

President of WMO, David Grimes, Opening Session of IPCC-46

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Ministers, Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Chair, and esteemed colleagues.

It is my pleasure to speak to you today in my capacity as President of the World Meteorological Organization. It is an equally great pleasure to welcome you to my home country of Canada, [et plus particulièrement ici, dans la magnifique cité de Montréal. Montréal qui est la Mecque du calcul au Canada, si ce n'est dans le monde, pour ce qui est des sciences du climat.](#) It is a beautiful city, full of history and culture, and I hope you enjoy your stay.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the importance of having clarity of purpose, becoming truly great at what you do, and promoting excellence in others, particularly in areas that challenge and complement your own strengths.

Let's set the scene for my example: Almost four decades ago, in 1979, as a result of growing recognition of the risks associated with human-induced climate change, the WMO organized the first ever World Climate Conference, calling for "global cooperation to explore the possible future course of global climate, and to take this new understanding into account in planning for the future development of human society." Coincidentally, the WMO was then, as the IPCC is now, 29 years old, and was maturing into its purpose as the authoritative voice on the state and behaviour of the Earth's atmosphere, its interaction with the land and oceans, the weather and climate it produces, and the resulting distribution of water resources.

However, the WMO understood that an independent body was needed to scrutinize its science in order for its findings to be persuasive for decision makers, and that it did not, itself, have the capacity to consider the socio-economic impacts of climate change, and lead response strategies. So, in 1987, the 10th WMO Congress asked its Secretary General to work with the United Nations Environment Programme to establish an *ad hoc* intergovernmental mechanism to provide scientific assessments of climate change, and thus, with the endorsement of the United Nations, the IPCC was established.

The first assessment report of the IPCC served as the basis for negotiating the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which entered into force in 1994, and the ensuing association between the IPCC and the UNFCCC has become a model of excellence for interaction between the interests of scientific analysis and decision making.

International cooperation has never ever been as important as it is today, where extreme weather and climate events now account for more than 4 out of every 5 disasters worldwide. The warming which is occurring in our atmosphere, oceans and climate, in particular the polar regions, is having significant impacts, leading to increased severe weather and extreme events such as droughts, floods and forest fires, like those which have been devastating Canada's western-most province this summer. These events underscore the need for WMO and the IPCC to work together to ensure the scientific knowledge and foundations are in place to build societal resilience and support adaptation to threats of natural hazards and weather and climate extremes.

At our recent WMO Executive Council meeting this past May, we recognized the important role of, and contributions from, WMO Members and their National Meteorological and Hydrological Services towards the work of the IPCC. We also recognized the substantial benefits that flow to National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and the IPCC through the active involvement of scientists and experts from these Services, especially those from developing countries, in the activities of the IPCC.

Same paragraph as above en français:

À la réunion du Conseil exécutif de l'OMM en mai dernier, nous avons souligné le rôle et les contributions des Membres de l'OMM et de leurs Services météorologiques et hydrologiques nationaux aux travaux du GIEC. Nous avons souligné en particulier les avantages importants de pouvoir compter sur l'appui de scientifiques et experts en provenance des pays en développement.

As many here will be aware, WMO is collaborating with the United Nations Environment Programme to develop an implementation plan for an Integrated Global Greenhouse Gas Information System (IG3IS) which will serve as an important mechanism to complement the national reporting of emission inventories guided by the IPCC, to provide scientific observations in support of policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and to improve future climate scenarios. Strong and enhanced collaboration between WMO and the IPCC will help us to fully realize the potential of this information system, to guide additional mitigation options, reduce uncertainties in national emissions inventories sources and sinks and to raise awareness of progress towards national emissions reductions commitments.

The challenge of climate change is an onerous one that requires the best of us all. I'd like to extend my appreciation to the IPCC for its contribution in informing the necessity for actions to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, informing policy making at national and international levels as well as strengthening the WMO and the science community at large. We at WMO look forward to our continued collaboration. [Un gros merci aussi à la ville de Montréal d'accueillir ce groupe de délégués des plus accomplis.](#) I wish you success in your endeavours, and an excellent session. Thank you.