



**Address to the Ninth Conference of the Parties to the
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
by**

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President of the Conference of the Parties, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman I am privileged to be able to address this august gathering on behalf of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. It is particularly significant for me to be given this opportunity in this Conference, placed as we are with over two years having gone by since the Third Assessment Report (TAR) of the IPCC was completed and at this current juncture when we are moving ahead with preparation of the Fourth Assessment Report. This Conference and its subsidiary bodies have had considerable interaction and discussion on the main findings of the TAR, and we hope you would find the work of the IPCC of value in developing your activities under the UNFCCC, including some of the special reports and technical papers produced by the IPCC. Let me emphasize and highlight some of the major conclusions of the TAR, which would have special relevance to actions that the COP would be considering in the coming years. I would first refer to some of the impacts of climate change. Global mean sea level is projected to rise by 0.09 to 0.88 meters between the years 1990 – 2100 for the full range of SRES scenarios assessed by the IPCC. This would happen primarily due to thermal expansion of sea water and the loss of mass from glaciers and ice caps. These glaciers and ice caps are projected to continue their widespread retreat during the 21st Century. Northern Hemisphere snow cover, covering permafrost and sea ice extent are projected to decrease further. The Antarctic ice sheet is likely to gain mass because of greater precipitation while the Greenland ice sheet is likely to lose mass because the increase in runoff will exceed the precipitation increase.

The effects of climate change on human health, eco-systems, food production, water resources, small islands and low lying coastal areas are likely to be serious. In the case of human health, threats particularly in lower income populations, predominantly within tropical/ subtropical countries are projected to increase. Also in most tropical and subtropical regions yields in agriculture are projected to decrease for most projected increases in temperature. This, according to the TAR, can be stated with medium level of confidence. Perhaps the most significant impacts of climate change would be felt in the availability of water. Projected climate change would exacerbate water shortage and quality problems in many water scarce areas of the world, but it would also alleviate these in some other areas.

Overall, climate change is expected to negatively impact development, sustainability and equity. As it happens, the impacts of climate change will fall disproportionately on developing countries and the poor persons within all countries. This is likely to accentuate inequities in health status and access to adequate food, clean water and other resources. The increased exposures of populations in developing countries to relatively high risks of adverse impacts from climate change and their low capacity to adapt combine to make populations in developing countries generally more vulnerable than populations in developed countries.

The TAR, therefore, concluded that the primary economic benefits of mitigation would be in the nature of avoided costs associated with the adverse impacts of climate change. For mean temperature increases over a few degrees centigrade relative to the year 1990, impacts were assessed to be predominantly adverse, so net primary benefits of mitigation were assessed to be positive. Hence major reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions were found to be necessary to achieve stabilisation of their concentration. In this context, reference needs to be made to Article 2 of the Framework Convention. The IPCC has attempted to provide a scientific basis to defining what constitutes a dangerous level of concentration of greenhouse gases. The TAR provides extensive scientific assessment for helping to answer this question. It also puts forward the view that the basis for determining what constitutes dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system will vary among regions. Such decisions were seen to involve value judgments determined through socio-political processes, and therefore while the IPCC is attempting to provide more scientific substance for helping to arrive at the required value judgment, it cannot itself possibly make the value judgment as part of its scientific assessments.

In early November 2003 the plenary session of the IPCC held in Vienna dealt with the structure of the Fourth Assessment Report, work on which is now being taken in hand with considerable vigour and diligence. Nominations have been invited for authors who would work on various components of the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4). In pursuing this step, it has been requested that Governments and other organisations that would provide such nominations should assist in ensuring proper geographical balance, the inclusion of a younger set of authors, a larger disciplinary base and the inclusion of the best possible talent that could be mobilised for the production of the AR4.

I would like to inform this Conference of the Parties that extremely rigorous preparations have been undertaken for structuring the AR4. Two intensive scoping meetings were held in April at Marrakesh and in September in Potsdam respectively to

prepare the intellectual underpinnings of various components of the AR4. Over 130 experts participated in the first scoping meeting for three full days and over 150 participants in the second meeting for four days. Collectively, this represented over a thousand person days of teamwork, to which must be added the extremely useful inputs provided by governments and other organisations, involved in this exercise.

Some of the new and unique features included in the AR4 cover the explicit treatment of a set of crosscutting themes which include (1) Uncertainty & Risk, (2) Integration of Mitigation and Adaptation, (3) Article 2 of the UNFCCC and Key Vulnerabilities, (4) Sustainable Development, (5) Regional Integration, (6) Water, and (7) Technology. The Panel is also considering the set of specific products that must be produced as the output of the AR4 to ensure effective outreach and an appropriate content in each specific product to meet more precisely the needs of policy makers in different regions as effectively as possible. In doing so the IPCC would only be upholding its cardinal principle of being policy relevant without being policy prescriptive.

We are privileged to have opportunities to interact with the subsidiary bodies of the Convention process and of course the Conference of the Parties. We believe this interaction provides us with a solid foundation for ensuring policy relevance in our work and meeting the needs of the Convention process in an objective and rigorous manner through our assessment efforts. We would make every endeavour to continue this interactive relationship, and I hope in this Conference as in previous ones, we would receive your views and an evaluation of your needs to help us serve you better.

Thank you Mr. President.