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**Opening address at First Lead Author Meeting of the IPCC *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate***

Ko Barrett, Vice-Chair of the IPCC, Nadi, Fiji, 2 October 2017

Welcome to the First Lead Author Meeting for the *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*.

Firstly, let me thank the Government of Fiji and the University of the South Pacific for hosting us in your beautiful homeland and for facilitating our time together at this venue.

As you all know, the work of the IPCC depends on voluntary contributions from our member governments, and on the intellectual capital and other contributions provided by you in the scientific community. We are very grateful for your generosity.

This is the first time the IPCC has undertaken a focused report on the processes that drive change and the resulting impacts to oceans and the frozen parts of our planet. There is a huge volume of scientific information for us to assess, which can help policymakers to better understand the changes we are seeing and the risks to lives and livelihoods that may occur with future change.

At the start of our current assessment cycle, the IPCC received over 30 proposals for special reports from governments and international organizations. The bureau bundled these into nine themes, using science as the unifying factor to define themes. Drawing on this work, governments selected three subjects for special reports, including the present one.

The scientific understanding of our Co-Chairs and the political will of this intergovernmental body has help us to craft a special report of greater relevance than any individual proposal. It will have meaning for the communities at the top of the world - in polar regions and high mountain environments - all the way to coastal communities and small islands so heavily dependent on and connected to our oceans. In a nutshell, this is the incredible value of the IPCC - bringing together science and the intergovernmental process. As a result, we have a tremendous opportunity to tell

this compelling story of climate change in an environment where governments and policymakers are involved and listening. Thank you for being willing to give so much of yourselves to help tell this story.

The report that we start work on today will be released in September of 2019, in just under two years' time. It devotes chapters to polar regions, high mountain areas, the changing oceans and extremes.

It devotes a whole chapter to Sea-Level Rise and Implications for Low-Lying Islands, Coasts and Communities, and will include a cross-chapter box to integrate information on low-lying islands and coasts, looking at the impacts and risks of climate-driven changes and how these can be addressed.

It's therefore right that we are holding this first meeting in Fiji, because this country, along with other small island developing states in the Pacific, is particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise and other climate-driven changes.

But, as we enjoy this island setting, our thoughts, too, go out to people on the small islands of Barbuda, Dominica, Puerto Rico and other islands and coastal communities in the Caribbean that have recently suffered the devastating impacts of tropical storms and hurricanes.

It is a sad truth that we rarely gather together as an international scientific community without the need to acknowledge a climate-related tragedy taking place someplace on our great planet.

It's appropriate that we are meeting here, because Fiji is now at the centre of climate diplomacy. As you know, Fiji will assume the 3 presidency of the Climate Convention at COP 23 next month in Bonn. I hope that the IPCC's work here will contribute to a successful Fijian presidency.

The fact that we are meeting in Fiji is also a reflection of the IPCC's efforts to engage more closely with this region. It's very encouraging that more countries in the Pacific have appointed national focal points for the IPCC, although we still have some gaps.

I'm very pleased that the University of the South Pacific, University of Fiji and Government of Fiji are taking advantage of the presence of IPCC experts in the country to hold outreach events in Lautoka and Suva while we are here.

It's important that the IPCC takes every opportunity to share its findings with stakeholders wherever we meet, and to encourage scientists, local practitioners and experts to share their knowledge with us to help to broaden the information we assess for our reports.

We have just issued the call for nominations of authors for the Sixth Assessment Report, and hope that our meeting here and related outreach events will raise interest and awareness so that we increase the number of nominations from the region.

As I come to the close of my remarks, I want to share a little bit about our other reports. The *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* is but one report of the IPCC this cycle.

Work is already well underway on the *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5C*, which was requested by the UNFCCC negotiating process and will be released in almost exactly one year.

In 2019, besides the Ocean and Cryosphere special report, we will release the refinement to our methodologies for measuring national greenhouse gas inventories in May, and in October our other special report, on land use.

The Working Group contributions to the Sixth Assessment Report will appear in 2021, and the cycle will finish with the Synthesis Report - integrating all this work - in early 2022, in time for the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement in 2023.

It is an ambitious work programme. Thank you for agreeing to be a part of it.

I now declare the Lead Author Meeting open.

-ends -

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