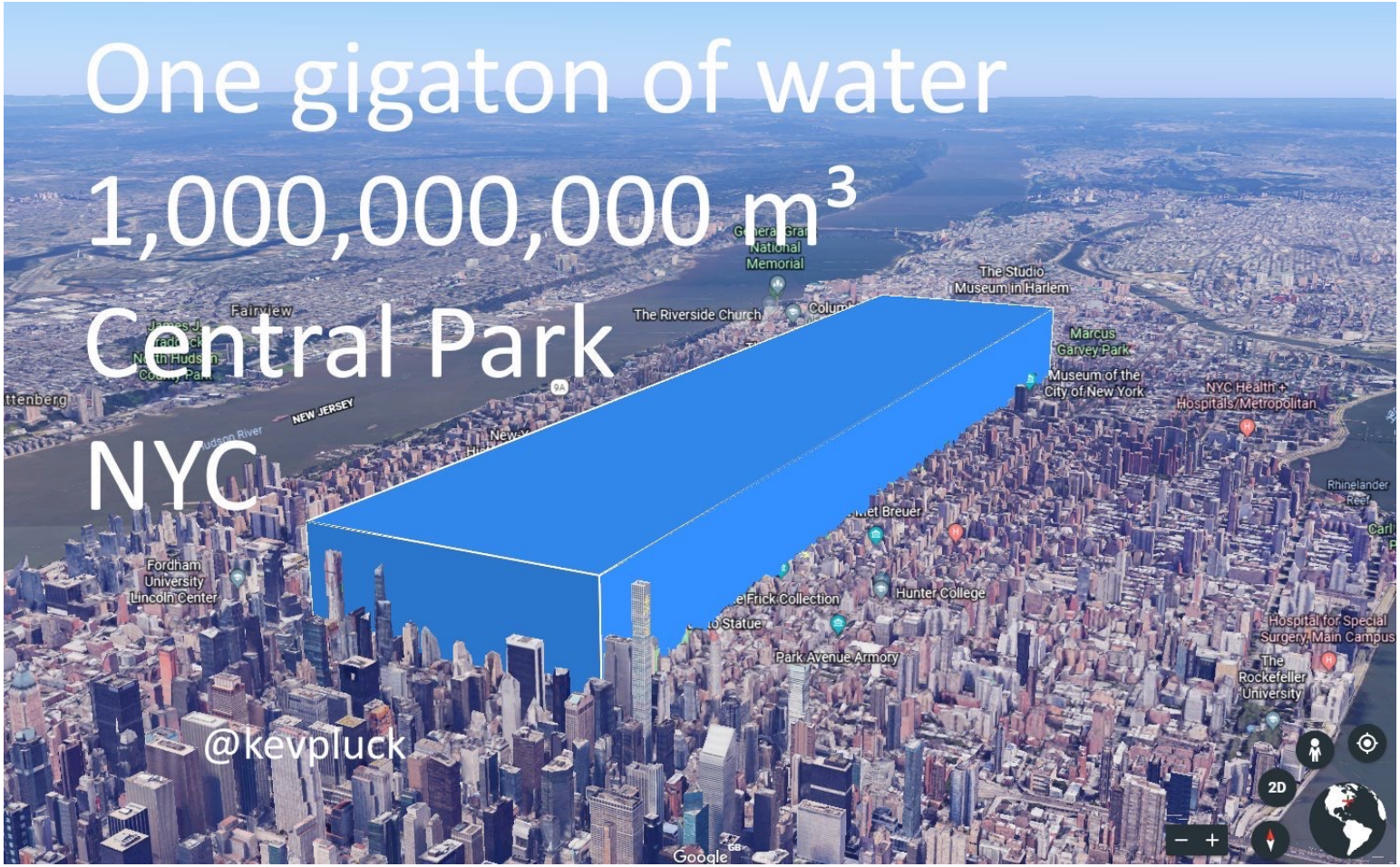
http://www.weather.com/news/science/environment/alaskas-glaciers-capturing-earth-changing-our-eyes-20131125?cm_ven=Email&cm_cat=ENVIRONMENT_us_share

Fact n° 3: Average temperature is probably on its way to exceed the « conservation temperature » for the Greenland and (some of the) Antarctic ice sheet

There is therefore a very high risk that average sea level would increase by several metres over the next century or two

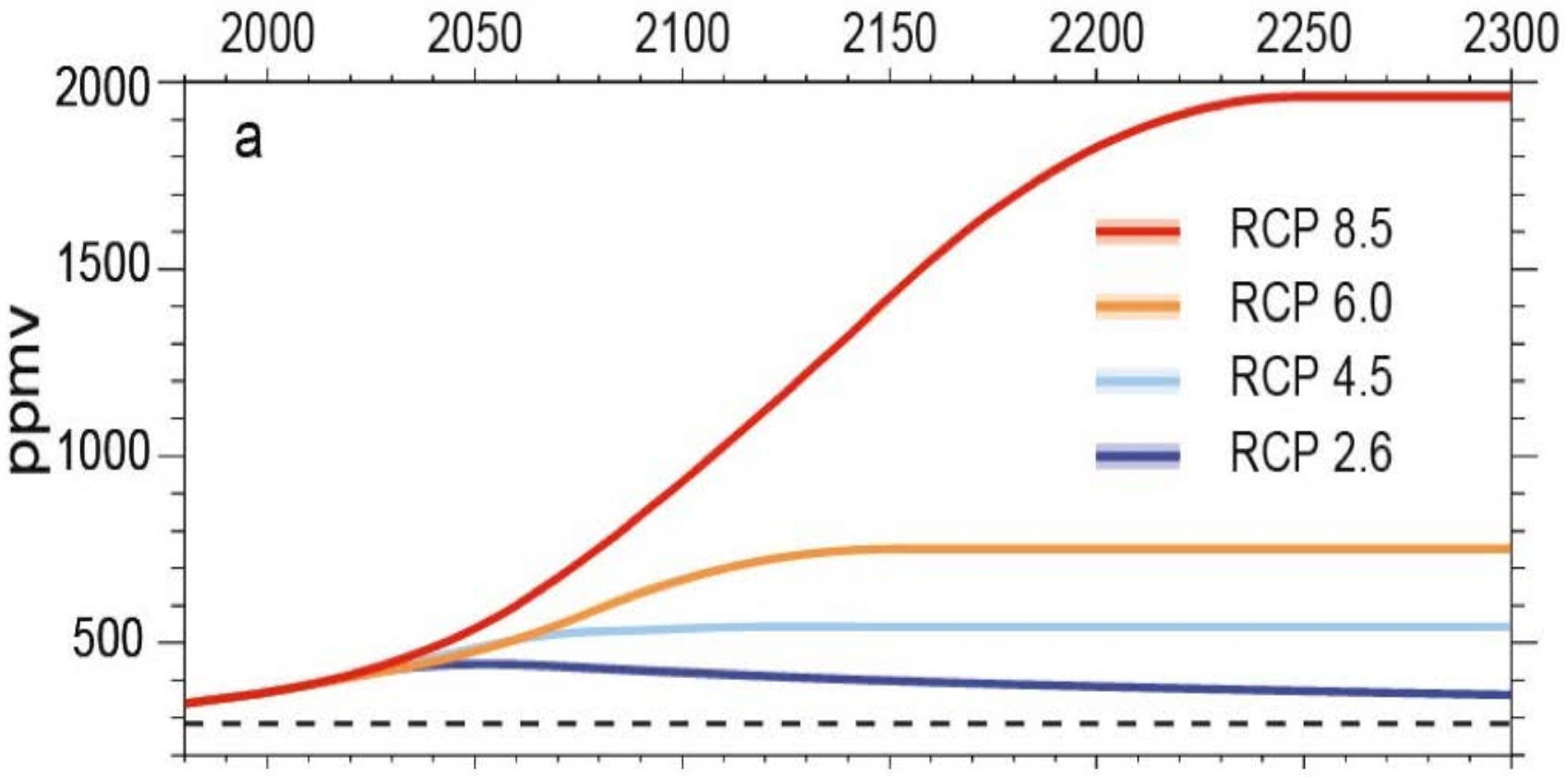
@JPvanYpersele

The Antarctic Ice Sheet presently loses 1 Gt of water every 1.5 day



Source: @Kevpluck, June 2018

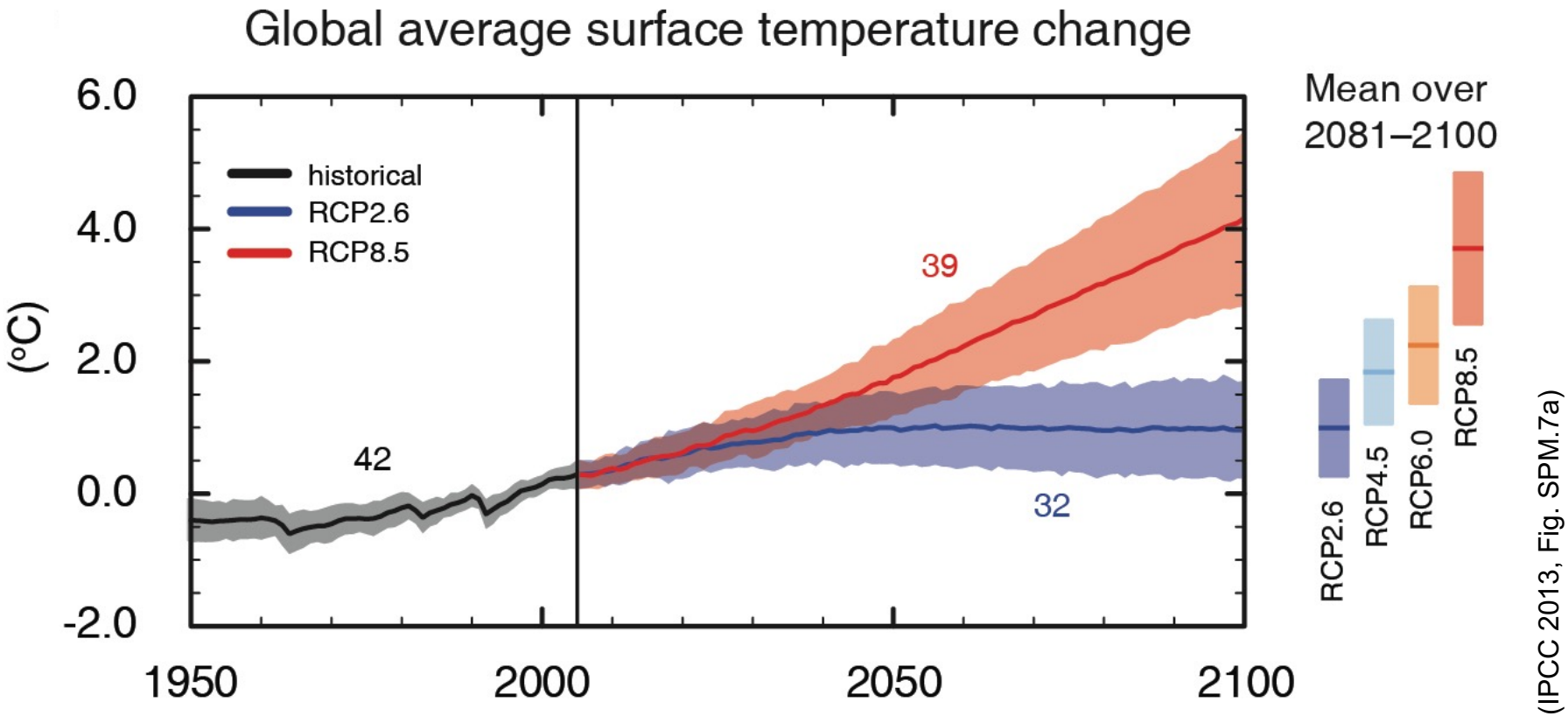
AR5 RCP: Atmospheric CO_2 concentration



Most CMIP5 runs are based on the concentrations, but emissions-driven runs are available for RCP 8.5

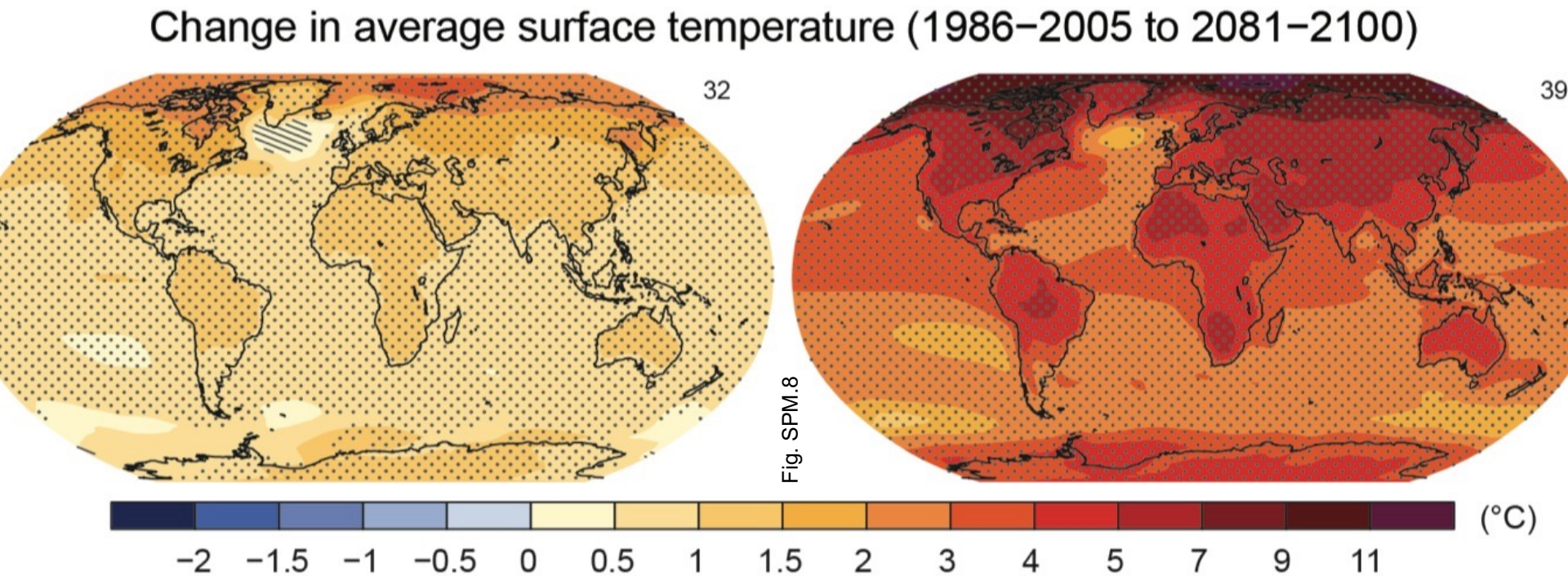
Note : « emission-driven » -> knowledge of C-cycle uncertainty

Réchauffement moyen – scén. RCP, 21s



(IPCC 2013, Fig. SPM.7a)

RCP2.6 RCP8.5



Hatching [hachures] indicates regions where the multi-model mean is small compared to natural internal variability (i.e., less than one standard deviation of natural internal variability in 20-year means).

Stippling [pointillés] indicates regions where the multi-model mean is large compared to natural internal variability (i.e., greater than two standard deviations of natural internal variability in 20-year means) and where at least 90% of models agree on the sign of change

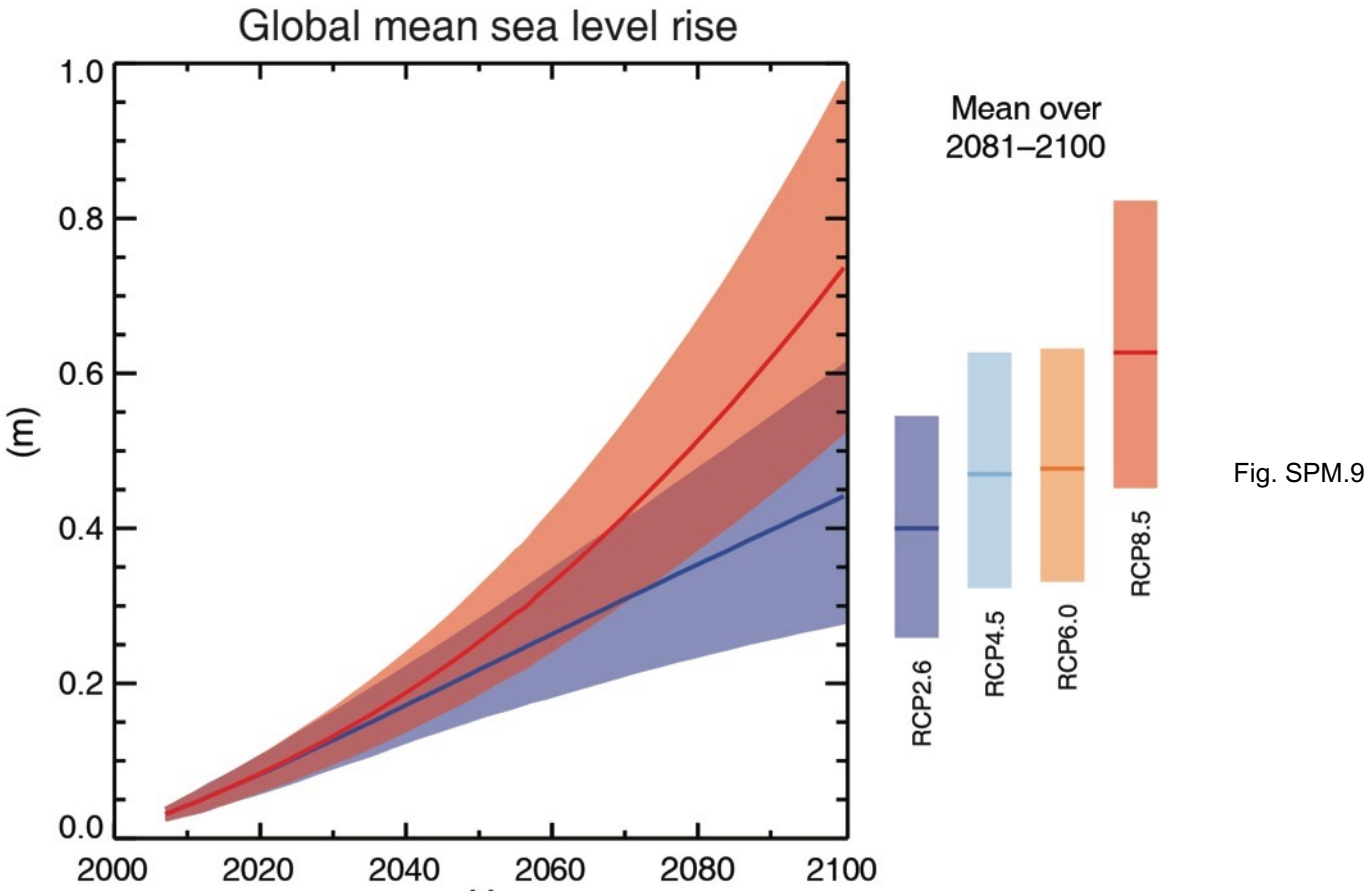


Fig. SPM.9

RCP2.6 (2081-2100), *likely* range: **26 to 55 cm**

RCP8.5 (in 2100), *likely* range: **52 to 98 cm**

Effects on the Nile Delta, where more than 10 million people live less than 1 m above sea level

NB: + 1 m is possible in the next 100 years…

(Time 2001)

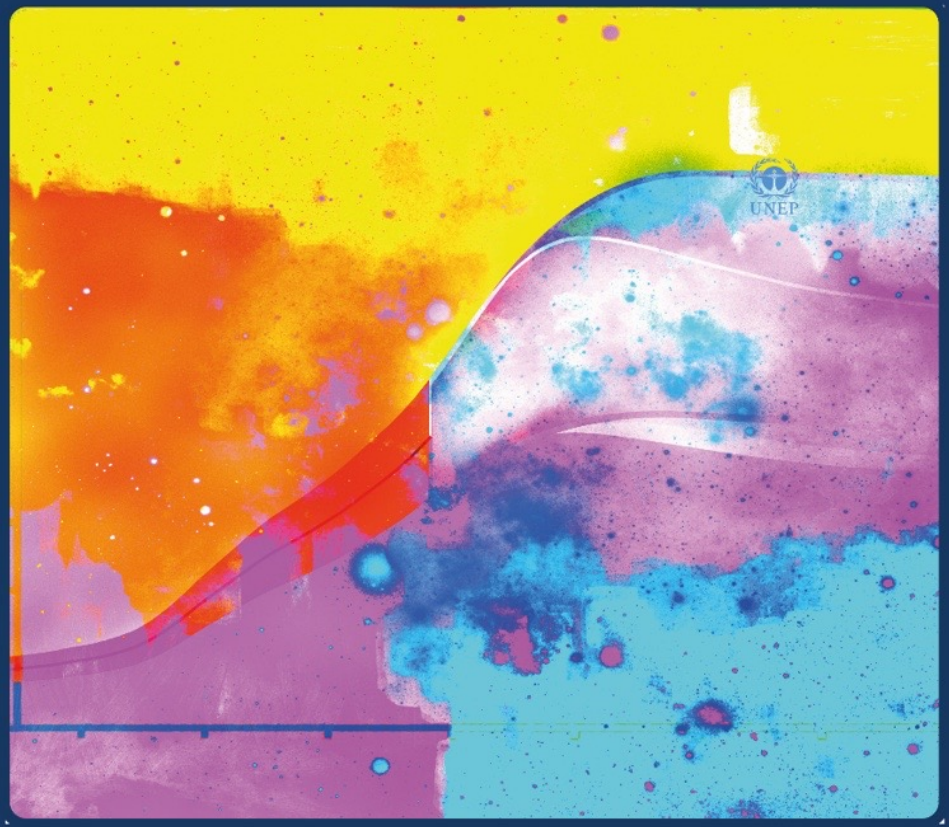
The SR15

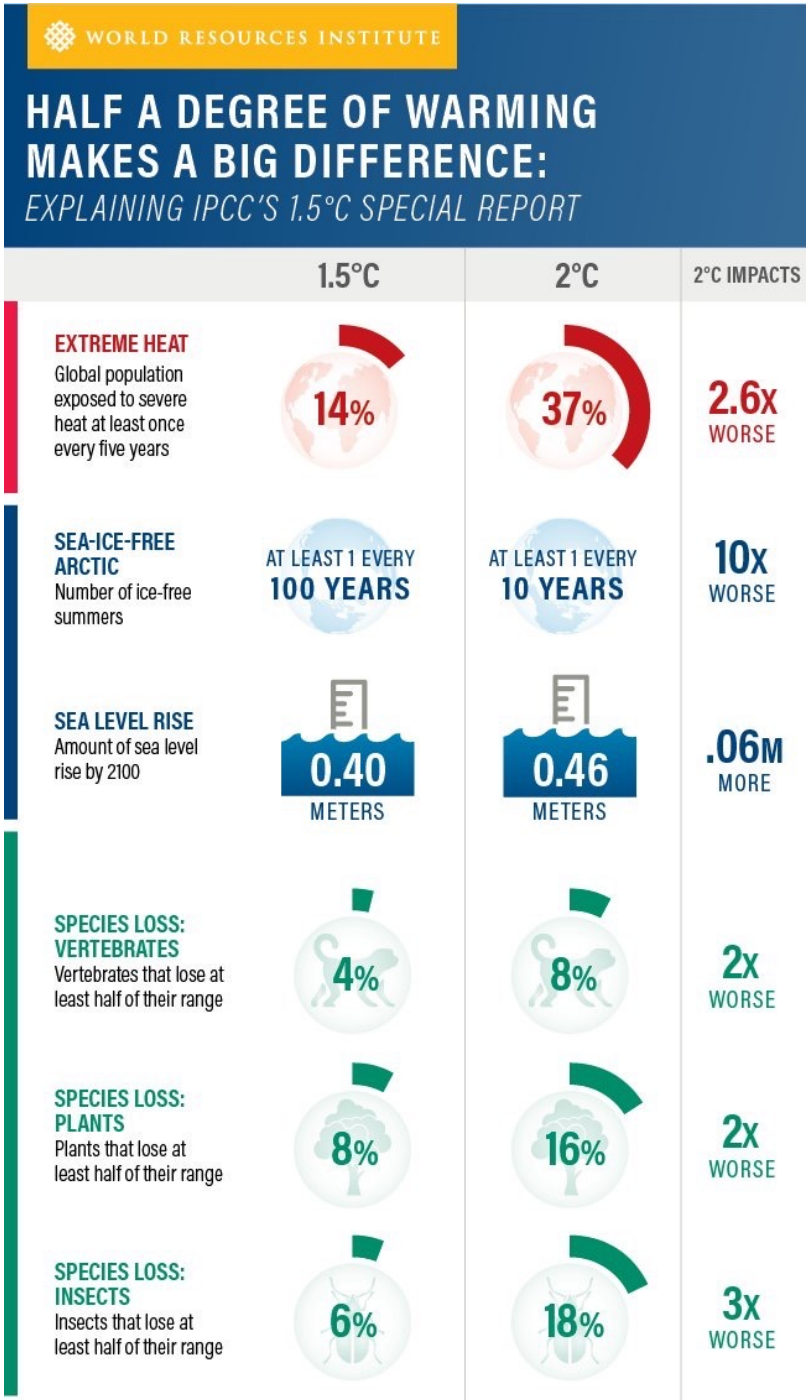
ipcc
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change

WMO UNEP

Global Warming of 1.5°C

An IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.



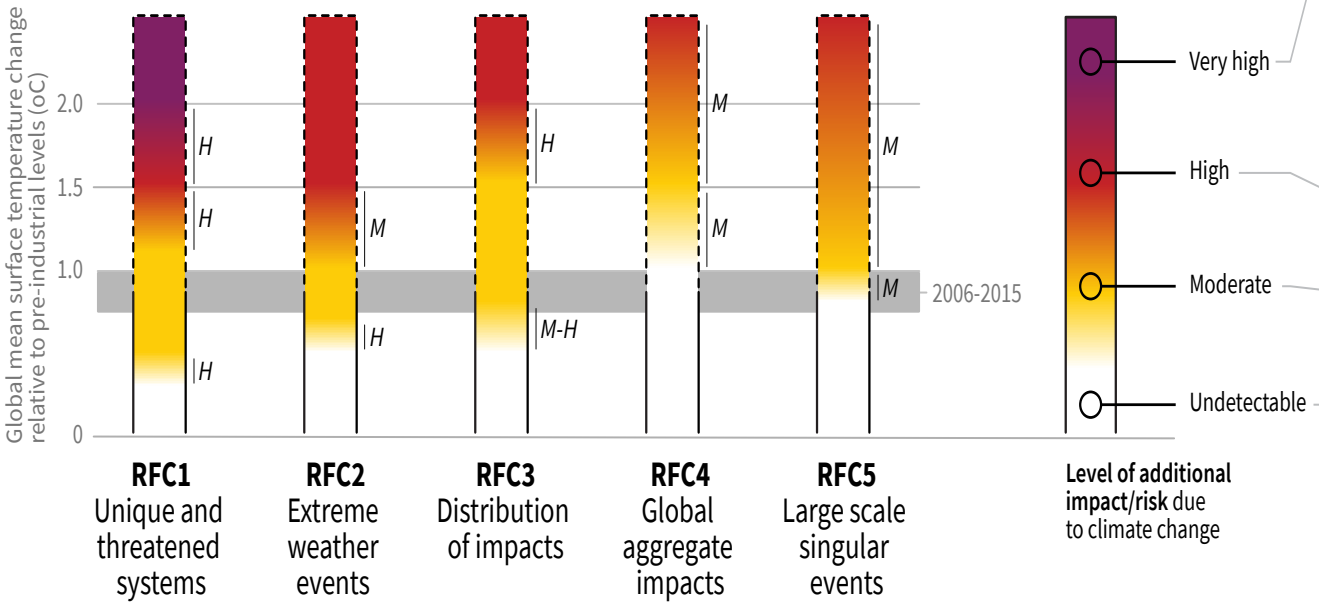


Responsibility for content: WRI

How the level of global warming affects impacts and/or risks associated with the Reasons for Concern (RFCs) and selected natural, managed and human systems

Five Reasons For Concern (RFCs) illustrate the impacts and risks of different levels of global warming for people, economies and ecosystems across sectors and regions.

Impacts and risks associated with the Reasons for Concern (RFCs)



Purple indicates very high risks of severe impacts/risks and the presence of significant irreversibility or the persistence of climate-related hazards, combined with limited ability to adapt due to the nature of the hazard or impacts/risks.

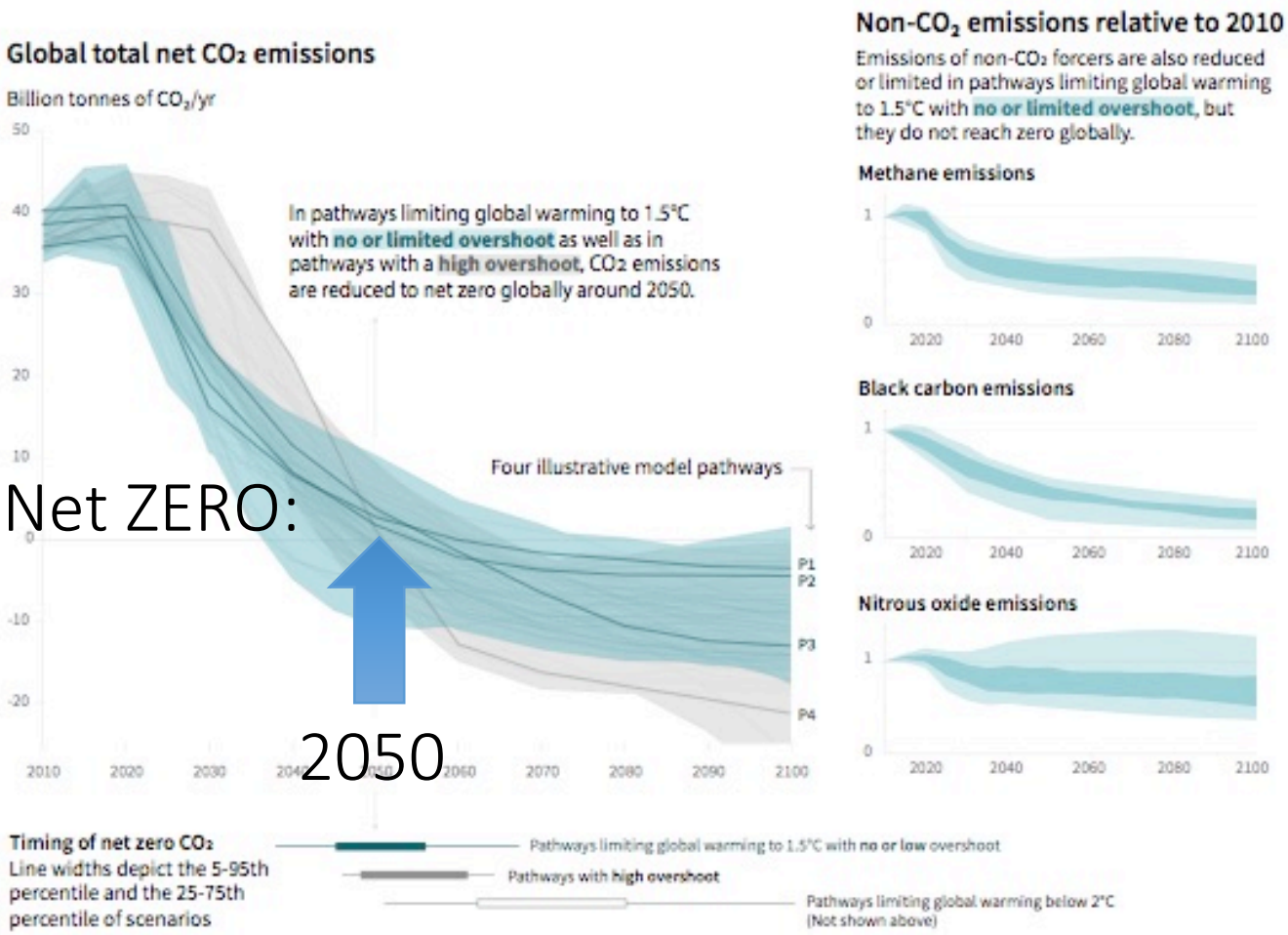
Red indicates severe and widespread impacts/risks.

Yellow indicates that impacts/risks are detectable and attributable to climate change with at least medium confidence.

White indicates that no impacts are detectable and attributable to climate change.

Global emissions pathway characteristics

General characteristics of the evolution of anthropogenic net emissions of CO_2, and total emissions of methane, black carbon, and nitrous oxide in model pathways that limit global warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot. Net emissions are defined as anthropogenic emissions reduced by anthropogenic removals. Reductions in net emissions can be achieved through different portfolios of mitigation measures illustrated in Figure SPM3B.



Source: IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C

Remaining carbon budget in 2018
(Source: IPCC SR15)

- The remaining carbon budget of 580 $GtCO_2$ for a 50% probability of limiting warming to 1.5˚C, and 420 $GtCO_2$ for a 66% probability (medium confidence)
- The remaining budget is being depleted by current emissions of 42± 3 $GtCO_2$ per year

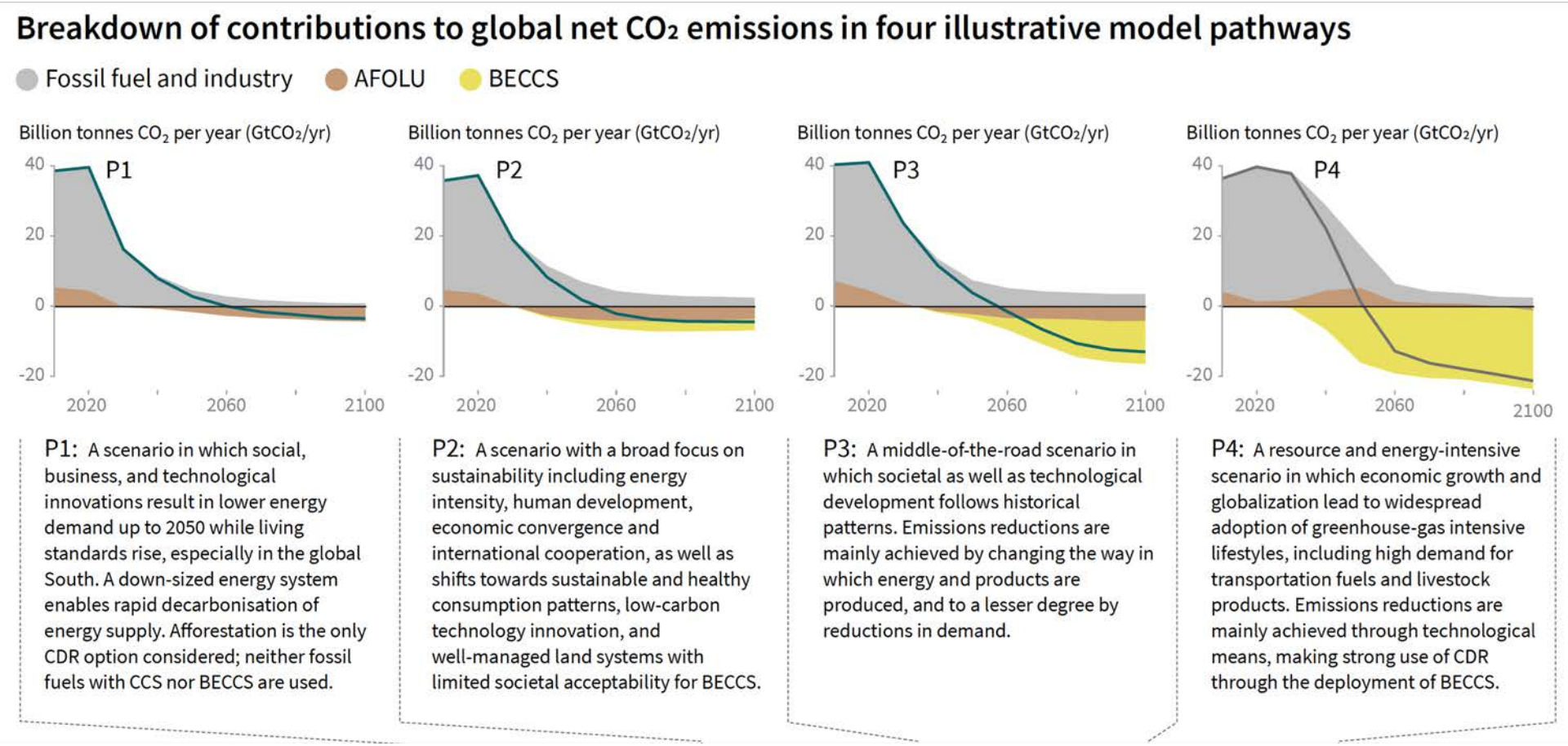
Greenhouse gas emissions pathways

- Limiting warming to 1.5° C would require changes on an unprecedented scale
    - Deep emissions cuts in all sectors
    - A range of technologies
    - Behavioural changes
    - Increase investment in low carbon options

Greenhouse gas emissions pathways

- Progress in renewables would need to mirrored in other sectors
- We would need to start taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere (Afforestation or other techniques)
- Implications for food security, ecosystems and biodiversity

Four illustrative model pathways in the IPCC SR15:

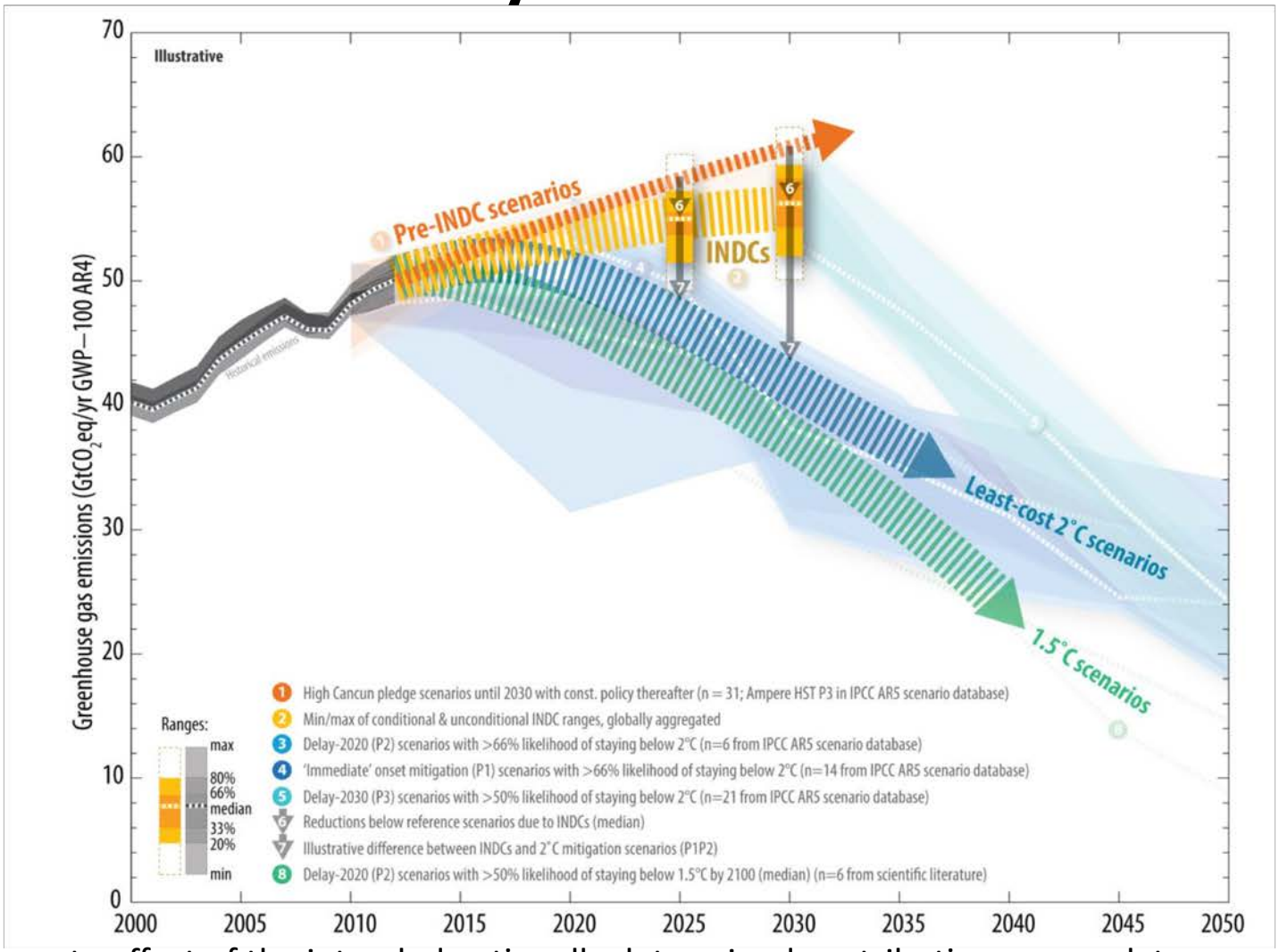


Fact n° 10: The present national plans (NDCs) introduced ahead of the Paris Agreement are far from what is needed to respect the 1.5° C objective, and even to stay below 2° C warming

Please note that the Paris Agreement speaks about 1.5° C and « *well below* 2° C » warming, not 2° C

@JPvanYpersele

Comparison of global emission levels in 2025 and 2030 resulting from the implementation of the intended nationally determined contributions



UNFCCC, Aggregate effect of the intended nationally determined contributions: an update http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2016/cop22/eng/02.pdf

(Element) of solution n° 1: The survival of humanity and ecosystems must become a much higher political priority

… as if we were all running for our life.

@JPvanYpersele

The Paris Agreement (COP21, December 2015)

Vision

« …strengthen the **global response to the threat of climate change**, in the context of **sustainable development** and efforts to **eradicate poverty** »

Objectives

a) Holding the increase in the global average temperature:

- *« **to well below 2°C** above pre-industrial levels »*
- *« **pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C** above pre-industrial levels,*
  recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change »

b) Adaptation and Mitigation

- *« **Increasing the ability to adapt** to the adverse impacts of climate change and **foster climate resilience** and*
- ***low greenhouse gas emissions development**, in a manner that does not threaten food production»*

c) Finances

- *« Making **finance flows consistent** with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development. »*

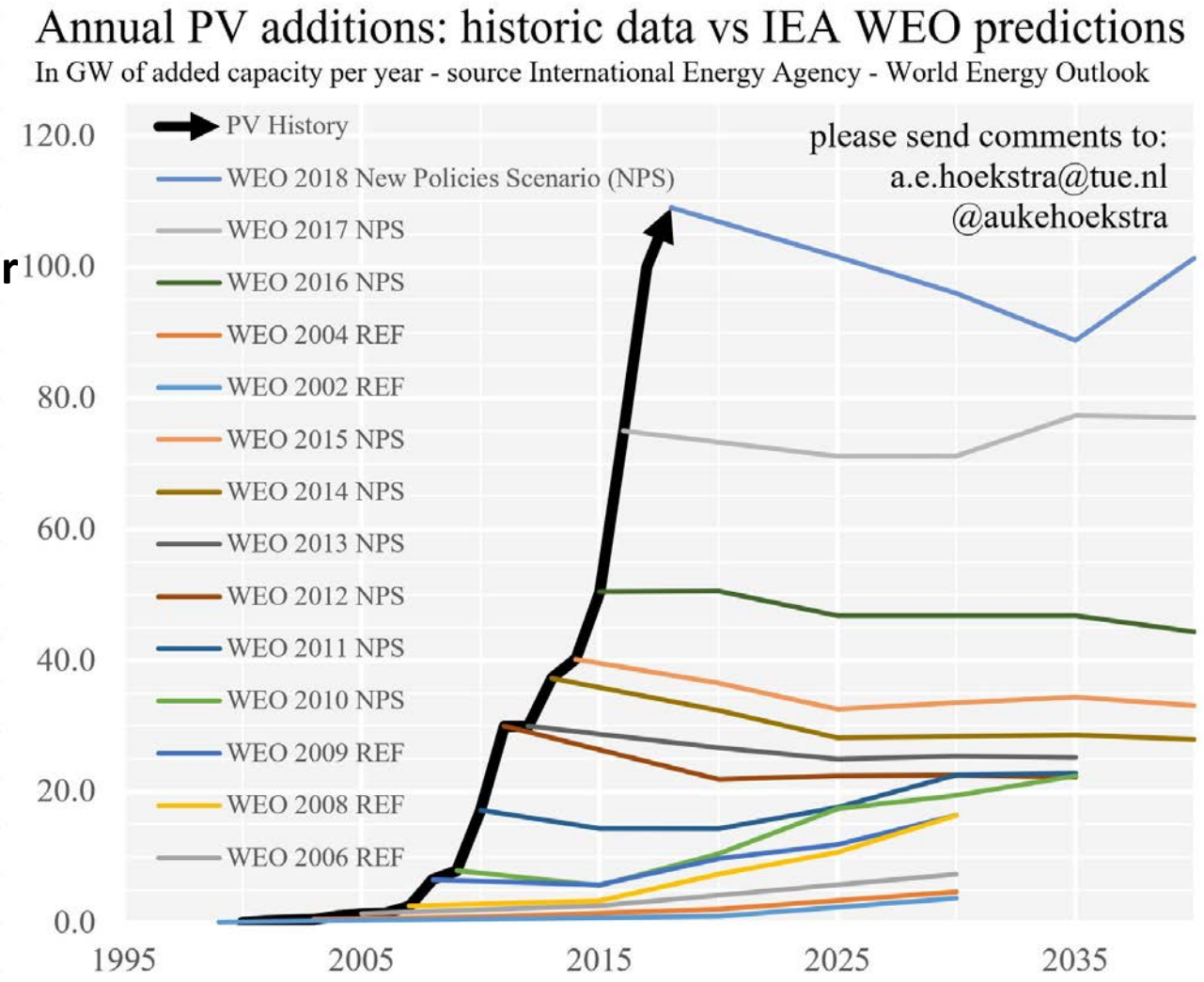
- **Substantial reductions in emissions to stay under 2° C would require large changes in investment patterns e.g., from 2010 to 2029, in billions US dollars/year:** (mean numbers rounded, IPCC AR5 WGIII Fig SPM 9)
- **energy efficiency: +330**
- **renewables: + 90**
- **power plants w/ CCS: + 40**
- **nuclear: + 40**
- **power plants w/o CCS: - 60**
- **fossil fuel extraction: - 120**

Solution n° 9: The Sun gives us in two hours about as much energy as the world uses in *one year*, all forms of energy considered

The cost of solar kWh is crashing, wind power, heat and electricity storage, and smart grids are moving forward

@JPvanYpersele

The International Energy Agency has missed that point…



Technology

Technology alone cannot solve climate crisis, warns ING

Michael Holder

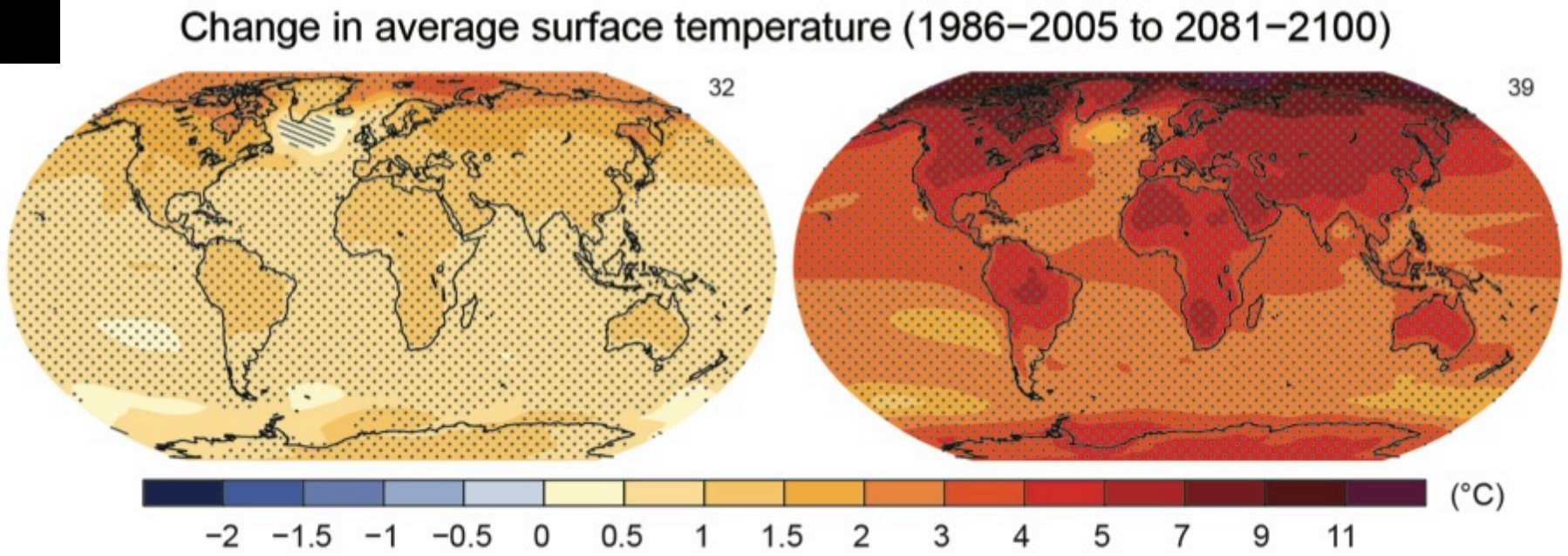
07 December 2018

World set to miss 2030 climate targets as new clean technologies take time to scale, warns ING

Technology could reduce today's global energy-related CO2 emissions by 64 per cent by 2050, but effective policies are urgently needed to ensure unintended climate impacts are avoided, new research by...

RCP2.6 RCP8.5

Fig. SPM.8



Humanity has the choice

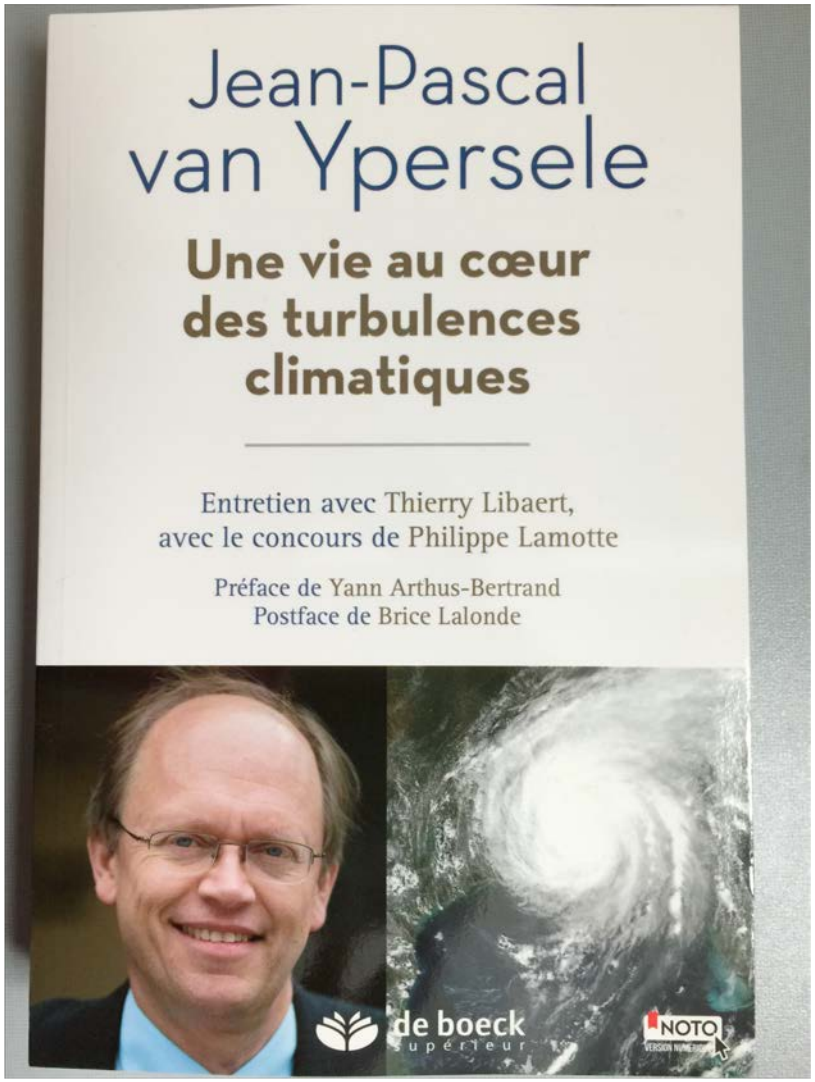
Pour en savoir plus:

Lisez mon livre, où j'aborde tous ces sujets

Publié chez De Boeck supérieur

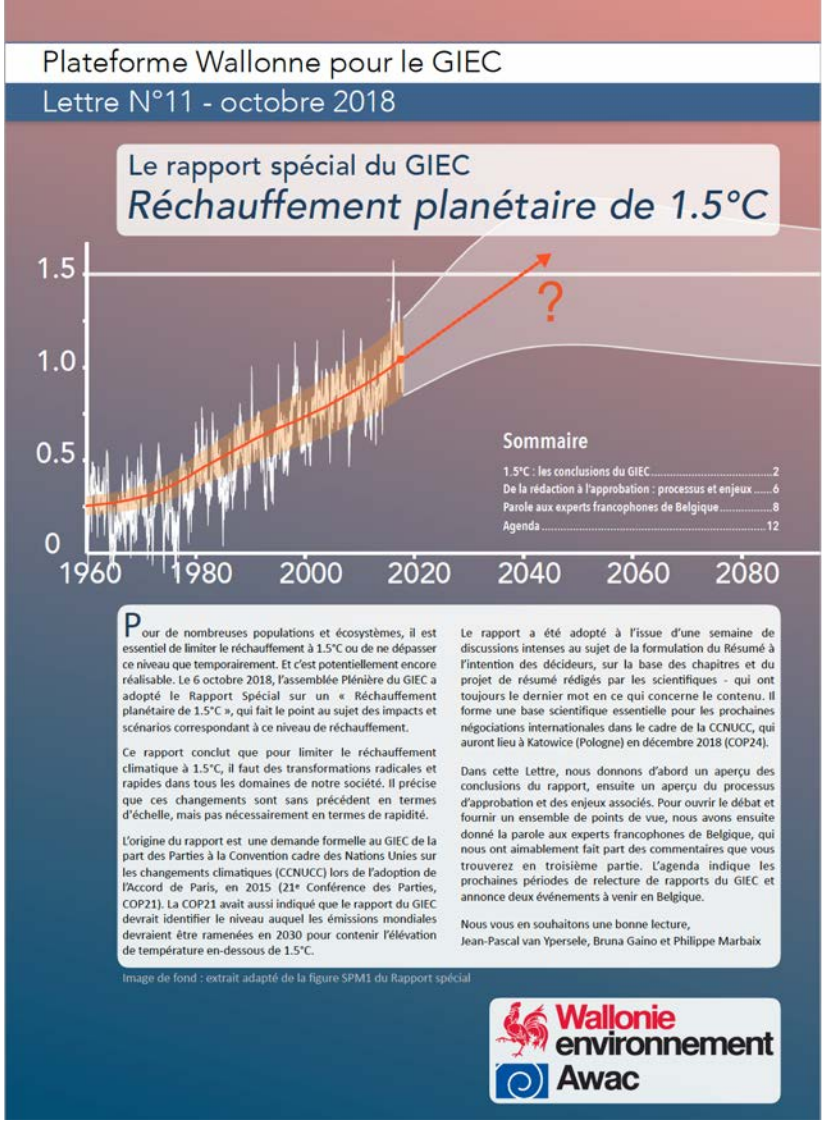
Préface:Yann Arthus-Bertrand

Postface: Brice Lalonde



Bij EPO (2018)

Voorwoord:
Jill Peeters



Plateforme Wallonne pour le GIEC

Lettre N°11 - octobre 2018

Le rapport spécial du GIEC

Réchauffement planétaire de 1.5°C

Sommaire

Pour de nombreuses populations et écosystèmes, il est essentiel de limiter le réchauffement à 1.5°C ou de ne dépasser ce niveau que temporairement. Et c'est potentiellement encore réalisable. Le 6 octobre 2018, l'assemblée Plénière du GIEC a adopté le Rapport Spécial sur un « Réchauffement planétaire de 1.5°C », qui fait le point au sujet des impacts et scénarios correspondant à ce niveau de réchauffement.

Ce rapport conclut que pour limiter le réchauffement climatique à 1.5°C, il faut des transformations radicales et rapides dans tous les domaines de notre société. Il précise que ces changements sont sans précédent en termes d'échelle, mais pas nécessairement en termes de rapidité.

L'origine du rapport est une demande formelle au GIEC de la part des Parties à la Convention cadre des Nations Unies sur les changements climatiques (CCNUCC) lors de l'adoption de l'Accord de Paris, en 2015 (21e Conférence des Parties, COP21). La COP21 avait aussi indiqué que le rapport du GIEC devrait identifier le niveau auquel les émissions mondiales devraient être ramenées en 2030 pour contenir l'élévation de température en-dessous de 1.5°C.

Le rapport a été adopté à l'issue d'une semaine de discussions intenses au sujet de la formulation du Résumé à l'intention des décideurs, sur la base des chapitres et du projet de résumé rédigés par les scientifiques - qui ont toujours le dernier mot en ce qui concerne le contenu. Il forme une base scientifique essentielle pour les prochaines négociations internationales dans le cadre de la CCNUCC, qui auront lieu à Katowice (Pologne) en décembre 2018 (COP24).

Dans cette Lettre, nous donnons d'abord un aperçu des conclusions du rapport, ensuite un aperçu du processus d'approbation et des enjeux associés. Pour ouvrir le débat et fournir un ensemble de points de vue, nous avons ensuite donné la parole aux experts francophones de Belgique, qui nous ont aimablement fait part des commentaires que vous trouverez en troisième partie. L'agenda indique les prochaines périodes de relecture de rapports du GIEC et annonce deux événements à venir en Belgique.

Nous vous en souhaitons une bonne lecture,
Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, Bruna Gaino et Philippe Marbaix

Image de fond : extrait adapté de la figure SPM1 du Rapport spécial

Wallonie environnement
Awac

Disponible gratuitement, 6X/an: www.plateforme-wallonne-giec.be

Ecrit pour les jeunes (et moins jeunes), avec des liens vers des ressources utiles

Disponible gratuitement, 6X/an: www.plateforme-wallonne-giec.be

This gives me hope:

Well-informed young people speaking truth to power

With @GretaThunberg at COP24

To go further :

- www.climate.be/vanyp : my slides (under « conferences)
- www.ipcc.ch : IPCC
- www.realclimate.org : answers to the merchants of doubt arguments
- www.skepticalscience.com : same
- www.plateforme-wallonne-giec.be : IPCC-related in French, Newsletter, latest on SR15
- www.wechangeforlife.org : 250 experts speak
- **Twitter: @JPvanYpersele & @IPCC_CH**