

Check against delivery



OPENING SPEECH BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES, PROF. JUDI WAKHUNGU, CBS ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 43RD SESSION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE (IPCC) AT UNEP HEADQUARTERS, NAIROBI, ON MONDAY, 11 APRIL 2016, 10:00 A.M.

UNEP Executive Director –Dr. Achiem Steiner
World Meteorological Organisation(WMO) Secretary General – Prof. Petteri Taalas
IPCC Chair – Prof Hoesung Lee
UNFCCC Representative
IPCC Acting Secretary – Mannava Sivakumar
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to join you this morning for the official opening of the 43rd Session of IPCC. I am informed that among those in attendance in this session include representatives of the member states and observer organisations, which is a clear testimony of the wide/inclusive representation and important mandate of the IPCC Sessions.

On behalf of the Government of Kenya, and on my own behalf, I would like to welcome all delegates and visitors to Kenya. I also urge you to take some time off to interact with other Kenyans and visit our beautiful heritage and tourism attractions within the city and its environs. I assure you, Kenyans are very friendly and hospitable people.

Distinguished Delegates,

Since 1990, the IPCC has provided regular and unbiased assessment reports with useful information about the changing climate system. To date, five assessment reports have been produced by the IPCC and the successive reports have more and new information on the findings with regards to the science of climate change.

Indeed, the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report (AR5) has the most recent and updated information on the climate system. In this regard, the world is currently more informed in the science than was previously. This report is extremely essential for all policy makers with regard to making informed decisions touching on sustainable development.

Further it is worth noting that the IPCC AR5 informed the basis of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement that was adopted in December 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Headline Statements from the Summary for Policymakers (physical science basis) of the latest assessment report (AR5) depict worrying trends and are therefore reason for concern.

Among the headline statements include:

- Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are

unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea level has risen, and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased.

- Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850.
- Human influence on the climate system is clear. This is evident from the increasing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, positive radiative forcing, observed warming, and understanding of the climate system.
- Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system. Limiting climate change will, therefore, require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.

These headline statements have confirmed beyond reasonable doubt that Climate Change is a reality and no longer a speculation. The "*balance of evidence*" indicates that the global warming is due to anthropogenic (i.e. *man-induced*) activities. This *balance of evidence* is hankered on a scientific basis grounded on decades of analysing data from systematic observations by a network of meteorological stations of member countries of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

Distinguished Delegates,

Kenya is vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change as most economic sectors like agriculture, livestock, tourism, forestry and fisheries are climate-sensitive. The increasing frequency and intensity of extreme climate events, coupled with the country's low adaptive capacity, continues to threaten the progress towards the

attainment of Kenya's Vision 2030 target, an ideal to be achieved through Sustainable Development.

The signals depicting Climate change in the country include:-

- General increase in temperature;
- Shifts in rainfall seasons (Onset and cessation dates);
- Increasing frequency and intensity of extreme climate events especially drought and floods;
- General decreasing trend in annual rainfall amounts; and
- Reduction in mountain glaciers.

In a bid to mitigate the numerous occurrences, the Government of Kenya has put in place an enabling environment to address climate change at different levels.

This includes the National Climate Change Response Strategy, National Climate Change Action Plan, National Adaptation Plan and the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution. Other instruments include the National Climate Change Framework Policy and Bill, and the Green Economy Strategy.

We have also made efforts to mainstream climate change into the national development agenda through the second medium term plan of 2013-2017.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am informed that the main agenda of this session include a follow-up of the Paris Agreement, and the themes for special reports during the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) Cycle.

I am sure lessons learnt from previous Assessment Reports will greatly inform the development of this cycle. This is clear testimony of the IPCC's endeavours to make information at its disposal more effectively and efficiently communicated /disseminated for the benefit of the most vulnerable people in the society.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following the elections that were held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, during the Forty Second Session of the IPCC, the IPCC Bureau and Task Force Bureau are now fully constituted and ready to spearhead the activities of the IPCC.

I congratulate all those elected and wish them well in their new roles under the able leadership of the newly elected IPCC Chair – **Prof Hoesung Lee.**

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me end by thanking UNEP and WMO for hosting this IPCC Session in Nairobi. I wish to assure you that Kenya supports the outcome of this very important and timely Session.

It is now my pleasure to declare the 43rd Session of the IPCC officially open and wish you fruitful deliberations in the next three days.

Thank you.