

FAQs

Why an FAQ?

With our new preprint, *“Adverse Climate: Addressing Inclusion and Diversity Issues in the IPCC’s Sixth Assessment and Beyond,”* I know there will be questions about what this paper means — and what it doesn’t. This FAQ is my way of being transparent and proactive. It shares the intent behind the work, clarifies why we wrote it, and explains how our lived experiences as authors can help strengthen — not undermine — climate science and the IPCC.

1. What is the main purpose of this paper?

The paper examines systemic barriers faced by Global South scientists, people of color, women, and other marginalized groups in the IPCC AR6 Working Group II process. Drawing on lived experiences, it highlights unequal power dynamics, language barriers, and resource inequities. It also offers actionable recommendations to help AR7 and future assessments become more inclusive. The aim is to strengthen climate science by ensuring diverse voices shape global narratives.

2. Is this paper a criticism of the IPCC?

No. The paper is a collaborative effort by IPCC authors — including several current AR7 Coordinating Lead Authors and Lead Authors — to support and strengthen the IPCC’s mission. It builds on the IPCC’s ongoing DEI initiatives, such as updated codes of conduct and author training. What it does — for the first time — is bring forward authors’ voices to show that discrimination does occur within global assessments. The IPCC is used here as a laboratory case to illuminate these systemic issues, but such challenges are not unique to the IPCC. They are widespread across scientific institutions worldwide, and documenting them is a necessary step toward more inclusive global science.

3. Why focus on IPCC AR6 WGII?

AR6 WGII provides a case study for challenges common across global scientific assessments. Its diverse author team offered a unique opportunity to document systemic barriers in process, behavior, and resources — with lessons that apply beyond the IPCC.

We also seek to caution against complacency with the recent 51% diversity metric for AR7. Increased diversity on paper does not automatically translate into greater agency for marginalized groups; true inclusion requires equitable participation and influence, not just representation.

4. How does this paper address climate science broadly?

Excluding diverse voices risks skewed narratives and ineffective solutions, such as those embedded in Integrated Assessment Models. Inclusive science leads to more robust, actionable outcomes by integrating perspectives from those most affected by climate change, particularly in the Global South.

5. Could this paper undermine trust in climate science or the IPCC?

On the contrary. By advocating for transparent, equitable processes, the paper strengthens trust in the IPCC and in climate science. Addressing systemic issues enhances legitimacy and credibility, countering increasing claims that climate science is elitist or biased.

6. What are the key recommendations?

The paper calls for structural changes to foster equity and inclusion. Crucially, these must be pursued together, in parallel, rather than as isolated or “box-ticking” measures. For example, DEI training alone is insufficient unless it is sustained and reinforced by other reforms such as an Ombudsperson, equitable resource access, and transparent author selection processes. Only when these initiatives operate on a **sustained** basis—and **in concert**—can marginalized voices move from symbolic inclusion to genuine agency in shaping assessments.

7. How does this work align with the IPCC’s DEI efforts?

It acknowledges progress already made, such as new funding mechanisms for Global South authors and expanded journal access for AR7. The recommendations are evidence-based ways to build on this progress and ensure AR7 delivers inclusive, high-impact science.

8. Who are the authors, and why did they write this?

The 21 authors, from ~20 countries, include current and former IPCC authors with diverse expertise. . This effort is led by Adj. Prof. Shobha Maharaj — a Global South woman of colour, AR7 Coordinating Lead Author, and a scientist with extensive experience working in small islands across both the Caribbean and Pacific. The authors share lived experiences to advocate for systemic change — taking personal risks to strengthen global science.

Contact: For further questions, email Adj Prof. Shobha Maharaj at shobham@unifiji.ac.fj