

**Speech by Mr Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chairman, IPCC
at the Opening Ceremony of the Scoping Meeting
for the Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) of the IPCC**

Venice, Italy 13 July 2009

Madame Minister Stefania Prestigiacomo;
General Director Mr Corrado Clini;
Mr Antonio Navarra;
distinguished colleagues;
ladies & gentlemen!

It is a great pleasure and a privilege for me to open this meeting, since this marks an extremely important phase in the history of the IPCC and the Panel's activities, and because we are embarking on our Fifth Assessment Report (AR5). It would perhaps be valid to believe that the finest hour of the IPCC came and went in 2007 and 2008, particularly with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 and the overwhelming response that the Fourth Assessment Report received worldwide in the months following its release. In fact even in the recently concluded G-8 Summit the leaders of this group paid tribute to the IPCC in stating "we reaffirm the importance of the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and notably of its Fourth Assessment Report, which constitutes the most comprehensive assessment of the science". However, I believe the finest hour is yet to come. We have today a deep level of awareness on various aspects of climate change and the scientific realities associated with this subject. This, of course, has been achieved in large measure by the findings of the AR4, and the efforts made by us all to spread them far and wide. My belief is that this understanding and awareness will not only spread among various sections of human society in general but particularly among world leaders who clearly are charged with taking action, equipped as they are with knowledge related to the costs and implications of inaction.

Under these conditions my belief is that the AR5 would be met with very high expectations. This would be true certainly on the part of those who are looking for more information and more compelling evidence of the link between human actions and climate change, so that they can confidently take action in this field. But there would be growing demands also from those who actually take action, since they would look for validation in the AR5 of their own decisions which may have been based on information available in the AR4. There is still another reason for high expectations, which is essentially related to the lack of scientific work on climate change on a very specific basis as it relates to several locations in the world. We hope that the AR5 will be able to provide much greater regional detail than available literature has allowed in the past. We all have to make a major effort to do full justice to expectations in different parts of the world, and for this reason in the meeting beginning today we must take care of this aspect as diligently as possible. We would need to be equally diligent in going the extra mile in assessing literature in local languages where for scientific reasons we would be able to enrich the AR5 with comprehensive knowledge and information.

Another area that I feel we must pay special attention to in this meeting is the need to look at those subjects in considerable detail on which there is a perception gaining ground that since the release of the AR4 reality has turned out to be far more serious than the projections of that report. We know

that this view is not valid, but being aware of this reality, we should certainly take it into account in our work this week and what follows from this meeting. Indeed, this particular issue has been structured in the design of the meeting itself.

I am particularly happy that the Panel has clearly desired that we pay attention to the Synthesis Report right from the beginning. This in no way should infringe on the flow of information into the Synthesis Report, which by definition must be based on the underlying Working Group Reports, but ensuring that the Synthesis Report is a document much more than the sum of the parts on which it is based, requires that intellectually it has to be based on a structure and design that must evolve as early as possible. I shall not go into the history of the delay, in fact resistance to the SYR, in the last assessment, which clearly made it very difficult to put that report together. That the authors associated with the AR4 Synthesis Report worked really hard to produce an outstanding document is a tribute to their talent and labour. But a tribute that I would like to offer to those who were not totally in favour of the report is the mandate on the brevity that was specified in the length of the report. This as it turned out was a major asset, and one that we must retain in the AR5 as well. A short Synthesis Report makes for a much more effective and much more readable document.

This meeting is of great importance. The practice of holding scoping meetings for IPCC's assessment reports was started with the Third Assessment Report (TAR) when we held a meeting in Bad Munstereiffel, Germany. For the AR4 we held two scoping meetings, the first in Marrakech, Morocco and the second in Potsdam, Germany. The Marrakech meeting had a total of 112 persons in attendance and the Potsdam meeting 150. This meeting has much larger participation, and therefore, the organization of all the sessions and managing the meeting is certainly a much more complex task than we have faced before. Also since this is the only scoping meeting that we are holding for the AR5, it is critically important that we work in consonance with the design of the meeting and as diligently as possibly to ensure that we arrive at the expected outcome. I have no doubt that with the talent that we have been able to attract this would indeed be the case.

In closing let me express my gratitude to the member governments of the IPCC, who have given us a vast range of rich comments which have helped my colleagues and me greatly in designing this meeting and in preparing for the contents of the AR5. Having been associated with four of the five assessment reports completed by the IPCC so far I would be correct in stating that I have never seen such active engagement on the part of the governments in providing us very valuable insights on the expectations and the relevant policy issues that must drive the contents of this report. Indeed the IPCC is referred to as a scientific body, but I believe its strength lies in being a government guided scientific body. The coalition of science and policy expertise gives the Panel a uniqueness of personality that I believe is largely responsible for it having attained a level of credibility and a voice of scientific authority among policymakers and the public all over the world.

In conclusion, let me express my thanks to all those who have worked so hard to put this meeting together. Foremost among these ones Mr Carlo Carraro, who has devoted a great deal of time and effort on behalf of our Italian hosts. Mr Sergio Castellari as the Focal Point for the IPCC in Italy has been a great source of support. My senior colleagues in the IPCC and the staff of the Secretariat have as always risen to the occasion and played a stellar role in the organization of the meeting.

Finally, my thanks to Her Excellency the Minister for gracing the occasion as the chief guest at this Opening Ceremony, and my good friend Mr Corrado Clini for acting as master of ceremony.

Thank you!