

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Opening statement by the Chair of the IPCC, Hoesung Lee,
to the 50th Session of the IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 2 August 2019**

Welcome to the 50th Session of the IPCC.

This meeting will be dedicated to one of the most important assessments ever prepared by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – the Special Report on *Climate Change and Land*.

So I am very pleased that we are meeting here in Geneva at the headquarters of the World Meteorological Organization and also the home of the IPCC Secretariat.

We are very grateful to the WMO for their support, hospitality, and the provision of these excellent meeting facilities.

We greatly appreciate the work the IPCC Secretariat has done with the support of the WMO conference team to make this meeting possible.

I would also like to thank our other sponsoring organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, for their continued support, and look forward to deepening our contacts and cooperation under their new Executive Director, Inger Andersen.

I welcome the closer collaboration and contacts we have developed with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in this cycle.

And we are very grateful to the Government of Switzerland for its strong support of the IPCC.

The Special Report on *Climate Change and Land* stands out in the IPCC's work programme for a number of reasons.

This report is being prepared jointly by all three IPCC Working Groups in collaboration with the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. This is the first time that an assessment was conducted in this manner engaging all Working Groups and the TFI.

The integrated approach to assessing climate change is one of the most significant developments of this assessment cycle.

Indeed, this report addresses all three UN Rio conventions – climate, biodiversity and desertification – and thus our report recognizes the nexus of these global challenges and demonstrates the broad policy relevance of the IPCC's work.

And not only policy relevance, but also relevance to people everywhere.

You could say that this report is about “my landscape”, “my farm” and “my food”.

We must salute our authors, as well as the co-chairs and technical support units, for their enormous efforts to deliver the assessments our member governments requested, to high quality and in a timely fashion.

The Special Report on *Climate Change and Land* is the second of the three special reports we are releasing in 2018 and 2019.

These three reports are complementary to each other.

Global Warming of 1.5°C examined the implications of ambitious climate goals.

Climate Change and Land focuses on land as a source of emissions, but also looks at the adaptation and mitigation options that land use offers.

And next month the *Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate* will look at the impacts and adaptation options of the ocean and high-mountain communities.

Three months ago we released the *2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories*, which intersects with *Climate Change and Land* in important respects.

It is noteworthy that these three special reports and the methodology report have been developed while work on the main Sixth Assessment Report is also underway..

In recent weeks, heat waves across much of Europe and fires in the Arctic have underlined the risks that climate change can pose to people and ecosystems through extreme heat, drought and threats to food production.

Here in Switzerland beech forests are under threat from drought.

I hope this report can serve as a bridge between scientific knowledge and those who can play a role in implementing solutions: policymakers of course but also other stakeholders in the business, civil society, and consumers.

And I also hope it will raise awareness among all people about the threats and opportunities posed by climate change to the land we live on and which feeds us.

The interlinkages between land and climate assessed in this report point to weighty and finely balanced decisions that policymakers will need to take..

I urge you to use five days of approval session productively, collegially and positively, to deliver a report that is worthy of the magnitude of the subject and the hard work of our authors.

Thank you for your attention.