

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Statement to the Opening Ceremony of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IPCC

UNESCO, Paris, France, 24 February 2020

IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee

Some days ago we were all saddened and shocked to hear that our former Chair Rajendra Pachauri – Patchy – had passed away.

Patchy served the IPCC for decades.

He was Chair when we were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, and, with his tireless energy, he made the world aware of the problem of climate change.

His last piece of substantive work for the IPCC was to lead the Fifth Assessment Report to completion with the Synthesis Report in 2014.

His determination to bring those findings to the attention of policymakers the world over paved the way for the Paris Agreement a year later, and laid the foundations of our own ambitious outreach activities today.

His memory will stay with us and inspire us for our work.

May I ask you to rise for a minute of silent tribute to Patchy.

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I welcome you to the 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IPCC.

We thank UNESCO for hosting this meeting.

We also thank the Government of France for their strong support of the IPCC, especially for this cycle of the Sixth Assessment Report.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, and delegates.

I am very pleased to inform you that the Sixth Assessment Report is progressing well.

The main reports' first order drafts have been through the expert review process and we will complete reviewing the second order drafts this year.

With this, all three Working Groups will be in excellent shape for the completion and approval of their reports next year.

Preparation for the Synthesis Report is well underway.

In this 52<sup>nd</sup> Session of the IPCC, you will consider an outline for the Synthesis Report based on the scoping meeting we held last year.

And then in about two years from now, the Panel will consider the approval and adoption of the Synthesis Report.

We have been productive, extremely productive, in our work since AR6 launched four years ago.

We have produced four reports – three Special Reports and one Methodology Report – in these four years.

This level of high productivity never existed before in the IPCC's 32-year history.

Not only the quantity but also the quality stood out.

Leaders in policy, business, and civil society, and citizens of every generation have all deeply appreciated the value of our recent reports.

The demand for immediate action for tackling climate change is growing and has never been higher. However, the response to this demand is slow.

Since AR6 began, developing country participation in IPCC activities increased substantially. In our latest meeting, for the scoping of the Synthesis Report, the percentage of developing country participants increased to 51%, the highest ever.

Gender balance keeps improving, with Working Group II recording a share of 41% for women among its author team.

Our recent Panel sessions were all carbon-neutral.

Financially, the IPCC now is not the IPCC you knew in the past.

At the close of the Fifth Assessment cycle in 2015, IPCC finances were in a dire situation.

The IPCC Trust Fund, which had shown a declining trend in the Fifth Assessment period, sank in 2015 to its lowest level in recent IPCC history.

The disposable cash reserve turned out to be so low that it could barely cover up to two years of activities when we began the new Sixth Assessment cycle in 2016.

Now the amount of the IPCC Trust Fund is the highest in our history.

The number of countries contributing to the Trust Fund is also the largest in our history.

Both developing and developed countries have joined the contributors to the IPCC Trust Fund.

Whenever I met your Ministers or Heads of Government or Heads of International Organizations, I and Abdalah Mokssit, the IPCC Secretary, always pleaded with them to increase their financial contributions to the IPCC. We thank them for their support.

We hope to leave stronger IPCC finances for the next cycle of the IPCC.

While we are making noticeable progress in the assessment, developing country participation, gender balance, and IPCC finances, we have found some concerns I would like to share with you.

The publication of *Global Warming of 1.5°C* has taken a long time since its approval in October 2018.

Its translation into UN languages has not been smooth.

IPCC travel has been a continuing source of complaint from participants.

These are secretarial and administrative matters.

I want to highlight two things.

It is IPCC money that pays for these things: publications, translation, and travel.

However, it is not the IPCC but the WMO that manages the process and has the final say about these things.

The IPCC Secretary has no decision-making authority on these matters.

If the IPCC Secretary had the final authority and responsibility in these and other matters related to the administrative functions, I am sure that we would not have encountered problems with publications, translation, and travel.

The time has come for the IPCC to consider having its own rules of operation regarding these and other matters, including the institutional arrangement of the Secretariat for its status and operations.

The current set-up was the result when the IPCC needed to take its very first step 32 years ago.

The WMO provided the salary of the IPCC Secretary, who is a WMO employee, and also provided the office space of the Secretariat in the WMO building.

UNEP provided the salary of the IPCC Deputy Secretary who is a UNEP employee.

The Secretariat currently has 10 staff who are WMO employees with their salaries paid by the IPCC Trust Fund.

Yet no one in the IPCC Secretariat is accountable to the IPCC.

This should be corrected.

The IPCC needs to establish its own rules on secretarial and administrative operations.

The IPCC has matured enough and built up the strength over the last 32 years to deserve a Secretariat capable of operating exclusively under IPCC rules and wholly accountable to the IPCC.

We need an IPCC Secretariat that is fit for the IPCC of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. You have the power and authority to make it happen.

From this year the Panel will begin its periodic five-year review of IPCC rules and procedures.

It is a golden opportunity to modernize the IPCC administration.

One important task left over for the Sixth Assessment cycle from the Fifth Assessment is to revisit the size, structure, and composition of the Bureau.

Specifically, the Panel is to review the approaches and criteria that would be used to determine the size, structure, and composition of a future Bureau.

This will be an opportunity to remodel the IPCC to make it compatible with the new decade of transition to climate stabilization.

I hope that the Panel will use the opportunity of a thorough review of the Bureau framework to see what would be best for the IPCC to enhance its policy relevance.

I would like to recall an example from our history in this regard.

For the Second Assessment, the Panel decided to merge adaptation and mitigation into Working Group II, and reformulate Working Group III's mandate to address the economic and social dimensions of climate change.

I was a co-chair of that Working Group, and with my Canadian counterpart and with the support of Chairman Bert Bolin, we were able to mobilize talented economists and social scientists, including one Nobel laureate economist and two economists who later were awarded Nobel prizes in economics.

Its report *Economic and Social Dimensions of Climate Change* contributed greatly to expand the policy relevance of the IPCC by providing the first scientific assessment of efficiency, equity, and ethical issues related to climate change.

I am sure that there would be many ways for the IPCC to enhance its relevance, within our mandate, and that the review of rules and procedures would help achieve this aspiration.

Let me conclude by thanking UNESCO for their generous hospitality in hosting this meeting.

We are also very grateful to UNESCO for organizing the panel discussion following this Opening Ceremony, which brings together scientists, youth leaders and representatives of indigenous peoples to discuss climate action, illustrating the policy-relevance of the IPCC's work.

I look forward to productive and collegial discussions with you this week.

Thank you for your attention.