

## **CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**Opening Statement to the Scoping Meeting for the Sixth Assessment Report  
Hoesung Lee, Chair of the IPCC  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1 May 2017**

### **Introduction**

Welcome to this scoping meeting for the Sixth Assessment Report. Firstly, let me thank the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa for their generous hospitality in organizing this meeting and providing us with these splendid facilities. I would also like to thank the Government of Ethiopia for all their assistance in facilitating this meeting.

### **An emphasis on solutions**

It is appropriate that we are meeting here. As was highlighted in the outreach event we held over the past two days, Africa is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Governments took the decision in Paris a year and a half ago to address climate change. Now they are asking the scientific community for help to respond to global warming.

In our previous assessments, we have clearly established the problem – the fact that the climate system is changing due to human activity, and that the impacts are already being felt on all continents and oceans. We have considered possible futures to examine the options for adaptation and mitigation.

The next assessment report, AR6, will also provide a robust scientific foundation for decision making. In AR6 we will be putting a greater emphasis on solutions. We will be advancing our understanding of the decision-making process at different levels, from households to cities, countries and the global community. We will enhance our knowledge of the costs and benefits of climate action and carrying on as we are, including the opportunities and opportunity costs. We will assess current and emerging technologies. We will examine the experiences of practitioners already coping with climate impacts and look at the social aspects of climate change.

Solutions also depend on the continuing vital research being done in fundamental climate science. Whether advancing our understanding of the response of the climate system or downscaling to the adaptation-relevant scale, this research

enables communities to build resilience. So the physical science is a core part of our solutions assessment.

An IPCC assessment is a complex beast. This meeting is expected to draft the outline and indicative coverage of the contents of the three Working Group contributions to the AR6 for consideration by the IPCC when it next meets in September. A further scoping meeting will be held to draft the outline of the Synthesis Report, which will integrate the three Working Group contributions and the three Special Reports that are being prepared in this assessment cycle.

As a scientific assessment body, we will continue to uphold scientific rigour and accuracy in presenting our findings. Our reports are scientifically objective and intended primarily for the use of policymakers. We know we must do better to help non-specialists to understand climate change and its implications. For the series of 8 reports that will be released over the next five years starting from 2018, we will be working with communications experts to help our authors produce clear, accessible and user-friendly reports.

### **The Sixth Assessment Cycle**

With this meeting we are taking the first decisive step in a long journey that will result, in four and five years' time, in a new IPCC assessment, laying out the scientific community's updated understanding of climate change. AR6 will be the critical scientific input for the global community as it reviews the Paris Agreement and considers whether greater ambition is needed to address climate change.

A massive collaborative effort of this kind takes time. People sometimes question the use of a blockbuster IPCC report that appears only every 6 or 7 years. Firstly, it will be a key resource for governments and researchers for years to come. We know that governments and institutions in developing countries, in particular, find this extremely valuable. Secondly, the IPCC will be releasing one or more policy-relevant and up-to-date reports almost every year from 2018 until AR6 is completed. Let me enumerate them:

- The Special Report *Global Warming of 1.5°C* in 2018;
- The *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* and *Climate Change and Land* in 2019;
- The *2019 Refinement to the 2006 Guidelines on National Greenhouse Inventories*;

- The three Working Group contributions to AR6 in 2021; and
- The AR6 Synthesis Report in 2022

Each new assessment stands on and develops the achievements of the previous ones. Science has continued to advance since AR5 was completed. Researchers have tackled many of the uncertainties and knowledge gaps that were indicated then. This week, you will be laying the foundations for the new benchmark that the Sixth Assessment Report will become. I wish you collegial and productive discussions. I declare this scoping meeting open.