

Check against delivery

Opening remarks from the IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee
58th Session of the IPCC
Interlaken, Switzerland
13 March 2023,

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, excellencies,

As the Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - IPCC - I am delighted to welcome government delegations, representatives of observer organizations, IPCC authors and Bureau members to the 58th session of IPCC.

This is the Panel's last approval session and the penultimate plenary of the sixth assessment cycle. We have gathered to consider and deliver the Summary for Policymakers of the Synthesis Report, the closing chapter of the Sixth Assessment Report.

I would like to thank the Swiss Government and the city of Interlaken for their kind support and facilitation of our plenary. We are grateful for your warm welcome and hospitality.

This morning we heard powerful messages of support and recognition from our distinguished colleagues and friends. They stood with us and encouraged us throughout, and for this, we are truly grateful.

This week, we are poised to cross the finish line of the cycle. The Synthesis Report is the culmination and convergence of the Panel's efforts over the years to deliver the most robust and relevant climate change science to policymakers. It draws on the six previous reports to deliver a number of new approaches and insights.

Standing in contrast to the previous assessment cycles, I would like to stress the strategic approach we have taken in this cycle to strengthen cross-working group coordination and consistency. I note that this has greatly improved the quality and efficiency of the writing of the Synthesis Report.

Throughout this cycle, we have also shifted the IPCC's focus on pathways to solutions. Our reports, including Synthesis Report, are solution oriented. They clearly show that humanity has the know-how and the technology to tackle human-induced climate change. But not only that. They show that we have the capacity to build a much more prosperous, inclusive and equitable society in this process. Tackling climate change is a hard, complex and enduring challenge for generations. We, the scientific community, spell out the facts of disheartening reality, but we also point to the prospects of hope through concerted, genuine and global transformational change.

We can look at the cycle with a great sense of collective pride and achievement. This has been the most productive cycle in IPCC's 35-year-long history. Together, we have delivered three special reports, three Working Groups' reports and a methodology document. Much of this work had to be carried out in unforeseen and threatening circumstances of a deadly pandemic.

But each IPCC contribution has been an extraordinary feat of painstakingly hard work by hundreds of scientists and experts. Each contribution added a new, strong scientific pillar supporting and guiding critically important negotiations and processes aimed at tackling the challenge of global warming and

climate change. In the same vein, the Synthesis Report will substantially contribute to talks at COP28. It will also feed into the first Global Stocktake taking place this year.

Once approved, the Synthesis Report, will become a fundamental policy document for shaping climate action in the remainder of this pivotal decade. For policymakers of today and tomorrow, a much-needed textbook for addressing climate change. Make no mistake, inaction and delays are not listed as options.

Today, the IPCC is the most authoritative scientific voice of the United Nations. Its credibility and relevance are at previously unseen levels. Never before has climate change science spoken with such certainty and precision. As we are about to engage in approving the final chapter of our work, I want to acknowledge and thank all IPCC authors, Bureau members and government representatives. Your dedication, scientific rigour and unbreakable determination enabled the IPCC to deliver.

Our work this week warrants our undivided attention and commitment. I have no doubt that our careful approval of the Summary for Policymakers, will deliver a scientifically robust and policy-relevant report. By doing so, we will bring the sixth assessment cycle to a successful closure and complete the towering task we were given.

As the one responsible for the delivery of the Synthesis Report and chairing our proceedings, allow me to impress upon all of us the importance of upholding a respectful, positive and constructive spirit throughout this approval session. When we work together, we deliver. On target and on time. With this, I now declare the 58th Session of the IPCC open.

Thank you.

ENDS