

**Secretary-General's statement on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary and
29th Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change**

Geneva, 31 August 2008

Institutional History

Let me start by expressing best wishes on behalf of the entire United Nations family to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on the occasion of its 20th Anniversary; to its Chair, Mr. Pachauri; as well as all former Chairs, Working Group Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs and the thousands of scientists who have contributed tirelessly to the Panel's 20 year history of accomplishments.

This is also an occasion to acknowledge the proud parents of this wonderful institution, the UN Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization, for the vision and foresight they had to establish the IPCC in 1988 by a General Assembly resolution. Beyond this foresight, we owe UNEP and WMO a gratitude for their continued efforts to support the Panel's work throughout the years.

Significant marks on climate policy

The IPCC has a remarkable history of accomplishments including its First and Second Assessment Reports, which gave us the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, respectively.

The critical role of the Fourth Assessment Report of last year, in putting to rest any left skepticism on whether climate change was real and happening; in elevating the discourse of response – no longer *the debate* - to the highest of political levels and public consciousness; and in fostering the breakthrough we managed to achieve in Bali is undeniable. The Panel's winning of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize is a testament to this fact.

Along with these remarkable accomplishments, we ought to celebrate the rigorous scientific tradition that underpins the work of the IPCC. Without the strong, peer reviewed science base and the policy relevance of that science which the intergovernmental process naturally engenders, the case for action on climate change would not be as unequivocal as it is today.

But anniversaries are a good occasion not only to take stock and celebrate the past but also to lay-out ambitious hopes for the future.

Looking to the Future

We appreciate that with such track record of success the IPCC will face increased demand and pressure, especially at this critical juncture for global climate change policy and action when negotiations are underway to reach a comprehensive post-2012 agreement by December 2009 in Copenhagen – one that measures-up to what the Panel's

scientific findings tell us. There will be a need to update and constantly make the scientific case for action on the road to Copenhagen, and indeed beyond.

The first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol will end in 2012. We must now collectively put our energies to adopting a comprehensive agreement that will engage all countries, and which will provide for the significant emission reductions needed, together with concrete provisions to support countries to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. We should learn from the experience of last – almost two – decades of intergovernmental action and agreements on climate change, but we should not be trapped by them. We need bold action, new ideas and approaches, and most important of all political will to make those reality.

After three negotiating sessions since Bali, we are making progress but not at the speed and scale needed. In negotiations on a complex and multi-faceted issue as climate change, progress on one issue is necessarily tied to progress on almost all the issues; this is to be expected. But we must fight the urge to postpone everything until Copenhagen. Surely, we can make concrete progress on some issues. Like a jigsaw puzzle, a final deal is possible only by building towards it in increments, chipping away at small manageable pieces at a time and putting them to rest once that piece of the puzzle is solved.

In this respect, I would emphasize the need to make the most of the upcoming opportunity in Poznan. We have little time left to prepare for Copenhagen; we have an ambitious agenda ahead of us.

We thus need concrete outcomes from Poznan on the road to Copenhagen. It is my sincere hope that by the end of this year in Poznan, Parties to the Climate Change Convention would have achieved a better understanding of a shared vision for long-term cooperative action. Parties would have made significant progress on the implementation of existing agreements of the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol, such as on adaptation, capacity building, technology and finance, which will facilitate negotiations on the future; and on the Adaptation Fund so it can become well funded and fully operational.

In these areas, the UN System will spare no effort in providing a coherent implementation support to its Member States.

As we have seen in the case of Indonesia in Bali in 2007, the host country of the Conference of the Parties has a crucial role to play in facilitating progress and providing the necessary leadership to solve difficult problems that arise. I call on Poland's leadership in particular, to help us navigate this next stage of the journey by providing the necessary leadership, and engaging other Leaders to speed up our progress so that we can reach a comprehensive deal by December 2009.

In this context, in just 12 days from now, I will be meeting the Leaders of three key countries – Indonesia, Poland and Denmark who were, and will be presidents of the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC – to mobilize their political engagement and support to speed up progress in the negotiations.

But ultimately the responsibility for leadership and progress of course rests on each of the Parties. In the Bali Action Plan, Parties recognize that deep cuts in global emissions will be required to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention and emphasize the urgency to address climate change as indicated in the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC.

In the context of and consistent with the UNFCCC negotiations and the Bali Action Plan, I continue to encourage developed countries to provide leadership in coming up with long-term goals together with ambitious short and medium-term targets and developing countries to do their part to achieve the stabilization levels recommended by the Panel's scientific findings.

This needs to be coupled with arrangements for substantial additional financial resources – public as well as private to support the shift toward low-carbon societies, and to provide the necessary funds for adaptation to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Such bold action, consistent with the overarching principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, can drive today's market forces to result in the technological change and market transformations that are needed for a total transformation of our economies into low or zero-carbon economies.

Indeed, the IPCC and science have been our ally in figuring out what we need to do by when. But I believe the IPCC can be an even more effective instrument for consensus building by for example including more developing country expertise in its assessment so that its future conclusions can be owned by all. This will enhance the anchoring of the negotiations in science.

I also think there is much room for the IPCC to tackle the difficult issues of finance and technology, which are the key enablers of action on its pertinent findings on mitigation and adaptation requirements.

I remain personally committed to providing support to help the negotiations so we can reach our common objective – a balanced, inclusive, effective and ratifiable treaty.

In this effort, we will continue to rely on our committed partner - the IPCC - as the key source of policy relevant science on climate change within the UN family.

I wish the Panel well in its future work on the fifth Assessment Report and its other special reports, methodological reports and technical papers. Given the IPCC's remarkable history of accomplishments, I have no doubt it is up to the task to deliver on these future challenges and aspirations.

And the challenges ahead of us are daunting. Climate change is no-longer just a phenomenon. It has developed into a full-scale crisis that makes it increasingly difficult for us to reach and maintain development aspirations, such as the Millennium

Development Goals. But a crisis needs a commensurate response! After twenty years of the work of the IPCC we have the science. We know what needs to be done. We now look to the Poznan and Copenhagen negotiations to deliver a response that is commensurate with the climate crisis that is upon us.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The world is waiting for results! The future is literally in our hands!

Thank you very much and congratulations on your anniversary!