

**Your Excellency, Mr. Pachauri,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Honorable Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all let me welcome all of you to Batumi, one of the most beautiful cities of Georgia and on behalf of the government of Georgia thank all representatives of IPCC and delegates who supported our proposal to conduct the 37<sup>th</sup> IPCC plenary session in Batumi.

We will try our best to create a comfortable environment for productive work and hope that you will enjoy your stay in Batumi.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

For several decades humanity has been faced with the multiple challenges caused by global climate change. Urgent action is required to mitigate climate change process before the consequences prove to be irreversible.

A number of factors like solar activity, changes in size of land and oceans, volcanic eruptions and other natural processes have an impact on the formation of the earth's climate and its changes. Though, changes derived from those factors develop slowly, take millenniums and the earth's ecosystems are able to easily adapt to them.

As various scientific studies have already proven, fast industrialization, especially during the last decades, resulting in intensification of anthropogenic pressure on natural environment, has become the reason for rapid climate change. Consequently, today many countries of the world face serious social and economic challenges, and decisions on how to address those challenges should be made only based on studies and well argued information.

Therefore there was a necessity to create an international organization which based on high-level scientific research results and other objective information would help Parties to the UNFCCC in the evaluation of the physical processes of climate change and its adverse impacts as well as in elaboration of the response strategies.

Today, we have the honour to host this highly important organization – the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Since its establishment by WMO and UNEP in 1988, IPCC has reached significant success and in 2007, with the great contribution of its Chairman His Excellency Mr. Pachauri, IPCC was awarded a Nobel Prize for its efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change.

The fundamental, wide-ranged evaluations made by IPCC have already played an important role in assisting governments to choose and implement a relevant political strategy in regard to climate change. IPCC published multiple series of reports and methodologies, which are frequently cited and used by politicians, scientists and experts.

I hope that the 37<sup>th</sup> session of IPCC will be fruitful and important documents will be adopted, which will become a part of the (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The only way to resolve global climate change problem is to join efforts of all countries, including small and economically less developed ones.

Georgia is a small country. Our contribution to the joint response is quite modest. However, making this contribution is challenging for us - not less than for any other country.

Georgia, due to its geographical location and complex landscape, is characterized by a wide range of weather and climate formation conditions. Actually all types of hydro-meteorological disasters and related geodynamic phenomena are formed.

Hence, we are concerned with the negative consequences of climate change (which are already on place) and possible future aggravations if steps are not taken today. Therefore, we are committed to play a small but respectable role in addressing global climate change problems.

The collapse of centrally planned economy in 1990s resulted in substantial decrease in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Georgia. Current economic growth is accompanied by increase in emissions level. Therefore, it is important to undertake efforts to substantially limit this increase. We have recently started working on a Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) supported by US EC-LEDS programme. A high level inter-ministerial committee and a LEDS expert working group have been established under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (MoENRP) of Georgia.

At the local level, seven cities of Georgia have already joined the EU initiative - Covenant of Mayors, committing to a voluntary reduction of municipal GHG emission by 20%. This process has national relevance, as these seven biggest cities represent about 80-90% of our urban and about 50 % of our total population of Georgia.

Climate Change and its adverse impacts on ecosystems and economy is a threat for Georgia's sustainable development. The most vulnerable to the Climate Change are The Black Sea coastal zone, semi-arid regions, especially, agricultural lands and grasslands, and highlands/mountainous areas.

As a party to the UN framework convention on climate change Georgia periodically makes reports on the activities carried out in the country in regard to climate change problems. Since 2012 Georgia has started preparation of its Third National Communication to the UNFCCC in which a significant part will be dedicated to the study of the impact of climate change on the economy and natural ecosystems of one of the unique regions of Georgia - the Autonomous Republic of Adjara (Capital Batumi, the city in which we are now). The study mainly will be based on IPCC methodologies.

During the current 37th plenary session, you will have a chance to hear a short presentation about the study results.

Other steps are taken towards adaptation to Climate Change in Georgia and I would like to take this opportunity and expresses our sincere gratitude to the organizations and developed countries for their successful and continuous support to Georgia in this regards.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude my speech with expressing the hope that this plenary session will be very fruitful and achieve the planned results.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for your participation in this very important meeting and wish a successful week and enjoyable stay in Batumi.