

Opening Remarks for the Opening of IPCC-62

Ko Barrett, Deputy Secretary-General, WMO

Prof. Jim Skea, IPCC Chair

Mr. Li Yanyi, Vice Governor of Zhejiang Province

Mr. Liu Zhenmin, China's Special Envoy for Climate Change

Dr. Chen Zhenlin, Administrator of the China Meteorological Administration and Focal Point of China for the IPCC

Mr. Yao Gaoyuan, Mayor of Hangzhou

Mr. Adbalah Mokssit, Executive Secretary of the IPCC and

Mr. Jian Lui, Director of UNEP

Distinguished delegates, esteemed members of the IPCC Bureau, respected observers, and guests,

It is with great pleasure that I join our distinguished panel in welcoming you to the 62nd Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, here in the vibrant city of Hangzhou, China.

On behalf of the WMO Secretary-General Prof. Celeste Saulo, we extend our deep gratitude to the government of China, Zhejiang Province and the city of Hangzhou for your generous hospitality as we join together and embark on this pivotal journey to deliver the Seventh Assessment Report.

For many decades, the government of China has demonstrated a strong commitment to international scientific cooperation and has been an important leader within the IPCC, providing research advances and helping to guide their highly influential assessments. We are honored to convene under your stewardship.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the tireless efforts of the IPCC Bureau and the many experts who have diligently crafted the outlines of the three Working Group reports and the Methodology Report on Carbon Dioxide Removal and Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage. Your expertise and dedication are the backbone of this process and will be crucial as we move forward, as ever, supported by the indefatigable Secretariat.

Today, as we focus on these outlines and the budgetary considerations necessary for our work, I call upon all governments represented here to take decisive action—ensuring that we advance the IPCC process and deliver a robust Seventh Assessment Report on schedule. This report is critical for informing the Second Global Stocktake and shaping our collective climate response.

The findings of our work are not just academic; they serve as a guiding compass for governments as they navigate the complexities of climate change.

As we reflect on our current climate trajectory, the World Meteorological Organization has confirmed that 2024 was the warmest year on record, with global temperatures reaching approximately 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels. Just slightly warmer than 2023, which was previously the warmest year. Indeed, the last decade has been the warmest in the historical record.

And if it isn't true yet, I would venture to say it will be soon, that every one of us will know somebody who has been affected by an extreme event like severe flooding or extreme heat.

Now, while the Paris Agreement's target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C remains within reach, it is imperative that we recognize the grave threats we face without immediate and robust action—action that must be firmly grounded in scientific evidence. Research and experience has shown that the cost of inaction far exceeds the costs associated with action and policy-relevant science remains a key ingredient in the solution package.

The WMO remains steadfast in our commitment to providing critical support to the IPCC Secretariat and its members. We are proud to work hand in hand on the periodic provision of climate information and are dedicated to supporting the IPCC to effectively undertake its mission.

This year marks a significant milestone for the World Meteorological Organization as we celebrate our 75th anniversary as a United Nations Specialized Agency. Over the decades, we have achieved numerous milestones, including the convening of three World Climate Conferences. I've been reflecting on these this week, sitting in Geneva where each of these were held.

In particular, I recalled The First World Climate Conference in 1979 –over forty-five years ago. That conference issued a Declaration as an appeal to nations that, “it is now urgently necessary for the nations of the world to take full advantage of man’s present knowledge of climate and to take steps to improve significantly that knowledge, to foresee and prevent potential man-made changes in climate that might be adverse to the well-being of humanity.” Forty -five years ago...and the message still rings true today.

The First World Climate Conference proposed a World Climate Programme, a scientific program that was quickly established at WMO with UNEP and a number of other UN organizations. Through this program and through a number of significant conferences and processes to follow, national delegations at the WMO Congress in 1987 called for WMO to provide authoritative information on the state of knowledge of human-induced climate change and agreed with recommendations from a number of quarters for the need to undertake periodic assessments of scientific knowledge.

But they took it a step further by determining that the assessment mechanism should operate under the overall guidance of governments rather than solely through scientists serving in their personal capacities.

This was a bold and innovative move that ultimately authorized the Secretary-General of the WMO with the Executive Director of UNEP to establish what was soon to become the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC). A move that has -- all of these years later -- stood the test of time and demonstrated the wisdom of entrusting climate science to this inter-governmental process.

This is your inheritance. And while WMO takes pride in being one of the founding partners of the IPCC and in supporting your journey throughout these years, the next cycle is in your hands now. And now, more than ever, we require rigorously assessed scientific information to inform our mitigation and adaptation policies, as well as to guide international climate negotiations.

As we embark on this important session, I wish you all constructive discussions and a successful outcome. Together, let us reaffirm our commitment to a sustainable and resilient future, made possible by ambitious climate decisions, underpinned by the best available science.

Thank you.

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