

Statement to the Opening Ceremony of the 52nd Session of the IPCC

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I am honoured to address you today at the 52nd session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change because the IPCC has been, without a doubt, an incredible, positive scientific force in laying out the scale and consequences of climate change and what we must do to lessen the threat it poses to humanity and the planet.

Everybody involved in the work of the last few years should be proud of how influential this body has been. So, let me congratulate you all for last year's marathon in getting out the two special reports, on climate change and land and on the ocean and cryosphere, and updating the methodology for greenhouse gas inventories. Your special reports have undoubtedly fueled societal climate change movements, notably among young people, and built momentum for the action we must take. I am also happy that the three Working Group Reports of the Sixth Assessment Report are on track.

The bad news

This is all the good news. Unfortunately, there is so much bad news on climate change. Only in the last few weeks, the WMO warned that 2020 will see higher than ever concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere. We heard that that this January was the hottest on record. Preliminary measurements, still to be verified, said that the Antarctic had posted temperatures in excess of 20°C for the first time.

As things stand, we are heading for the hotter than 1.5 degree world you warned us of, with all of the more intense climate impacts this will entail. UNEP's Emissions Gap Report told us that to stay on track for 1.5°C of warming, we need to cut emissions 7.6% every year between 2020 and 2030. COP25, unfortunately, did not deliver on closing Article 6 or on the early submission of ambitious 2020 Nationally Determined Contributions. Our sights are therefore clearly set on Glasgow as the time to deliver, because we know that there remains a huge gap between ambition under the Paris Agreement and where the world needs to be in 2030. We need nations to deliver that increased ambition in Glasgow this year – a five-fold increase – and quickly begin shifting their economies to deliver on their commitments.

This reality means that we need the IPCC more than ever. We need you to stand firm, step up your efforts and inject further impetus for climate action. The world is now looking towards the AR6, in particular its Synthesis Report, to help guide us.

To this end, I call on the Chair, the Vice and Co-Chairs, and all IPCC members, to work together, with the support of the Secretariat, in solidarity, with governments to deliver a high-quality and timely AR6 Synthesis Report, which can provide the scientific foundation for transformational global action to bend the curve on climate change. In this noble and critical mission, please be assured that we, at UNEP, take our role as co-sponsor along with our

partner the World Meteorological Organization very seriously, and endeavour to provide you with the strongest support possible.

2020, Super Year of Nature - United behind Science

Another key point I would like to make is on the Super Year of Nature. As you know, this year we have many opportunities to set out a pathway to reversing the degradation of ecosystems and biodiversity, in so doing setting up a mutually supportive relationship with the climate.

In Kunming, China, the world will agree the post-2020 Global Diversity Framework, which must set ambitious targets to halt and reverse the trend of increasing biodiversity loss. In 2020 countries are also asked to submit their enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions, which provides an opportunity to include nature-based solutions in their climate pledges. This could deliver up to one third of the climate solution by 2030: a critical effort during the decade when we must decarbonize our economies. The President of the General Assembly is also convening the first Nature Summit in September this year to build momentum for nature, and to ensure that we secure a strong and meaningful biodiversity framework.

These are just a few key moments, with much more going on.

From UNEP's perspective, this year is critical.

The conclusion of negotiations on Article 6 is vital for whether or not we achieve our collective climate goals. International carbon markets and a price on carbon are absolutely crucial if we're to have any chance of stabilizing the global temperature rise and avoid runaway climate change.

Nature is the foundation of human societies and economies. Virtually every problem we face can be traced back to the breakdown of our relationship with nature. It is time to put the conservation and restoration of nature at the heart of our societies, and we are working hard to push this agenda.

One strand of our work in this regard is to collect the best science to support the Nature Summit and Convention on Biological Diversity COP15. UNEP is developing a Synthesis Paper, based on a number of global assessments – in climate, in biodiversity, in chemicals, in waste, and beyond. This obviously includes the three IPCC special reports and the Fifth Assessment Report, reports from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and many others. I would be most grateful if the IPCC can be a champion in developing this report.

I am also so pleased to see an agenda item on joint activities between the IPCC and IPBES. I believe this will go a long way in improving our understanding of the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change.

UNEP support: in conclusion

In closing, let me run through a few specifics on UNEP's ongoing support to the IPCC.

- I have appointed the new Deputy Secretary, Ms Ermira Fida, who is here in a designate capacity who will start on 13 April. Ms Fida is a citizen of Albania, a physicist, and a long-time member of UNEP staff, who prior to her UNEP career worked with UNDP as

manager of the climate change programme for Albania. Prior to joining the UN, Ms Fida worked as Albania's representative to the IPCC and UNFCCC from 1994 to 1998. Ms Fida will work closely with the WMO and UNEP and in support of the Secretary, to enhance management and provide adequate quality services to the Panel.

- We at UNEP would be honoured to host the next session of IPCC, IPCC-53, in Nairobi. If approved, our Chief Scientist Jian Liu will work closely with the Secretariat to make it yet one more success.
- We are increasing our contribution to the IPCC Trust Fund, starting this year.
- And we will work together with the IPCC and the broader science community to consolidate the Global Assessment Dialogue (IPCC, IPBES, Group on Earth Observations (GEO), International Recovery Platform (IRP) and Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)) as requested by UNEA4 through resolution 23, to present a united front on science to catalyze and scale up actions on climate change and biodiversity loss.

Let me end by once again thanking the IPCC for its intellectual leadership and pivotal role in pushing global climate action forward. You have done so much, and can do such more. It is important to remember this throughout this Plenary as you shape the future of this vital body.

I wish you every success.

Thank you.