

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Statement by Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chairman of the IPCC,
to the Opening Session of the 40th Session of the IPCC
Copenhagen, 27 October 2014**

Your Excellency, Madam Kirsten Brosbøl, Minister for the Environment, Government of Denmark,

Your Excellency, Mr Rasmus Helveg Petersen, Minister for Climate, Energy and Building,
Government of Denmark,

Mr Frank Jensen, Lord Mayor of Copenhagen,

Mr Jeremiah Lengoasa, Deputy Secretary-General, WMO,

Mr John Christensen, Director DTU Partnership, UNEP,

My colleagues, Vice-Chairs of the IPCC,

Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and NGGIP,

Dr Renate Christ, Secretary, IPCC,

My colleagues on the Technical Support Unit,

Authors of the Synthesis Report,

Distinguished delegates,

Members of the media and friends.

It is a great honour and privilege for me to welcome you to the opening session of the 40th Session of the IPCC.

Let me take the opportunity on behalf of the IPCC to express my deep gratitude to the Government of Denmark for hosting this session in this beautiful city. Copenhagen has long been known for its enlightened citizens and their deep commitment to efficient energy use and sustainable development. So it is indeed fitting for the IPCC to complete the Synthesis Report of the Fifth Assessment here. Thank you for hosting us for this important session.

The importance of the work that lies ahead cannot be overstated. During the coming week, we will complete and approve the Summary for Policymakers of the Synthesis Report and adopt the longer Synthesis Report itself.

The Synthesis Report will provide the roadmap by which policymakers will hopefully find their way to a global agreement to finally reverse course on climate change. It gives us the knowledge to make informed choices, the knowledge to build a brighter, more sustainable future. It enhances our vital

understanding of the rationale for action – and the serious implications of inaction.

The report is not a cut and paste from the three Working Group reports that preceded it. Yes, it distils and integrates the findings of the Working Groups that constitute the bulk of the Fifth Assessment Report. But it also incorporates two Special Reports brought out in 2011, covering both traditional areas and new topics not assessed before by the IPCC. This integrated approach provides fresh insights by highlighting contrasts and making comparisons between findings from all of these source documents.

There are justifiable expectations that this Synthesis Report should set a new benchmark for scientific robustness. It does.

Having been associated with the IPCC for more than 20 years as a Lead Author, Vice-Chair and Chairman, I can state categorically that I have never before seen the scale and intensity of effort that has gone into all three Working Groups. But, furthermore, I am deeply impressed with the unprecedented effort that has gone into this Synthesis Report.

The three Working Group reports are the most comprehensive assessment of climate change ever undertaken. The effort to write them sets a new benchmark in scientific assessment. More than 830 coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors, supported by over 1,000 contributing authors took part in writing the three reports. The scope of their effort was breathtaking: The reports draw their authority from more than 30,000 scientific papers. Equally remarkable was the fact that all of these experts donated their time as a labour of love, working without any compensation from the IPCC for months and years.

I am deeply humbled by their dedication, grateful for their expertise and inspired by their work.

Their effort has resulted in a Synthesis Report that provides critically important information for policymakers, who have the difficult task of finalizing a global climate agreement next year in Paris.

I cannot predict the outcome of those negotiations. But I do know that it is critical for policymakers to allow their decisions to be informed by the science. I do not envy them. Their task is formidable.

But may I humbly suggest that policymakers avoid being overcome by the seeming hopelessness of addressing climate change. It is not hopeless.

Much has been made of the growing peril of delaying the hard choices that need to be made to adapt to and mitigate climate change. I do not discount those challenges.

But the Synthesis Report shows that solutions are at hand. Tremendous strides are being made in alternative sources of clean energy. There is much we can do to use energy more efficiently. Reducing and ultimately eliminating deforestation provides additional avenues for action.

This is not to say it will be easy. It won't. A great deal of work and tall hurdles lie ahead. But it can be done. We still have time to build a better, more sustainable world. We still have time to avoid the most serious impacts of climate change.

But we have precious little of that time.

Distinguished delegates, we are delighted to meet you here in Copenhagen to complete the task that you assigned to us six years ago through this collective enterprise involving the governments of the world and the best scientific talent and wisdom. Your guidance, support and direction have been invaluable and the founding pillars of the IPCC's strength.

Before closing, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the 51 Core Writing Team authors, 18 Extended Writing Team authors and 10 Review Editors of the Synthesis Report for their willingness

to take on this challenge on top of their existing responsibilities. Working with them has been one of my greatest privileges. I want to offer my special thanks to Dr Leo Meyer and his colleagues on the Technical Support Unit, whose contribution and dedication made the Synthesis Report possible.

May I once again thank our Danish hosts for their hospitality and help in organizing this meeting. I would also like to congratulate my senior colleagues at the IPCC and the staff of the Secretariat, who have as always risen to the occasion and played a major role in facilitating the smooth completion of the Working Group and Synthesis reports. Thank you to all the distinguished delegates and the authors here. I wish you a very productive and successful meeting.

My final thanks to their Excellencies the Ministers of Denmark and the Lord Mayor of Copenhagen for favouring us with their presence.

Let me close with a quote from Mahatma Gandhi that sums up the history and experience of tackling difficult challenges. He said: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."

The world owes a profound debt of gratitude to all of you who have done so much to bring forth the knowledge required to meet this epic challenge.

Thank you.

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