

Opening Statement, 46th Session of the IPCC

Hoesung Lee, Chair of the IPCC

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

I am honoured to welcome you to the 46th Session of the IPCC, in this beautiful City of Montreal, at these excellent facilities in the headquarters of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

We are meeting in the traditional territory of the Mohawk nation.

I mention this, not only to acknowledge our respect for the indigenous peoples of this region, but also as a reminder of the importance of traditional knowledge in the assessments of the IPCC.

Firstly let me thank the Government of Canada for their generous hospitality.

We will be discussing the finances of the IPCC at this meeting.

Suffice it to say that financial contributions, as well as significant contributions in kind such as we are benefiting from here, are essential for the IPCC to carry out the work you have tasked it with.

But besides the hospitality, it is right that we are holding this meeting here.

Canada is a nation where science and scientists enjoy respect at the highest level.

Your future Governor-General, Julie Payette, is a former astronaut.

And an awareness of climate change, and what it means for people and our natural surroundings, runs deep through Canadian culture.

As the great Canadian author Margaret Atwood put it:

"I think calling it climate change is rather limiting. I would rather call it the everything change."

Excellencies, Colleagues. This is one of the most important meetings we will hold in this cycle.

In Montreal we have the important task to decide on the outlines of the three Working Group contributions to the Sixth Assessment Report.

Much has already been achieved, and here you will consider the results of five days of intense, expansive and above all productive discussions at the Scoping Meeting that took place in Addis Ababa four months ago.

A further scoping meeting will be held to draft the outline of the Synthesis Report, which will integrate the three Working Group contributions and the three Special Reports that are being prepared in this assessment cycle.

With this meeting we are taking a decisive step in a long journey that will result, in four and five years' time, in a new IPCC assessment, laying out the scientific community's current understanding of climate change.

AR6 will be the critical scientific input for the global community as it reviews the Paris Agreement and considers whether greater ambition is needed to address climate change.

At this Session you will also consider the important matter of alignment of the IPCC cycles with the UNFCCC and its Global Stocktake.

COP21 identified the future reports of the IPCC as sources of information for the Global Stocktake. The IPCC will deliver the Synthesis Report of the Sixth Assessment Report one year before the first Global Stocktake in 2023.

Science underpins the negotiating process and provides the evidence base for sound policy.

In establishing the review mechanisms of the Paris Agreement, negotiators invited the IPCC to provide a special report on Global Warming of 1.5°C in 2018, in time for the facilitative dialogue that year examining the collective efforts of Parties.

Work on that report, the first in this cycle, is proceeding apace.

The expert review of the First Order Draft is underway, running until 24 September, and lead authors will meet next month to consider the comments and start work on the next draft.

We have also just selected authors for the other two special reports – on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, and on Climate Change and Land.

They will meet next month to start developing the report.

The authors of the 2019 Refinement to the 2006 Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories are also making progress, with the first order draft due to go to expert review at the end of the year.

At this Session you will be also presented with the results of the extensive work by the Ad Hoc Task Group on Financial Stability and consider the IPCC budget. Supporting science also means ensuring the IPCC is in a position to carry out its activities and bring its findings to the attention of policymakers and wider audiences.

Besides ensuring that we have the resources to enable our experts to prepare the assessments, we must also make sure that we can fund wide-ranging outreach activities to all regions, so that we can communicate our findings to stakeholders around the world.

We are already working with communications experts so that the 8 reports that will be released over the next 5 years will be clear, accessible and user-friendly, and so that non-specialists can understand climate change and its implications.

I would again like to express my appreciation to the Government of Canada for hosting several outreach events here to raise awareness about the IPCC's activities and findings.

Many of you will have attended the valuable and insightful workshop yesterday evening on gender balance in the IPCC.

I wish you fruitful and productive discussions and declare the 46th Session of the IPCC open.

Thank you for your attention.