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INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change

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**FORTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE IPCC
Nairobi, Kenya, 11-13 April 2016**

OPENING SPEECH OF MR HOESUNG LEE, CHAIR OF THE IPCC

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Principal Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Authorities of the Republic of Kenya, Mr Charles Sunkuli

Mr Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Mr David Carlson, representative of the Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization,

Mr Mannava Sivakumar, Acting Secretary of the IPCC,

Distinguished Delegates, colleagues and friends

Welcome to the 43rd Session of the IPCC. Achim, this is probably the last time that you personally will welcome us to this beautiful campus, which is one of the homes of the IPCC. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank you here and now for the many examples of warm, practical and effective support you have offered the IPCC over the years, and wish you all the best in your new role as director of the Oxford Martin School at Oxford University.

Colleagues, I hope you are as excited as I am as we embark on the Sixth Assessment Report. More research on climate change, its impacts, and possible adaptation and mitigation options is being undertaken than ever before. The core function of the IPCC is to assess this literature, summarize the key findings for policymakers and communicate knowledge to the public. We will have a lot of exciting new material to assess during AR6.

I believe that by specifying the scope of its reports and selection of the authors the IPCC can focus its assessments in ways that are more relevant to governments and other stakeholders. My sense is that there is particular interest now in climate change impacts at a regional and local scale. In addition, I believe the IPCC must now increase its focus on solutions.

The IPCC realizes that its communications efforts need to be and can be improved. The IPCC launched an ambitious outreach programme last year to communicate AR5 findings, including the Structured Expert Dialogue at the UNFCCC, that helped pave the way for the Paris agreement. The Expert Meeting in Oslo in February, generously hosted by Norway, yielded a wealth of recommendations that we can use to further enhance the effectiveness of our communications as we start work on AR6. The Paris Agreement adopted by COP21 in December 2015 is another reason for my excitement. The Paris

Agreement is more ambitious and comprehensive than many had dared to hope for. The IPCC is not a party to the convention, but we worked hard to ensure that the agreement is scientifically sound.

In the UNFCCC CoP-21 Decision on the Paris Agreement and in the Paris Agreement itself there are some explicit and implicit requests of the IPCC. Specifically, we have been asked “to provide a special report in 2018 on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways.” Countries are expected to propose a wide variety of national commitments. This, together with scientific developments, will require updates of methodologies for national greenhouse gas inventories, and more focused priorities for the Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impacts and Climate Analysis (TGICA). IPCC should also contribute to the UNFCCC global stocktake foreseen in the Paris Agreement.

Scientists and governments have proposed 30 special reports in addition to the one requested by the UNFCCC. The human and financial resources typically allow us to undertake 2 or 3 special reports over the course of an assessment cycle. I would like to thank the new co-chairs of the working groups for the work they have done on the 31 proposals for special reports, with the guidance of the Bureau, which I hope will facilitate our discussions here.

Only six months ago we met in Dubrovnik to elect the new IPCC Bureau. As you will hear each of the working groups is making good progress in establishing its Technical Support Unit. The Bureau has had its first meeting. We have worked hard to try to facilitate the decisions that need to be made at this meeting, in particular decisions relating to special reports. And we are looking forward to the decisions of the Panel at this meeting so that we can begin our work.

So it's no surprise that we have a packed agenda here in Nairobi. We will have to work with focus and discipline in the three days before us because what we decide and achieve here will determine our work plan for the next six years or so and set the tone for our work on the Sixth Assessment Report.

It will be some years before we see the first working group contributions of AR6 coming to fruition. So as the world starts to implement the Paris Agreement, the special reports that we bring out in the next few years will be of great importance.

The choice of special reports is part of the broader question of strategic planning for the Sixth Assessment cycle that we must consider here. The demands on the IPCC for assessments seem unlimited. At the same time we must take a realistic view of our capacity, including our financial resources, and the potential contributions of authors and elected officials who give so generously their time and expertise. And we face the challenge of aligning our work schedule with the needs of the UNFCCC so that our assessments appear when they can be truly policy-relevant.

There is a lot of work to be done. The new team is very capable and eager to start. Let's agree an ambitious work plan here.

With that I declare this 43rd Session of the IPCC open. Thank you.