

# Singaporean scientist elected co-chair of top UN climate body

Cheryl Tan

Associate Professor Winston Chow was on Thursday evening

elected co-chair of the United Nations' top climate science body – the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – making him the first Singaporean to take up the role.

The IPCC looks into the scientific basis of climate change, its impact and future risk, as well as outlines possible options for countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions and implementing suitable adapta-

tion measures.

Its reports help governments to develop climate-related policies and contribute to global climate action under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

As a developing country co-chair, Prof Chow, a climate change scientist, will contribute to Working Group II, which focuses on climate change impact and adaptation measures – as part of its seventh assessment report cycle.

Prof Chow specialises in urban climate and is a Lee Kong Chian Research Fellow based in Singapore Management University's College of Integrative Studies. He has been a principal investigator for the multi-institute Cooling Singapore initiative since 2017, and leads interdisciplinary research on how Singapore's urban climate risks will change as its climate warms.

The elections of various top positions were held from Tuesday and are expected to conclude on Friday in Kenya's capital of Nairobi.

In a LinkedIn Post on Thursday, Prof Chow said that he was honoured to have been elected.

"I have never shaken so many hands in my life before – but I guess it is a testament to the strong faith many countries have in my capacity to lead this body in assessing global climate change impacts and adaptation over the next several years," he added.

He stressed that solutions to the climate crisis cannot be "ad hoc or piecemeal", and that successful climate resilience that strengthens global climate action requires inclusivity and collaboration both within and beyond the IPCC community.

Congratulating Prof Chow, Singapore's Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu said on Facebook: "With his experience, I am confident that he will serve the IPCC well.

"A/P Chow will contribute towards a better understanding of the impact of climate change, and the continued development of resilient climate adaptation solutions."

Prof Chow will work with Professor Bart van den Hurk from the Netherlands, his fellow co-chair.

The IPCC's work continues to guide the global community, especially developing countries, in their environmental response. Singapore also takes reference from the panel's Seventh Assessment Report's (AR7) findings in refining the Singapore Green Plan 2030, said Ms Fu.

Prof Chow will also work closely with British Professor Jim Skea, the newly elected chair of the IPCC Bureau, in shaping the work of AR7, which will inform global climate action, she said.

Prof Chow had said on Saturday



As a developing country co-chair, Associate Professor Winston Chow, a climate change scientist, will contribute to the IPCC Working Group II, which focuses on climate change impact and adaptation measures. PHOTO: MSE

## EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE

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**MS GRACE FU**, Singapore's Minister for Sustainability and the Environment, congratulating Associate Professor Winston Chow.

that in an increasingly climate-vulnerable world, human and natural systems face more adaptation challenges, especially communities that did the least to contribute to climate change.

Many are facing the worst risks arising from its impacts, he noted.

This underscores the need for a strong IPCC Working Group II assessment in order to enable the right adaptation approaches, reduce risk and help enhance climate resilience, he added.

The IPCC is divided into three working groups and a task force, and publishes reports every six to seven years to ensure that the scientific aspects of climate change are continually updated according to the latest available data. It is now in the seventh assessment cycle.

Each report comprises content from three working groups. Aside from Working Group II, Working Group I looks at the physical aspects of climate change, such as

temperature rise, while Working Group III focuses on ways to mitigate climate change.

There are also special reports that zero in on particular issues, such as the ocean and its related ecosystems, as well as the links between climate change and land.

Each working group has two co-chairs – one from a developing country and the other from a developed country – with 15 vice-chairs across all three working groups.

The Ministry for Sustainability and the Environment said in April that it had nominated Prof Chow for the post, given his extensive experience in the field.

It noted that the IPCC had decided to include a Special Report on Cities and Climate Change in the AR7 cycle, an area where he has done extensive research and field work.

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