



**Speech by  
Dr Rajendra K. Pachauri  
Chairman of the IPCC,  
at the Twenty First Session of the IPCC**

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Prof. Klaus Topfer, Executive Director of UNEP & Under Secretary General of the UN, Your Excellency D. I. Josef Proll, Austrian Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment & Water Management, (often referred to as "LEBENSMINISTERIUM" or the Ministry of Life), Mr. Michel Jarraud, Deputy Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Ms. Joke Waller-Hunter, Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, my colleague Dr. Renate Christ, Acting Secretary of the IPCC, distinguished delegates and friends.

This session of the Panel holds great significance for a number of reasons. Firstly, we have perhaps the largest number of delegates participating in this Plenary of all the sessions held thus far. This underlines the interest that the member governments of the IPCC have in the work that we are charged with carrying out in the coming years. I thank all the governments and other organizations represented here for this expression of interest, which is a source of encouragement for my colleagues and me in the Bureau. Secondly, we are holding this session after intensive preparations for structuring the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC. We have had two formal expert meetings at Marrakech and Potsdam earlier this year in which over 130 and 150 experts respectively participated and contributed to the development of the structure and outlines of the three Working Group reports. Altogether these two expert meetings represented over 1000 person-days of collective effort. To this must be added the extremely valuable inputs we have received outside these formal sessions, particularly from various governments. We have, therefore, benefited greatly from the knowledge and expertise of the richest talent that is available globally on various aspects of climate change.

It is with a sense of humility but some confidence that we would be submitting the results of all these efforts to the Panel for guiding and propelling us further towards our shared objectives of producing a sound, scientifically valid, objective and high quality Fourth Assessment Report. Simultaneously we have also carried out a number of other tasks, the progress of which will be presented to you in this session. These include substantial work on two Special Reports dealing with HFCs & PFCs and CO<sub>2</sub> capture and storage respectively. My special thanks to the Task Force Bureau on Inventories for achieving specific outcomes on schedule and for diligently discharging all the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Panel. To be more specific, the Panel has to decide on adoption and acceptance on the two inventory reports prepared under LULUCF on invitation from the UNFCCC and the initiation of new major activities of the Inventory Programme, namely to revise the Revised 1996 IPCC Inventory Guidelines on invitation from SBSTA. A great deal of effort has, therefore, been put in by the IPCC to provide support to the Convention process.

The main task before us this week is consideration of the outlines of the three Working Group assessment reports. These, you will recall, were at an early stage of development when we last met in Paris this February. Since then the WG co-chairs and Bureaux have developed and revised the outlines at two scoping meetings, in Marrakech in April and at Potsdam in September. And the development and subsequent revisions of the outlines were in response to comments requested and received from governments over the course of the scoping process. For instance, several governments supported the concept of a regional focus, the explicit use of the cross cutting themes agreed on at IPCC-XX and closer cooperation between the Working Groups in the production of the AR4. Several of the submissions supported a continuation of the structure that characterized the TAR, and for this reason the AR4 is proposed to be structured on more or less the same lines as the TAR.

Well-established IPCC objectives and principles have guided our development of the outlines. These include i) an up to date and balanced assessment of existing knowledge; ii) the product of the best scientists from all relevant fields and backgrounds; and to these objectives we have agreed also to strive for a greater connection between the three Working Group reports, by identifying a number of cross-cutting themes. These seven CCTs cover: {(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. And, on each of these topics our responsible experts (we have called them anchors) have developed concept papers and worked with WG co-chairs to incorporate the themes in the report outlines that you have before you. The Bureau had defined the role of the anchors in terms of five specific tasks. Four of these including inputs for the Working Group outlines have been completed. The fifth task involving interaction with the writing teams once they have been selected would take place at various stages of the preparation of the AR4 coordinated by all the WG Co-Chairs to ensure consistency and continuity of their expert inputs. I must express my thanks to Prof. Mohan Munasinghe, Vice Chair of the IPCC for overseeing the process of articulation of the CCTs and the process of incorporating them in the proposed design of the AR4.

We would also be discussing in this session the question of the products that should form the outputs of the AR4. A decision

on this as early as possible, including that related to the production of the Synthesis Report, would ensure greater efficiency in the use of resources and consistency in the design of the products approved by this session.

While ensuring the greatest possible attention to policy relevance in the contents of the AR4, we would also have to be duly cautious in ensuring that at no stage must any part of the AR4 cross the storm front that would inappropriately take us into policy prescriptive territory. This would be a difficult but critically important requirement, and one that is at the core of the scientific credibility and effectiveness of the IPCC. Various demands may be placed on us, perhaps by those who would like the IPCC to take certain positions that could deviate from scientific assessment. Purely as an example I would like to refer to the need for treading carefully on the issue of Article 2 of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, which refers to the level of stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. The Third Assessment Report very rightly stated that decisions on what constitutes dangerous anthropogenic interference "are value judgments determined through socio-political processes, taking into account considerations such as development, equity, and sustainability, as well as uncertainties and risk". In its most unimpeachable form a scientific assessment can, however, provide essential information that is needed for such decisions and highlight (1) key vulnerabilities, (2) the specific nature and extent of impacts of climate change including damage to ecosystems, and the socio-economic implications of these impacts; and 3) the risk of occurrence of such impacts across a wide range of possible development futures and climate scenarios (ranging from unmitigated to stabilized). Scientists must faithfully and as accurately as possible confine their efforts to these three subjects. It is for others to determine what constitutes dangerous levels of interference with the world's climate system and what actions should be taken. For instance, it is for others to decide whether we have already crossed the danger threshold with the damage that has taken place to coral reefs, the widespread effects of sea level rise, the melting of glaciers, the changes in precipitation levels, and last but not least, higher temperatures. Some may feel that we already have. On the other hand others may perhaps conclude that even the disappearance of small island states is not dangerous, because entire populations could be moved from these states and from coastal areas to other locations as part of what could be termed as adaptation measures. Such value judgements do not reflect scientific assessment, and can at best be facilitated by an objective assessment of risks, impacts and key vulnerabilities of the systems thus affected and their relationship with specific mitigation options. Of course, these key vulnerabilities of different systems need to be defined not only in a biophysical sense but also in terms of socioeconomic implications which would also have relevance to mitigation options. I am highlighting these examples only as a word of caution, because at no stage of our work must we deviate from the scientific objectivity of what we are charged with doing.

We hope that at the end of this session we would embark on an active phase of preparation of the Fourth Assessment Report. The very first step in this venture would be the selection of authors. May I request all my colleagues, most notably the Working Group Co-Chairs, and, of course, the governments represented here to help in ensuring much better geographical balance in the selection of authors for the AR4. We have done progressively better in this respect in successive assessment reports, but we do have much further to go, not only because we need much deeper knowledge and understanding on local and regional issues, but also because in the last five years expertise on various aspects of climate change has advanced substantially in several parts of the world. Also important would be the need to draw on authors who are able to assess the literature in languages other than English. We must be conscious of the well-founded criticism that literature in several languages has not always received the attention that is justified. Finally, the IPCC must draw in authors of a new generation. The Panel has been in existence since 1988 and has been remarkably well served by hundreds of experts whose dedication and well earned authority in their areas of specialization has given the IPCC enormous standing, substance and prestige. But there is now a new generation that must also be brought in consciously to infuse new knowledge, new tools and techniques of analysis and a youthful vigour in the work of the Panel. All this would complement in a positive manner the talent that the IPCC has been able to harness thus far. In this context, may I also emphasize the need for enlarging the discipline base in the work of the IPCC. The assessment of climate change has to be driven by knowledge in the biophysical sciences, but if we are to be policy relevant and seen to be so, we need much greater involvement of economists, sociologists, and social scientists in general who can add a valuable dimension to other areas of science.

Decision 3 at the 20th session of the Panel required that stakeholder consultations with the business and environmental non-government organization communities be carried out as part of the preparation for the AR4. I am happy to state that this has been done effectively in the past few months, and plans are in hand for continuing this process in the coming months as well. My colleagues and I in the Bureau feel that we have benefited considerably through such consultations, and are therefore, encouraged to continue our efforts in this direction.

All these initiatives would constitute an intensive level of activity in the coming years, which would require commensurate financial resources. Governments have been sensitive to the financial needs of the IPCC in the past, and I am sure we can look forward to the necessary commitment of support in the future. In this context may I express our collective gratitude to Prof. Klaus Topfer for the support he personally and UNEP have provided to the IPCC. A similar measure of gratitude is owed to Prof. Obasi, Mr. Michel Jarraud and WMO for their generous help and support.

May I in conclusion welcome the dignitaries sharing the podium in this session and all the delegates assembled here for what I am sure will turn out to be an extremely productive and useful session of the IPCC.