

Good morning,

Your Excellency Mr Bruno Oberle, Swiss State Secretary for the Environment,
Mr Jan Dusik, Representative of UNEP,
Mr Jeremiah Lengoasa, Deputy Secretary General of WMO
Mr Halldor Thorgeirsson, Representative of UNFCCC
My colleague, Dr Renate Christ, Secretary of the IPCC
Vice-Chairmen of the IPCC, Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and the TFI
Distinguished delegates, members of the media, and colleagues,

It is a great privilege and pleasure for me to welcome you on this occasion, the opening of the Thirty Fifth Plenary Session of the IPCC. I must at the very outset thank the Government of Switzerland for hosting this meeting and indeed as an intergovernmental organization, the IPCC greatly values the support that it gets from governments just as that being provided today by the Government of Switzerland. In that sense may I also say that the IPCC is a unique organization where we are able to work closely with governments involving the best talent drawn from the scientific community from all over the world. This, therefore, is an important occasion for us to carry further the work that we have been doing through the history of the IPCC.

I would like to very briefly review some of what we have done. Of course, we will have detailed reports in the course of this Session, but for the information of the distinguished persons at the head table over here and members of the media, may I say that in this cycle of the IPCC for completion of the Fifth Assessment Report, we have made substantial progress. No doubt, we still have a long way to go. To give you an indication of what the elements of this progress have been, Working Group I has completed its First Order Draft and completed the Expert Review where we had 659 Expert Reviewers, and they submitted over 21,000 comments. Working Group II had 13,702 review comments on its Zero Order Draft and these have been taken into consideration while developing the First Order Draft. Working Group III has completed its Zero Order Draft; 159 experts registered for the review; 56 provided a total of 1789 comments on this Zero Order Draft and they are now working on the First Order Draft.

The Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation (SRREN) was approved at the 33rd Session of the IPCC in May 2011. There were specific outreach events that were held to spread the findings of this report. I would also like to emphasize that the relevance of this report continues to grow with time and perhaps we need to consider how we might carry forward the process of outreach in the coming months and years.

The Special Report on Extreme Events and Disasters and Advancing Climate Change Adaptation (SREX) was approved at the 34th Session of the IPCC in November 2011. I also want to acknowledge in that context the support of the Government of Norway. We have as a result of that support been able to carry out very well planned outreach efforts. Just to give you an indication of the access that has been provided and made use of by the global community at large, by the end of April 2012, there were more than 25,000 downloads of the full SREX report, and since the SREX Approval Session there have been more than 65,000 downloads of the Summary for Policy Makers. I seek forgiveness if some of this information is dated because clearly the use of this report through the internet is taking place on a daily basis.

For the Synthesis Report we have made adequate efforts in keeping with the mandate of the Plenary Session of the IPCC to start work on this Report early in this cycle.

The Task Force on Inventories has been very active in responding to the invitation of the UNFCCC to develop supplementary guidance on wetlands and will complete this work in early 2013. New Software to assist in the implementation of the 2006 Guidelines is also now available.

I would like to highlight the efforts that all of you, members of the Panel, have made in giving substance to the recommendations of the InterAcademy Council who as you will recall we had approached for carrying out a review of IPCC Processes and Procedures and practices in coordination with the Secretary General of the UN. A review of IPCC was important because of changes in the global context, the central position that climate science has taken up in the public debate, and the need to respond adequately to the challenge of new scientific developments. In this context I would like to highlight the importance of approving the Communications Strategy as this will be key in equipping the IPCC effectively to deal with the challenges ahead, and I hope we can get this approval accomplished in this Session.

We have of course learned a lot about communications, an area where clearly I have no hesitation in saying that the IPCC probably was not able to do enough in the past. I hope we are now better equipped to take care of this challenge; this issue was also highlighted by the InterAcademy Council.

The next two and a half years will be very intense because we are now coming to the final stages of completion of the Fifth Assessment Report. I want to compliment the Working Groups, all three of them, for having worked very hard on the two Special Reports that I referred to earlier. It is a tribute to the leadership of the Working Groups and the scientific community that were able to carry out an excellent job of producing these two special reports while at the same time continuing actively in progress towards completion of the Fifth Assessment Report.

We, of course, will ensure that the AR5 is a scientifically robust, comprehensive and solid report. It will be policy relevant which we hope will go beyond previous assessments. All efforts are being geared towards producing what we hope will be an outstanding report as expected of the IPCC. We will also start preparations early enough to ensure that we disseminate the findings of the AR5 with precision, accuracy and with an extensive effort to reach every section of the globe.

Finally, I would like to thank the scientific community which has responded enthusiastically and with a great deal of hard work and determination to ensure that the needs of the AR5 are fully met. There is every reason to appreciate the enormous amount of work that is being done by the scientists. I want to once again remind you of the excellent response we got to our call for nominations when we were forming the teams for the AR5 and this really went beyond the precedent that we had seen with earlier reports. The authors are of course of outstanding caliber. It is also significant to recall that 60 percent of the authors selected are new to the IPCC process and this means there will be new knowledge, new perspectives and new ideas to update the science. All of this we hope will be reflected in the AR5.

In conclusion I would like to thank the elected members of the current team of IPCC functionaries and the IPCC Bureau. Thanks also to the colleagues in the Secretariat for making all

of this possible. The next two and a half years are going to be an exciting period, and I am sure that with the support we are getting from the members of the IPCC and from the government representatives over here, we will live up to your expectations and hope to deliver a set of documents that define the best in science in the field of climate change.

Thank you very much.