

**Address by Mr. Achim Steiner,
UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of the UN Environment
Programme (UNEP) to the Thirtieth Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate
Change (IPCC), 21-23 April 2009, Antalya, Turkey**

21 April 2009, Antalya

(Delivered by Peter Gilruth, Director, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP)

Your Excellencies,

Dr. Veysel Eroglu, Minister of Environment and Forestry

Mr. Rajendra Pachauri, Chairman of the IPCC,

Representatives of the United Nations System and Partner Organizations,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentleman,

On behalf of UNEP Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner, it is a great pleasure for me to address the opening of the thirtieth session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and to extend a warm greeting to all the delegates.

Equally, it is a great pleasure to thank the Government of Turkey for hosting this Panel session.

I particularly wish to thank Dr. Pachauri for leading the IPCC so successfully over the past years, and to congratulate him and the IPCC team on the release of the fourth assessment report, which is a global milestone that has brought climate change to the top of the world's agenda.

The IPCC fourth assessment report was undoubtedly a success story, but there can be no room for complacency. Scientific evidence, accumulated since AR4, suggests that humanity now faces even stronger challenges than the fourth assessment report anticipated.

Scientists, government officials, and civil society cite the urgent need to translate IPCC findings into concrete action. Many believe that, not only global, but also regional, sub-regional, national, and smaller scale climate change assessments are needed to foster climate-proof development.

We, at UNEP, are implementing different measures that respond to this demand, including integrated environmental assessments at sub-regional levels; creation, with the IPCC and other partners, of science-policy interfaces in developing countries that address climate change impacts; and development of scientific capacity in developing countries, such as within the Assessments of Impacts for Adaptation to Climate Change: Phase 2 project (AIACC 2). AIACC was born of IPCC efforts and AIACC 2 is ready for your advice and guidance on funding sources, likely research focus, and candidates who could become AIACC fellows and future IPCC contributors. AIACC is part of our shared history and UNEP is proud to move forward with this fruitful initiative.

In the lead up to the Copenhagen negotiations later this year, a strong demand has emerged from many parties to the UNFCCC for a fast-track presentation of recent climate science. Responding to this demand, UNEP intends to produce a compendium of recent findings to be launched by the UN Secretary General this coming September. We will be working closely with the Scientific Committee on Problems with the Environment to ensure the research findings we present in the Compendium are sound science conducted by reputable researchers.

Ladies and Gentleman

We are glad to inform you that the UNEP Chief Scientist, Dr. Joseph Alcamo, has recently been appointed. This is the first time that the post of Chief Scientist exists within the UN system. Dr. Alcamo, who is familiar to many of you as an IPCC co-author over the past decade, will take up his duties effective August 1st of this year. We can assure you that strengthening cooperation with the IPCC expert community will be high among the Chief Scientist's priorities.

UNEP has also strengthened its ties to the science community through the transfer of responsibility for relationships with the IPCC from UNEP's Division of Environmental Law and Conventions, to the Division of Early Warning and Assessment. This reorientation was announced at UNEP's most recent Governing Council meeting last February.

You may also recall that UNEP supports the post of the IPCC Deputy Secretary. For the time being this post is vacant, but the recruitment process is underway.

We are very glad that UNEP is able to support the IPCC in different ways. We are also glad that a new all-United Nations initiative – “Delivering as One” – opens a new window of opportunity. UNEP and WMO, the two co-founders of the IPCC, have started consultations in anticipation of closer collaboration, demonstrating the intent of “Delivering as One”, as requested by our Secretary General.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The solid scientific foundation and public awareness created by the IPCC over the last twenty years enables it to address important issues related to global environmental change. In this regard, UNEP is therefore pleased that the Panel has agreed to address a major challenge related to climate change: extreme events and disasters. This special report will make an important contribution to the preparation of the next comprehensive assessment.

UNEP, the Division of Early Warning and Assessment, and our new Chief Scientist look forward to supporting and contributing to IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report. The success of the IPCC rests on its scientific credibility and impartiality. A challenge for all of us is to maintain this very high standard built over two decades and we are certain that this tradition will continue with the Fifth Assessment Report.

Let me finish by expressing again how pleased I am to be speaking on behalf of UNEP, as one of the two founding organizations of the IPCC.

I wish you every success for this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.