

IPCC reinforces scientific message, while approving outline of its next Assessment Report

Barcelona, 4 November 2009 - "The time has come for us to return to the science of Climate Change" said Mr Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in a video address to the delegates presented yesterday, 3 November 2009, in Barcelona, where the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is meeting for a last round of talks before Copenhagen – "What we need to do now is to focus on our responsibility, not only towards ourselves in a very narrow and myopic context, but to the world as a whole because it is abundantly clear that mitigation of greenhouse gases is not at all an expensive proposition and if anything it is probably a negative cost opportunity. It should be science that determines your positions and it should be science that should tell you that for the benefit of this planet and all the species who live on it, the findings of the Fourth Assessment are totally valid and must be kept in focus if we want to move towards a good agreement in Copenhagen".

The Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) was released by the IPCC in 2007, providing the best scientific evidence on the causes and effects of climate change. The AR4 led the governments of the world, meeting in Bali at the Conference of the Parties (COP-13) of the UNFCCC the end of the year 2007, to agree on a roadmap that would lead to an effective agreement to fight climate change at the climate change conference in Copenhagen, which is meeting in just a few weeks from now.

Since then, the IPCC has continued to provide its expertise to the ongoing negotiations. This was the case yesterday, at the occasion of a side event organized by the Panel in Barcelona, featuring leading IPCC experts: Mr R.K. Pachauri, Chairman of the IPCC; Ms Renate Christ, Secretary of the IPCC; Mr Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, IPCC Vice-Chair and Mr Thomas Stocker, Working Group I Co-Chair, who reiterated key findings of the AR4 and presented recent scientific evidence that will be assessed in IPCC's future work.

In his video address, the IPCC Chairman emphasized the advantages of acting now: "The costs of mitigation are really very low and in some cases actually negative. So what we are talking about is a set of no-regret measures, very low-hanging fruits, and like Americans say "Picking up dollar bills that are left on the side-walk". Mr R.K. Pachauri also mentioned some of the main mitigation co-benefits, in particular much higher levels of energy security, cleaner air and associated health benefits, and higher employment deriving from mitigation opportunities such as a shift to renewable energy sources and a shift to higher levels of energy efficiency.

This event in Barcelona comes a few days after the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change convened its 31st Plenary Session in Bali (26-29 October 2009) to approve its own "action plan" for the coming five years: the outline of the three IPCC Working Groups contributions to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), which will come out in 2013/14. This report will assess the most recent scientific literature with the rigorous procedures that have become the trademark of the IPCC. It will provide a comprehensive update of knowledge related to climate change with a greater focus on the socio-economic aspects of climate change and its implications for sustainable development; more precise regional information; address ethical and equity considerations as well as matters related to Article 2, the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change, on the “stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”.

The IPCC is also currently preparing two Special Reports: “Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation”, which will be released in February 2011 and “Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation”, which will be released in September 2011.

The full webcast of the IPCC Side-Event at the Barcelona Climate Change Talks 2009, Mr R.K. Pachauri’s video address to the delegates of the UNFCCC in Barcelona, and the presentations by the IPCC experts mentioned above, can be found on the IPCC website at:
http://www.ipcc.ch/presentations_and_speeches/presentations_and_speeches.htm

The approved outlines of the IPCC’s Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) can be found on the IPCC website at: www.ipcc.ch

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