



# UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement      Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente

Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде

برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



## **Statement on behalf of Erik Solheim, Head of UN Environment**

**Delivered by Jacqueline McGlade, Chief Scientist**

**At the Opening Ceremony of the Forty-Fourth Session of the IPCC**

**Bangkok, Thailand, 17-20 October 2016**

**Let me start by offering condolences from UN Environment to the good people of Thailand on the demise of your Great King, a beloved father of the nation, the world's longest-reigning monarch and a major source of unity and stability of this great country. We wish to express deepest sympathy; our thoughts are with you in this very difficult and trying period.**

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**We also want to express our appreciation to the Government of Thailand and our local UN partners for hosting and arranging this very important session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in your beautiful city, Bangkok.**

**Your Excellency, General Surasak, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Mr Hoesung Lee, Chair of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,**

**Esteemed delegates, colleagues, friends**

It is a great pleasure for me to address the Opening of the 44<sup>th</sup> Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Last year in Paris we promised to keep the world safe from the worst effects of climate change. Two days ago in Kigali, we saw nearly 200 countries follow through on that promise by adopting an amendment to the Montreal Protocol to phase out hydrofluorocarbons. With this single step we now have a chance to cut half a degree of warming out of the system. It is the single largest contribution that the world has made towards keeping the global temperature rise to "well below" 2 degrees.

And the Kigali agreement comes hard on the heels of two other climate action milestones: sealing the deal to curb emissions from aviation and achieving the critical mass of ratification for the Paris agreement to enter into force. These steps are a clear signal that the green transformation has become irreversible and unstoppable, and the pace is quickening. The best investments are now those in clean, efficient technologies, which will also help to provide a clean, healthy environment. We are walking the talk.

## Science and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Science is the key to this success. But for science to be a powerful argument, it must make sense to politicians and citizens. So at the same time as you begin preparing the Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C eradicate poverty, we must put people front and centre in our communications. There is nothing more important than achieving improvements in people's lives based on a future which avoids the dangerous impacts of climate change.

The importance of the Intergovernmental Panel and its cycle of assessments must not be underestimated. It is the authoritative body, which we all look to for an understanding of what is happening to our planet. The efforts you have made to renew the Working Groups based on the principles of balanced disciplinary, geographic and gender balance are excellent. These changes will make sure the IPCC authors to deliver the definitive and comprehensive assessments of the best available scientific knowledge that countries and citizens need to underpin future actions.

UN Environment is proud to be supporting your efforts through the work of the Secretariat, helping to communicate the Panel's key messages and ideas. We are also extending our support to the 1.5°C assessment to ensure it is the best, most comprehensive scientific analysis.

The Special Report will come at a time when the Parties to the Convention on Climate Change reconvene for the global stocktaking of efforts to fight climate change. I am sure it will provide a strong foundation for political commitment and action.

## Conclusions

In two weeks' time, we will release the next issue of the *Emissions Gap Report*. This updates the near-term 'emissions gap' situation and how the Sustainable Development Goals can support climate change action. It underlines the message that the absence of rapid and inclusive development practices in terms of the early impacts of climate change could result in an additional 100 million people living in extreme poverty by 2030.

Our efforts to eradicate energy and poverty, promote universal access to cleaner forms of energy, increase energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, will go a long way toward bringing the world back onto a path consistent with the 2°C limit.

The *Emissions Gap Report* sends a strong message on the need for urgent action. Inaction now in curbing greenhouse gas emissions will mean that interventions will be more expensive later. If the necessary actions are not taken, adaptation costs for Africa alone could reach \$50 billion per year by 2050.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Paris climate agreement is an important step towards comprehensive climate change mitigation and adaptation. It is the first step on a long road that will throw up challenges as well as opportunities and solutions. Strengthening the Paris treaty will need robust scientific

knowledge about what is happening to the Earth's climate system and the implications of unabated climate change.

I am confident that the findings of the new IPCC assessment will help governments act effectively on climate change and secure multiple environmental, social and economic benefits.

On behalf of UN Environment, I wish you a very successful session and rest assured that we extend all our support to the work of the IPCC. Thank you