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‘The world is heading for warming of about 3 degrees’

It will not be possible to meet the target agreed in Paris of maximum global warming of 1.5 degrees unless action is speeded up around the world. That is clear from two IPCC reports that appeared this spring. A small army of Wageningen scientists were involved in the reports.

Unless current plans are tightened up, the world is heading for warming of about 3.2 degrees in 2100, says the IPCC. ‘The next few years are critical,’ says Gert-Jan Nabuurs, professor of European Forest Resources at WUR and one of the lead authors of the report on combating climate change. ‘Time is up. We are already too late to prevent the Earth from warming up by 1.5 degrees.’

According to Nabuurs, three key measures are stopping deforestation, sustainable intensification of agriculture and the restoration of forests and biodiversity, in combination with the use of renewable resources. ‘All the measures in agriculture

and forestry together can contribute about 15 per cent to the overall solution.’

His message for governments: ‘Be consistent and formulate policies for the long term.’ Nabuurs finds it ‘really strange’ to ask farmers to invest millions in reducing emissions but at the same time not do anything about cheap flights. ‘Governments can steer behaviour with regulations and price mechanisms and by encouraging research and private sector action. That is needed in sectors such as forestry and agriculture. Reduce uncertainty for farmers, forest owners and consumers.’

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