



**Speech by Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin
to the 20th session of the
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
20 February 2003**

Mr Secretary-General
Mr Director-General
Mr President
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy to be with you today for this second working session the IPCC plenary, here at UNESCO.

The signs of climate warming on the planet are already making themselves clearly felt. Average daily surface temperatures have increased by an average of 0.6°C globally and by 0.9°C in mainland France. Winter precipitation has increased, whereas summer precipitation is gradually decreasing.

Large-scale weather events have recently occurred in France, we remember, in particular, the great storm of 1999 and the recent floods in Gard which preoccupy our citizens who see them as the forerunners of climate disruption.

Although it has not been proven that these events are due to climate change, it is still very likely that they will result in an increase in extreme climatic events, subjecting society to considerable risks that are difficult to control.

The Prime Minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, during his opening speech, told us to face up to our responsibilities. He incited us to take swift action to win the climate challenge.

In order to do this, we need to collectively become aware of the scale of the planet.

You, Professor Pachauri, you, ladies and gentlemen, members of the IPCC, have a crucial role to play in this raising of awareness.

Only science can provide the essential information and the necessary proof to help us to reduce our uncertainty and enable us to take preventative action.

Only exemplary work like yours, exemplary in its rigor, its transparency, its openness and its scientific excellence will provide the basis for pertinent political decisions, acceptable to all.

Political decision in this field is not easy, since climate change constitutes a new kind of risk. The phenomenon is not spatially limited; it does not stop at international borders.

Its period of inactivity is inscribed in a worldly horizon which surpasses that of the individual.

The impossibility of finding the culprit is added to the removal of the boundaries of space and time, since we all, each and every one of us, in each act of our daily life, contribute to climate warming.

And this is where we, political men and women, relying on your scientific analyses, are obliged to change the attitude of our societies because of this risk, because it is the only way to sustainable development.

We should educate ourselves and mobilize worldwide public opinion to bring about awareness, without which there is no hope for our planet.

Since I have been in charge of the Ministry for Ecology and Sustainable Development, I have placed men, women, their lives and safety at the center of my activity.

That is why I have based my policy on the three-part slogan of safety, transparency and participation.

In the area of risk, be it industrial, natural or technological, there is nothing worse than the illusion of absolute security created by a lack of information. I would like to move from zero risk to controlled risk and this can only be done by helping citizens take up their responsibilities. I am confident of their ability to mobilize themselves and make decisions.

We need to inform, organize discussions and encourage public participation in the stakes and consequences of climate warming so that the public can take it over and make a collective effort. This is one of the great works that society must undertake.

The important discussion on energy which will take place in Spring 2003 put citizen consultation over the decision-making process on strategic choices for French energy policy for the next three decades. It is intended to inform the French, 70% of whom are slightly or badly informed about energy matters and who want a better explanation of the problem and greater transparency in energy choices.

Awareness-raising activities among citizens should be combined with tangible action for combating climate change.

The objectives are known: we need to halve greenhouse gas emissions worldwide by 2050.

The richest, industrialized nations have a duty to set an example. This means that France should reduce its greenhouse gas emissions four or five times.

In ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, France has committed itself to stabilize its greenhouse gas emissions at their 1990 level by 2008-2012.

In order to achieve this, in 2000, we adopted the National Programme for Combating Climate Change (NPCCC) and its November 2002 balance showed a slight decrease in our emissions relative to 1990.

These good results, however, are very disparate.

The tertiary residential sector and the transport sector recorded disturbing increases.

The Climate Action Plan 2003 must be focused on changing the trends of these sectors. I would like to see it organized on the basis of three principles:

First: Require public authorities to be exemplary.

The State and local communities are among the largest entities giving orders and they also manage a large collection of vehicles and buildings. Public authorities should, more than anyone else, set an example by improving the energy efficiency of their activities. This means monitoring their heating, electricity and fuel consumption or demanding products and subcontracted services to have greater energy performance.

Second: Invest in scientific research and technological innovations.

All efforts to reduce our energy consumption are not sufficient to create change in society required by the climate challenge; therefore, we need to create a new approach. Scientific research and technological innovation could provide us with just this.

We should, therefore, not delay in investing in state-of-the-art technology in order to enable the technological breakthroughs that we will need to reduce our emissions.

Third: Use the power of economic encouragement incentives.

Actions to combat climate change should combine energy efficiency and economic efficiency. Among the economic instruments, tax incentives, if carefully structured, could play an essential role in the emergence of innovative technology, technology that, in addition to reducing greenhouse gases, will benefit the economy, consumption, air quality and public health.

This Climate Plan must encourage and accompany a wide process of transformation towards a more energy-efficient and carbon-efficient economy.

It must be ambitious because the results depend on France's ability to fulfill its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol.

It must be far-seeing because it is laying the milestones for tomorrow's policies as regards mobility, control of energy requirements or energy production.

It must mobilize, since its efforts are required from all participating parties.

It must be transparent in its wording and in its objectives because it must build a relationship of trust with society.

Ladies and gentlemen

Climate change is a threat that we need to face up to by making public opinion take its responsibilities by acting in a pragmatic and determined manner and by being innovative.

To be innovative is not simply to develop new technologies, which we are already doing, but also to change the founding principles of our society.

The creation of an Environmental Charter, announced by the President of the Republic during his presidential campaign, is a key component of this process. This will bring fundamental principles concerning the right to a health environment and sustainable development to a constitutional level, within reach of all.

Placing the objective to better protect our environment and better take environmental concerns into account in all public actions at the top of our legal standards will empower juridical means to act differently.

This, in the long run, will set an example for the international community.

This will open the field of reference for our ethical code and will, finally, set off a real cultural revolution.

Through this charter, the rights and responsibilities of man in his environment and in his daily life and his responsibilities to his fellow man and his descendents will be redefined.

Making man come face to face with his responsibilities will create a new balance between economic development, social progress and environmental protection. This should also express the search for justice and solidarity between people and between generations.

No crisis in the history of humanity has shown the mutual dependency of nations as clearly as climate change does.

World evolution over the last decade of the 20th century shows the need for new world authority: the trans-border nature of environmental questions, the challenge of applying an increasing number of multilateral agreements on the environment, the increased number and size of megapolises, the growing rate of civil society and the orientation of public policies towards a knowledge-based society of information.

Globalization and technological progress offer not only new development opportunities, but also increase pressure on the environment.

These underline the urgency to deal with the environmental problems that threaten human health and well-being.

A new international authority model needs to be developed, based on integrating the environmental stakes into economic globalization.

We need to work to change the rules of international trade in order to link market access with climate protection.

In conclusion, Professor Pachauri, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank you on behalf of France for the exemplary work you are doing.

Thanks to you, awareness that the attacks on our planet cannot automatically be reconstituted has

progressed.

Thanks to you, science has its place in decision-making processes of governments and international institutions.

Thanks to you, climate change has become a global stake in the decades to come.

Thank you.
