

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Chairman's Opening Statement at the Thirty-Eighth Session of the IPCC

-- R K Pachauri, Yokohama, Japan

Your Excellency Mr Nobuteru Ishihara, Minister for the Environment of Japan,
My colleagues, Vice Chairs of the IPCC
My colleagues, Dr. Chris Field and Dr. Vicente Barros, Co-Chairs of IPCC WGII
Secretary of the IPCC, Dr Renate Christ,
Deputy Secretary, Mr Gaetano Leone,
Authors of the Working Group II Report
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Members of the media,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to welcome you to this 38th Session of the IPCC.

It is a great privilege for us to be holding this important 38th Session of the IPCC in the beautiful city of Yokohama and served by these modern facilities. We are indeed privileged to have His Excellency Mr. Ishihara with us in this occasion, and I would like to express my gratitude at the outset for the enormous support that we have received from him, his Ministry and all his officials. We are totally overwhelmed with the warm hospitality and care that we have been provided by the Ministry and others associated with this Session in Japan.

Japan has always been deeply supportive of the IPCC, and we value the enormous contributions made by the Government and the scientific community of this country which has been very active in every single assessment that has been produced by the IPCC. We are also very grateful to the Government for hosting the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, which has done very valuable work on behalf of the IPCC over the years, ably co-chaired by my colleague Mr. Taka Hiraishi. My gratitude and that of all my colleagues is also due to the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies, its Chairman Prof. Hamanaka and its President Mr. Mori for the support they have been providing to this TFI and to the IPCC in general.

This Session is of enormous value, and I expect that after the successful launch of the Working Group I Report in Stockholm last September, this Working Group II Report will now enhance our understanding of issues related to impacts, vulnerability and adaptation in the field of climate change. Of particular significance is the detailed assessment of regional aspects, which will give us a much clearer understanding of impacts in the past and those projected in the future for different regions, ranging from the African continent to Central and South America, the Polar Regions, the Small Islands and the Open Oceans. Essentially, adaptation measures are centered on local impacts and vulnerability and local institutional responses. By providing substantial regional information, this report would equip not only national and sub-national governments with an understanding of how and in what manner to adapt to the impacts of climate change, but also make it possible to go right down to the local level in providing a basis for decisions and initiatives on adaptation.

The chapters on urban as well as rural areas respectively would provide information which the diversity of governance systems in rural versus urban areas would be able to absorb appropriately in arriving at solutions and actions to deal with different impacts of climate change. Overall, the management of risk related to climate change impacts would be the dominant approach emerging from this assessment. There would also be a much needed focus on climate resilient pathways that would explore the framework for combining of adaptation, mitigation and sustainable development interactions. We believe that these features would enhance the policy relevance of this Working Group II assessment, and would be of high value in the development of the Synthesis Report due to be completed at the end of October this year. The IPCC has a very busy agenda in the coming months with the Working Group III Report to be completed next month, and then the final effort to complete the Synthesis Report, which is designed to be of direct value to policymakers and a non-specialist audience by distilling and synthesizing information and knowledge from all the reports produced in the Fifth Assessment cycle.

The regional aspects of the assessment in this Working Group II Report would also be very valuable in providing structured, coherent and policy relevant scientific details that would help the negotiating community in interpreting the applicability of Article 2 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Since the understanding of dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system is the foundation on which Article 2 of the Convention has to be defined, much of the material contained in this report would flow into the understanding of this complex issue. The timing and contents of the AR5 ensure that under the UNFCCC there would be adequate attention given to the findings brought out by the IPCC for facilitating an appropriate conclusion to the current round of negotiations under the Convention.

Given the importance of this Session and the crucial need for coming up with a robust, intelligible and practically useful Summary for Policymakers, may I request the delegations participating in this Session to provide all their wisdom and understanding in the process of approval of this report. Management of the time of this Session in an efficient manner would ensure balanced and adequate attention to every section of the report. The facilities of this excellent convention centre would provide an atmosphere conducive to productive and smooth conduct of our session. I have personally attended many events at this complex, and am speaking from extensive personal experience. And, I have, of course, lost count of the number of times I have visited Japan for various professional reasons, but I estimate it would be somewhere in the region of 150 times. I wish all those participating in the sessions of this meeting do enjoy their stay as much as I have enjoyed mine on all the occasions in the past.

Thank you.