

**Opening Statement by Hoesung Lee, Chair of the IPCC
48th Session of the IPCC, Incheon, Korea, 1 October 2018**

It's a great honour to welcome you to my home country, Korea, and I am very grateful to the government of the Republic of Korea and the authorities of the City of Incheon for hosting us here in this beautiful conference centre.

I am particularly honoured, because this will be one of the most important meetings in the IPCC's history. We will consider the Summary for Policymakers of the Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C. That is our main business here this week and I will concentrate on the 1.5 °C report in these remarks.

Why is this report so keenly awaited?

Scientists have been warning us for years that we can expect to see more extreme weather with climate change. The heat waves, wildfires, and heavy rainfall events of recent months all over the world underscore these warnings.

Three weeks ago in New York, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres described climate change as the great challenge of our time. But, he also noted that, thanks to science, we know its size and nature. Science alerts us to the gravity of the situation, but science also, and this special report in particular, helps us understand the solutions available to us.

Distinguished delegates, nearly three years ago your governments adopted the Paris Agreement. It sets a target of holding the rise in global mean temperatures to well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5 °C.

At that time, relatively little was known about the risks avoided in a 1.5 °C world compared with a 2 °C warmer world, or about the pathway of greenhouse gas emissions compatible with limiting global warming to 1.5 °C.

So, as part of the decision adopting the Paris Agreement, governments invited the IPCC to prepare a report assessing the impacts of warming of 1.5 °C and related emissions pathways.

Governments asked the IPCC to deliver this report in 2018, in time for what has become the Talanoa Dialogue at this year's Climate Conference, COP24.

To prepare a report on 1.5 °C to this timeline was extremely ambitious. The IPCC, and through it the scientific community, responded positively and with sincere enthusiasm.

In April 2016, at our 43rd Session, the IPCC decided to prepare the report as part of the work programme for the Sixth Assessment Cycle. The Panel decided to prepare this report in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, thus placing the report firmly among the tools to be used to achieve the sustainable development goals.

We held the scoping meeting in August of that year, and the Panel approved the outline at the 44th Session in October.

In February 2017 the Panel was able to announce the author team of the report – 91 authors and review editors were selected from 40 countries. And less than 20 months later, you have the report for your consideration.

Let me give you some statistics to illustrate the scale of work that has been achieved in this time. The final draft of the report contains over 6,000 cited references. The expert review of the First Order Draft, from July to September 2017, attracted almost 13,000 comments from some 500 experts in 61 countries. The government and expert review of the Second Order Draft, from January to February this year, attracted over 25,000 comments from 570 experts and officials in 71 countries.

Governments provided close to 4,000 comments on the Final Government Draft. So in all we have received 42,000 comments on the drafts of this report. Allow me to remind you that under the IPCC procedures, the authors must address each comment received in the review process.

Review is an essential part of the IPCC process, and we are grateful to the hundreds of experts who have contributed to our work in this way. We thank the 133 Contributing Authors who have added their expertise.

And special thanks to our National Focal Points who played a key role in the nomination of authors and the review process. I would also like to express my profound respect and gratitude to the co-chairs, authors and review editors, and the technical support units, for accomplishing this Herculean task.

This achievement goes beyond numbers.

This Special Report is unique in IPCC history as it has been prepared under the joint scientific leadership of all three IPCC Working Groups. Each chapter is a genuine piece of cross-disciplinary work, bringing together all the scientific expertise of the IPCC. That is why the line-by-line consideration of the Summary for Policymakers will be conducted by the First Joint Session of Working Groups I, II and III. In the same way, the Summary for Policymakers that will be considered in detail this week integrates the most important findings of the chapters in each section.

Distinguished delegates, the scientific community has responded to the invitation of policymakers and presented you with a robust and timely report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C and related greenhouse gas emission pathways.

The task is now yours.

You will consider the draft Summary for Policymakers line by line to ensure that it is consistent with the detailed assessment of scientific, technical and socio-economic information provided by the underlying detailed chapters.

Governments have asked the IPCC for an assessment of warming of 1.5 degrees, its impacts and related emissions pathways, to help them address climate change. We will work together in a constructive and collaborative spirit to produce a strong, robust and clear Summary for Policymakers that responds to the invitation of governments three years ago while upholding the scientific integrity of the IPCC.

Lastly I would like to share the important news with you that these sessions will be climate-neutral. We have taken measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions where possible and we will be estimating and compensating the remaining ones.

I am also pleased to inform you that the financial position of the IPCC continues to improve. I would like to thank the many governments who have contributed in recent months for their generous and continuing support, and urge all of you to provide us with the means to carry out the tasks you have given us. In this regard I would like to thank the Panel for your financial support for this report – 1.2 million Swiss francs for the various meetings required to prepare and approve it – and for endorsing the outline of the report and the author team.

I would also like to express my gratitude for the in-kind contributions of the countries that hosted the scoping meetings for this report and the four lead author meetings – Switzerland, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Botswana.

Thank you for your trust in the IPCC.

I am pleased to note that we have posted on the PaperSmart system the Code of Conduct for IPCC meetings that was introduced at the first Lead Author Meeting of Working Group I a couple of months ago. I hope we will have an opportunity to discuss this in the Panel soon; it provides a valuable framework to ensure that all of us here have a respectful working environment.

Let me finish by thanking the Government of Korea for its generous support for this meeting. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank our partners for their continued unwavering support – our parent organizations WMO and UN Environment, and the UNFCCC.

With these words I would like to wish you a successful and collegial meeting.
Thank you for your attention.