

Honorable Minister for Water and Environment, Mme Maria Mutagamba,
Honorable Minister of State for Environment, Mme Flavia Nabugere,
Honorable Minister of State for Water Mme Betty Bigombe,
Distinguished officials of the Government of Uganda,
Your Excellency Thorbjørn Gaustadsæther, Ambassador of Norway to Uganda,
Mr. Jeremiah Lengoasa,
Mr. Peter Gilruth,
Mr. Florin Vladu,
My colleagues, the Vice-Chairs of the IPCC, Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and the TFI,
Secretary of the IPCC Dr. Renate Christ,
Distinguished delegates, members of the media, and friends,

Let me at the outset express my profound gratitude to the Government of Uganda for hosting this extremely important Session and the preceding Joint Session of Working Groups I and II. I am also deeply grateful to the Government of Norway for the support they have provided not only for this meeting but the entire cycle of the preparation of the Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation.

We are drawing to the close of the year 2011, and this has been an extremely productive and eventful period for the IPCC. We have completed two special reports namely the one that we have been working on the acceptance of in the last 4 days, as well as the Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation which was completed in May 2011. The Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories has also been extremely active and has launched a new initiative this year dealing with the “2013 Supplement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories: Wetlands”. While working on these activities the IPCC has also moved ahead purposefully on various activities related to preparation of the AR5. In addition, of particular importance is the work that governments have carried out in implementing the recommendations from the Review by the InterAcademy Council, which it may be recalled was requested by the Secretary General of the UN and me on behalf of the IPCC to review the Processes and Procedures of the IPCC. This work has advanced substantially, and in the current Session we hope to take certain key decisions all of which would strengthen the IPCC and equip the Panel to deal effectively with the challenges ahead. In this context, may I highlight the importance of developing a Communications Strategy for which the Panel had approved a

guidance document developed by the Task Group which was set up for this purpose drawing on several governments that are represented in the IPCC.

The work of the IPCC continues to ensure policy relevant assessments, but these require widespread dissemination in the light of the new communications age that we live in. If we have to ensure policy relevance then we have to reach out effectively to those who are involved in the process of policy making. Indeed, in that context given that the 17th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is due to begin later this month in Durban, South Africa, it is critically important that the results of the two special reports which the IPCC has completed this year be presented at a Plenary Session of the COP. In addition there are substantive findings of the AR4 which merit renewed emphasis and effective articulation.

It is particularly significant that we are meeting on the African continent, because climate change has major consequences for all the activities that society pursues on this continent. Climate change also impacts directly on the challenge of economic development that Africa faces. In the AR4 we found, for instance, that changes in extreme events, such as droughts and floods, have major implications for numerous Africans and require further attention. One-third of the people in Africa live in drought-prone areas and are vulnerable to the impacts of droughts (World Water Forum, 2000). In Africa, for example, several million people regularly suffer impacts from droughts and floods. These impacts are often further exacerbated by health problems, particularly diarrhoea, cholera and malaria (Few et al., 2004). Floods are also critical and impact on African development.

The Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation has also become a source of valuable knowledge, not only in respect of the global picture but also for Africa. For instance, we know that the estimate of the number of people without access to electricity totaled more than 1.4 billion in 2009, with regional distribution indicating that it is entirely a developing country issue, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The SRREN found that renewable energy can accelerate access to energy for these people. In terms of biomass as a share of regional primary energy consumption, Africa is particularly high with a share of 48%, and consumption of bioenergy continues to grow in most African countries. Sustainability of bioenergy in particular in terms of lifecycle GHG emissions, is influenced by land and biomass resource management practices. If implemented properly, bioenergy may provide larger benefits such as contributing to social and economic development, energy access, a

secure energy supply and reducing negative impacts on the environment and health. There are also large opportunities for continued hydropower development worldwide, and the SRREN found that the African region is one of those with the largest growth potential. Though the levelized cost for energy for many RE technologies is currently higher than existing energy prices, several RE technologies can provide competitive energy services in certain circumstances, for example, in regions with favourable resource conditions or that lack the infrastructure for other low-cost energy supplies. In addition, the cost of most RE technologies has declined and further cost reductions are expected, resulting in greater potential deployment and consequent climate change mitigation.

The Special Report that we would be considering for approval today would be of great value in determining appropriate adaptation measures and answering questions in the minds of the public on the relationship between climate change and extreme events. Again if we take the case of our host country, extreme events and disasters which may have no connection with climate change have certainly affected hundreds of thousands of people. The emphasis on adaptation measures in the Special Report would help in providing a framework for adaptation and preparations related to all types of extreme events and disasters.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not acknowledge the extremely valuable efforts made by the elected members of the current team of IPCC officials and the scientific community at large. I would not hesitate to emphasize the overwhelming response we received to the call for nominations of scientists to work on the AR5. This enabled us to constitute teams of outstanding leaders in the field, fully ensuring geographical and gender balance as well as the inclusion of those who were at that stage new to the IPCC process. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Secretariat of the IPCC and all the colleagues who work there to provide support for all the activities of the IPCC and who respond willingly to enormous demands on their time. We are about mid-way in the AR5 cycle, and have faced unprecedented challenges in this period, dealing effectively with which was possible only on account of the remarkable teamwork shown by my colleagues in the Executive Committee and the enormous assistance we have received from the IPCC Bureau. I have no doubt that in the remaining period of this AR5 cycle we would accomplish all the tasks that lie before us and meet the expectations of society at large. Thank you.