

**Statement by Chairman Rajendra K. Pachauri
On the occasion of the opening of IPCC 33rd Plenary Session
Abu Dhabi, 10 May 2011**

Mr. Jeremiah Lengoasa,
Mr. Peter Gilruth,
Mr. Florin Vladu,

My colleagues, the Vice-Chairs of the IPCC, Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and the TFI,
Secretary of the IPCC Dr. Renate Christ,
Distinguished delegates, members of the Media, and Friends,

Unfortunately, His Excellency Dr. Sultan Ahmed al Jaber was not able to grace this occasion and join us this morning on account of some unexpected commitments. However, he has kindly provided a copy of his speech which has been distributed to the delegates. This may be read and taken as being delivered on this occasion.

I must at the outset express my gratitude to the authorities of the UAE and Abu Dhabi and my happiness at holding this extremely important Session of the IPCC in this location – a dynamic place which promises to become the centre of new thinking on a sustainable energy future for this planet.

We have early this week successfully completed an extremely important Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation. It is entirely appropriate that this Report was released in Abu Dhabi, which while being a major exporter of hydrocarbons is focusing with determination on creating renewable energy solutions in fulfillment of the vision of Sheikh Zayed, the founder of the UAE, whose dedication to sustainable development and the conservation of natural resources provides an inspiration and a beacon light to all of us.

This Thirty Third Session of the IPCC is highly significant, both in respect of all that we have committed to do since the last Session and the momentum that has been generated in completing the Fifth Assessment Report and two Special Reports, one of which has been completed successfully and the other is due for completion before the end of this year. Our agenda for this Session now requires the Panel to take several decisions that would ensure the operational efficiency and effectiveness of the IPCC as a whole and enhanced contribution by this body to policy relevant knowledge in the field of climate change.

We also need some urgent decisions on the proposed activities of the Task Force on Inventories. Of signal importance today are the tasks that were taken in hand during the Thirty Second Session of the Panel held in Busan in October, 2010 dealing with the review that the IPCC along with the Secretary General of the UN entrusted to the InterAcademy Council (IAC) with the purpose of strengthening the IPCC's processes and procedures. I consider the review of the IAC a historical opportunity for preparing our unique organization to deal effectively with the challenges of the future. The IPCC assessment process in the

words of the IAC itself “has been successful overall”, and the Panel it was stated “represents a significant social innovation”.

Hence, while we must do everything to close the gaps and eliminate the weaknesses in the organization, we must do so at all stages by building on the considerable strengths that the IPCC possesses and has demonstrated over the years.

The IPCC needs to build its capacity and capabilities in several respects. For instance we need to equip ourselves with the ability and capacity to deal with the heightened scrutiny such as that which we have been subjected to recently. This widespread scrutiny incidentally can be viewed as the direct outcome of the success of the IPCC. But we must anticipate the challenges that the future presents, and do all we can to deal with them effectively.

Indeed, for the first seventeen years of its existence between 1988 and 2005, the size of the Secretariat which is the only continuing source of service and institutional memory in this organization, remained frozen at just five individuals. It was only after 2005 that we achieved a marginal increase in the capacity and capability of the Secretariat based on decisions taken by the Panel. Now that we are evaluating the recommendations coming from the IAC review we would be serving the IPCC well only if we use this as an opportunity to carry out a comprehensive build up of the organization’s capacity in several respects.

In this we must remember what the IAC clearly stated: “Given the short amount of time available for this review, the Committee could not address every issue of importance to the IPCC assessment process. Nevertheless, it is the hope of the Committee that this report will contribute to an ongoing dialogue among IPCC stakeholders on a matter of importance to all humankind---”. We would, in my view, be failing in our responsibility if we did not pursue an active dialogue on a range of relevant issues and deal with those of crucial importance that the IAC was not able to cover.

We, therefore, must take a comprehensive view of the opportunity before us and avoid a segmented or fragmented set of actions. In other words, while it is essential that we take action as early as possible and demonstrate our commitment towards doing so, we must remember that the IAC report stated that “most of the Committee’s recommendations can be implemented during the Fifth Assessment process and should be considered at the upcoming Plenary”. However it also drew attention to “recommendations that may require discussion at several Plenary Sessions but that could be implemented in the course of the Fifth Assessment, include those related to management, communications, and conflict of interest”.

May I urge the Panel to keep this sage advice in mind as we come up with decisions during this Session. We are dealing with the future of this unique organization, and we must make haste with deliberation; anything implemented without careful reflection and dialogue could do lasting disservice to the organization. If the Panel decides on continuing the process of considering the IAC’s recommendations, it would have to decide the manner in which this exercise would be carried out at the end of this Session. In the previous Session of the Panel it was decided that the work of the Task Groups would be completed by the Thirty Third Session.

My colleagues the Vice-Chairs of the IPCC and the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and the TFI were very pleased to provide inputs to the Task Groups throughout the process followed since the Thirty Second Session. We would be privileged to provide any further advice that may be required during this the Thirty Third Session as well.

The past few months have been an intensely busy period for the IPCC, and I am delighted that the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and the TFI have initiated a number of activities, the progress of which will be reported to you during the course of this Session. I am fortunate to have a remarkable group of colleagues who the Panel has elected and appointed to the positions of Vice-Chairs of the IPCC and Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and the TFI and to membership of the Bureau.

I have every reason to believe that this team will deliver results in the assessments and other activities that we carry out reaching the highest levels of quality and providing material which would prove its policy relevance. However, our collective success is dependent entirely on the support, guidance and enlightened decision-making involving all the governments that constitute this Panel.

In this hour, as in the entire history of the IPCC, we look forward to the same vision, fairness, objectivity and supportive actions that have created the conditions for the success and effectiveness of the IPCC. I take this opportunity to plead most humbly with the Panel to bear these considerations in mind during this Session.

Thank you