

Press Briefing

The IASS at the World Climate Conference in Bonn

Experts from the institute to provide information about climate protection, marine conservation, and the energy transition



Photo: Measures against climate change are being discussed in Bonn. [UNclimatechange](#) on Flickr, [CC BY-NC-SA2.0-Lizenz](#)

Potsdam, 03.11.2017. From 6 to 17 November, delegates at the 23rd United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP23) will be working on the rulebook for the implementation of the Paris climate goals. A team of experts from the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) is at the conference to encourage discussion on the following central questions: What role does ocean conservation play on the way to achieving the Paris goals? How do climate protection and sustainable development go hand in hand? What risks and potential benefits would climate engineering bring? And can a broad societal dialogue advance the energy transition?

The Paris Agreement has been adopted and ratified by 169 states. It's now time to implement the ambitious goals of limiting global warming to well below two degrees Celsius by 2100 and achieving carbon neutrality. This year's climate conference aims to raise the



level of ambition of individual states and get them ready for a major stocktake in 2018. Money is also likely to be high on the agenda, since the USA has reneged on its promise to help finance climate protection measures and climate damage compensation.

The island state of Fiji is presiding over COP23, and this is turning the spotlight on the particular vulnerability of islands and poorer countries to climate change and the significance of oceans in the climate system. At the same time, the IPCC is preparing a new report due in 2018, which will evaluate concrete measures to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. These measures include technologies to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which fall under the umbrella term geoengineering.

That is the background to the current negotiations at the World Climate Conference 2017 in Bonn. IASS Researchers are on site to provide information on key topics in several events and talks.

Towards a Joint Approach to Climate Protection and Development

How can climate protection go hand in hand with sustainable development? That question is the focus of a discussion organised by the IASS together with Nepal, the Solomon Islands, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), and the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCE–SD) of the University of the South Pacific on the Fiji Islands.

Using concrete examples from these countries, participants will present and discuss successful approaches as well as obstacles to climate protection and sustainable development. These include measures to combat air pollution that improve health and quality of life while also helping to limit global warming. The event will also examine the role that local communities can play in adapting to climate change.

“Coordinated action on sustainable development and climate change”

When: Tuesday, 7 November 2017, 3–4.30 p.m.

Where: COP23, Bonn Zone (Rheinaue), Meeting Room 4

With: Charlotte Unger, Research Associate in the project “Climate Action in National and International Processes (ClimAct)” at the IASS

Ocean Governance: The Significance of Oceans for the Climate

The oceans play a key role in mitigation and adaptation, but they are also hard hit by the impacts of climate change: Ocean acidification and sea-level rise are among the challenges



that island states like Fiji are already struggling with. Entire ecosystems are threatened, including coral reefs, which are extremely sensitive to temperature rises. In order to advance marine conservation and climate protection in accordance with the UN sustainable development goals, ocean governance must be strengthened – more effective regulation is needed, especially in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

At COP23, IASS researchers are meeting with their colleagues from the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel (GEOMAR) and the Leibniz Centre for Tropical Marine Research (ZMT) to discuss how European marine science can shape climate policy and how to put this research area on a firmer financial and structural footing.

“Oceans in the Earth system: sustainable ocean climate and the role of science”

When: Friday, 10 November 2017, 2.15–3.45 p.m.

Where: COP23, Bonn Zone (Rheinaue), European Union Pavilion

With: Sebastian Unger, Ocean Governance Project Leader at the IASS

The Energy Transition: How a Broad Dialogue Can Advance Transformation

The ENavi research project is developing a navigation system for the energy transition. Using this tool, researchers can predict the future impacts and side effects of economic, political, legal, and social measures in connection with the transformation of energy systems. A total of 60 partners from academia, civil society and the private sector cooperate on the ENavi project, which is one of the four Kopernikus Projects commissioned by the German Ministry of Education and Research to investigate the energy transition.

At COP23, researchers engaged in the ENavi project are meeting climate experts to explore how cooperation between representatives of science, politics, business, and civil society can contribute to achieving the energy transition.

“How can transdisciplinary research contribute to greater advance of the energy transition?”

When: Friday, 15 November 2017, 10 a.m.–12.30 p.m.

Where: COP23, Transfer Zone (Rheinaue), Dome of the Helmholtz-Zentrum Geesthacht Centre

With: Piet Sellke, Research Associate in the ENavi project, IASS

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The Debate on Climate Protection: From Drastic Technologies to Creative Utopias

Climate change is having a particularly strong impact on the Arctic Region. At the same time, the melting of Arctic ice is opening new economic avenues. IASS Scientific Director Mark Lawrence will cast light on the socioeconomic consequences of climate change for the Arctic Region at COP23. In a talk beginning at **1 p.m. on Wednesday, 15 November** in the Korean Pavilion (Bonn Zone), he will ask whether this change is good or bad and for whom.

On **Thursday, 16 November from 12 p.m.** Mark Lawrence is also a guest at the "German Science Hour" in the German Pavilion (Bonn Zone), where he will talk about the pros and cons of climate engineering, a set of technologies intended to prevent or reduce some of the more drastic consequences of climate change, which, however, is associated with serious risks.

Physicist Tom Bruhn is contributing to an artistic exploration of pathways to a climate-friendly society: he will moderate a round table at the Bonn Museum of Modern Art, where creative ingredients for the future sustainable food system will emerge (**Wednesday, 15 November from 6 p.m.**).

A total of 16 experts from the IASS will be on site at COP23 in Bonn. We would be happy to put you in touch with an expert on a broad range of climate and sustainability topics. For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Anja Krieger – who can be contacted at COP23 on her mobile telephone: 00 49 151 120 190 27

Eva Söderman – in Potsdam

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The Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) conducts research with the goal of identifying, advancing, and guiding transformation processes towards sustainable societies in Germany and abroad. Its research practice is transdisciplinary, transformative, and co-creative. The institute cooperates with partners in academia, political institutions, administrations, civil society, and the business community to understand sustainability challenges and generate potential solutions. A strong network of national and international partners supports the work of the institute. Among its central research topics are the energy transition, emerging technologies, climate change, air quality, systemic risks, governance and participation, and cultures of transformation. The IASS is funded by the research ministries of the Federal Government of Germany and the State of Brandenburg.