

Press Release No. 87/2008

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Climate change makes adaptation necessary New publications on the risks and opportunities of climate change

Climate change and its consequences is the subject on everybody's lips these days, ever since the World Climate Council issued its 4th Assessment Report in 2007. Climate changes can already be perceived in Germany, but just how will a changed climate affect mankind and the environment? What can we do to be prepared? By building up on current research reports, the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) has compiled the body of knowledge about the risks of climate change for Germany in several publications and proposes possible strategies and measures for adaptation.

The climate change observed today is the reaction of the climate system to greenhouse gas emissions produced over the past two centuries. Owing to the climate system's slow reaction time, the impact of the significantly higher levels of greenhouse gas emissions produced at present will only be felt in the course of the next few decades. Earth's climate may continue to warm in the long term.

Modern climate protection policy is therefore founded on two pillars: mitigation and adaptation. "Reduction of greenhouse gases remains a top priority. However, we must be prepared to handle the inevitable consequences of climate change, which is why adaptation to climate change has become a second critical pillar of climate policy", said Dr. Thomas Holzmann, UBA Vice President.

UBA recently published a research report on climate change in Germany and in new publications, it has summarised the state of knowledge on the impact of climate change and the means for adaptation:

1. Five theme documents draw attention to the risks and opportunities of climate change posed to the areas of coastal protection, forest management, agriculture, flood protection, and the energy and finance sectors. They illustrate how the dangerous impact of climate change can be mitigated as well as which opportunities result from these changes. Publications on other theme areas are scheduled.
2. The German-language document *Deutschland im Klimawandel - Anpassung ist notwendig* [Germany in the face of climate change - adaptation is necessary] illustrates the possible consequences of climate change to be borne by Germany and also points out strategies with which these changes can be handled.

Federal ministries, under the direction of the German Federal Environment Ministry, are currently working out a strategy of adaptation to climate change whose implementation is intended to be a medium to long-term process. The federal cabinet will receive its first report at the end of 2008. The strategy will focus on the continued improvement of knowledge with which to provide a basis for decision-making, and on developing a process of dialogue and participation among the *Laender*, municipalities, and stakeholder groups. It will also focus on gradual substantiation of the various opportunities of action. UBA is providing professional counsel and guidance in the development of Germany's adaptation strategy through the Competence center on global warming and adaptation (KomPass)

The German-language document *Deutschland im Klimawandel - Anpassung ist notwendig* [*Germany in the face of climate change - adaptation is necessary*] can be downloaded from the Internet at: <http://www.umweltdaten.de/publikationen/fpdf-l/3468.pdf>

The theme documents are on the Internet (in German):

Coastal protection: <http://www.umweltdaten.de/klimaschutz/kuestenschutz.pdf>

Forestry management: <http://www.umweltdaten.de/klimaschutz/forstwirtschaft.pdf>

Agriculture: <http://www.umweltdaten.de/klimaschutz/landwirtschaft.pdf>

Flood protection: <http://www.umweltdaten.de/klimaschutz/hochwasserschutz.pdf>

Energy and finance: <http://www.umweltdaten.de/klimaschutz/energie-finanzwirtschaft.pdf>

The latest research report on climate change in Germany is available here:

<http://www.umweltdaten.de/publikationen/fpdf-l/3513.pdf>

Further information about KOMPASS is at <http://www.anpassung.net>

Dessau-Roßlau, 15 December 2008