



INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE



**Welcome Address by
Dr R K Pachauri
Chairman, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
At the Opening Ceremony and the Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the IPCC
Geneva, 31st August 2008**

Your Excellency, Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) Mr Ban Ki-moon; Your Excellency, Federal Councillor and Head of the Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications of the Swiss Confederation Mr. Moritz Leuenberger; Secretary General of the WMO Mr. Michel Jarraud; Executive Director of UNEP Mr. Achim Steiner, representative of the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC Mr. Roberto Acosta, delegates to the Twenty Ninth Session of the IPCC, ladies and gentlemen!

I am very pleased to welcome you here on this occasion which has historic significance for the IPCC as an organization but even more importantly for the cause of scientific and intellectual endeavour all over the world, because knowledge must increasingly drive and fashion the development agenda of the 21st century. It is a particular privilege and pleasure for me to welcome the Secretary General of the UN Mr. Ban Ki-moon. Ever since he took over the pivotal position of Secretary General he has been deeply involved in leading the international community towards solutions to the serious problem of climate change. He has very rightly described climate change as “the defining challenge of our age”. Time and again he has reminded us of the urgency with which the world has to act, an urgency that he has very appropriately emphasized by referring to the findings of the IPCC’s Fourth Assessment Report. Indeed, his stand on the subject and his support of the scientific findings of the IPCC have been a great source of encouragement for the scientific community at large and particularly those who have been engaged in authoring this particular report. May I also welcome M/s Michel Jarraud and Achim Steiner for their presence here today and the support that their respective organizations have been providing to the IPCC over the years. The UNFCCC is our main customer, if I could label them as such, and our interaction with them enriches the relevance of our work and ensures that the audience that we are trying to address is receptive to our outputs. In that respect the Bali Conference of the Parties was a very satisfying outcome of the IPCC Fourth Assessment process, because our Synthesis Report which was completed in mid November and released at the Panel’s last session in Valencia had a major impact in shaping the Bali roadmap. It is, therefore, pertinent to observe that the final declaration at Bali included several references to the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report while defining the path of action at the global level.

This celebration of 20 years of the existence of IPCC comes at a time when the Panel has reason to feel very proud of its record. The Norwegian Nobel Committee has honoured the Panel across the world by awarding the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize to the IPCC and former US Vice President Al Gore. But at this juncture the IPCC also needs to look inwards to assess how its internal structure would be consistent with meeting future challenges. A Task Group has been set up to study this subject and provide recommendations to the Panel, which would then be able to take a decision on any changes that may be required. It is my view that we need a somewhat different structure and some modification of reporting arrangements to ensure that the management and operations of IPCC activities are carried out smoothly and in keeping with the type and level of service that the Panel must provide in the face of escalating expectations.



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Lastly, I would like to end on a personal note by thanking the hundreds of persons who have made the IPCC what it is today and particularly those who have functioned with so much dedication, hard work and enthusiasm during the course of the Fourth Assessment Report. It is

really the effort of so many that has resulted in such high visibility for the IPCC and enhanced effectiveness of the reports that it has produced. I am sure I would be reflecting the views of the outgoing Bureau when I thank His Excellency the UN Secretary General for his enormous support and encouragement. I thank the Heads of IPCC's parent organizations namely WMO and UNEP as well as all those delegates who have steered the work of the IPCC in a manner that has enabled the scientific community to produce a set of outstanding reports. I hope all the delegates present at this session would not only enjoy the celebration of 20 years of IPCC's existence, but also reaffirm their commitment towards the success of the Panel and its work because it is only through the efforts and valuable inputs that IPCC receives from governments that has enabled it to reach its present status and standing. But we have miles to go and we would indeed continue to move forward towards fully meeting the expectations of the audience that it addresses.

Thank you!