

Opening remarks by Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme during the Fifty-Fifth Session of the IPCC and Twelfth Session of Working Group II

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Let me begin by congratulating Working Group II for staying on track to complete the 6th Assessment Report (AR6) by September 2022. This is no mean feat, given the complex and ongoing challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. You have navigated this space with aplomb, now moving into your second virtual approval session.

Colleagues, the work of the IPCC underpins climate action, as we saw at COP26. Working Group I's report on the physical science kept up the pressure on world leaders. We saw its relevance in many statements from COP26 delegates and in the final decision taken at Glasgow.

Now it is the turn of Working Group II to lay out the latest evidence on how past and future changes to Earth's climate system impact life on our planet. This report on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability will integrate more strongly across the natural, social and economic sciences. It will highlight the role of social justice and indigenous knowledge. It will strengthen the science on the links between biodiversity loss and climate change. Such a wider focus only makes the report more relevant.

Colleagues, we know that the world is already informed of the scientific evidence that the IPCC has presented over the decades.. But acknowledging the evidence is only the first step. We know from UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report 2021 that the growth in climate impacts is far outpacing our efforts to adapt to them. We need nations, cities, business, investors and every actor to turn this step into a sprint if we are to keep 1.5 degrees within reach and help communities and nations adapt to climate impacts.

So, the IPCC, UNEP, WMO and others must continue to drive home the message. This is something that we at UNEP will do at the upcoming second segment of the fifth UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) – where a significant number of frontier environment issues are on the agenda including a decision to agree on a pathway for a global agreement on plastic pollution.. Similarly, I know that your work will be critical in informing the global community of the imperative of action. And this will, in turn, help drive ambition at COP27.

Colleagues, knowledge on climate impact, adaptation and vulnerability is essential to strengthen international action for climate action, nature and a pollution free planet – which is the core theme of UNEA 5.2. So, this report will be crucial. To help world leaders shape responses to climate impacts already locked in. To help them prepare for future impacts. To warn the world of the dire consequences that further inaction on cutting emissions would bring. And, fundamentally, to address the climate anxiety many people are feeling by sparking real systemic transformation that keeps our planet cool.

So, I commend the key contributors to this report. The 270 authors. The co-chairs and vice chairs of Working Group II. The Chair of the IPCC. The government of Germany, the secretariat, the technical support unit and, of course, our partners, the WMO, with whom we

are proud together to support the work of the IPCC. I thank you for your dedication and commitment to help to steer the world onto the right climate track.