

Address by
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to the Framework Convention on Climate Change

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President of the Conference of the Parties, Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr President,

On behalf of the IPCC and all of those involved with the work of this body I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

The IPCC is an intergovernmental organization, established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Apart from the governments of the 192 countries that are its members, the IPCC depends entirely on the thousands of scientists from across the globe who volunteer their time and expertise in producing the comprehensive assessments on climate change brought out by the organization. In 2001, the Third Assessment Report (TAR) of the IPCC was approved by the member countries, and it concluded that "there is new and stronger evidence that most of the warming observed over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities." Some direct impacts of climate change have been identified in the TAR indicating that:

- Nearly all land areas are likely to warm more than the global average;
- Sea level will continue to rise;
- Changes in the hydrological cycle will be more intense, and modelling studies suggest an increased likelihood of drought in mid-latitude continental interiors.

In assessing the impacts of climate change, the TAR includes in its summary of robust findings that [Table SPM-3]:

- Many ecosystems and species are vulnerable to climate change, with already stressed communities being the most vulnerable;
- In some mid-and high-latitude areas with small temperature rises productivity may increase, but once temperature rises exceed a few degrees (Celsius), for most regions productivity would decrease;
- The impacts of climate change are expected to fall disproportionately upon developing countries and the poorest communities within those countries.

The Third Assessment Report also analysed mitigation options and concluded that:

- significant technical progress has been made on greenhouse gas emission reduction options; in fact the progress was faster than anticipated;
- the effectiveness of climate change mitigation can be enhanced when climate policies are integrated with non-climate objectives. Let me highlight in this the importance of integrating climate change policies with sustainable development strategies and the need to explore synergies with other environmental conventions and environmental issues such as biodiversity, desertification and air pollution;
- future mitigation efforts will be largely enhanced by integrating cleaner energy production strategies into energy policy.

Mr President

The existing concentration of greenhouse gases has committed the world to a certain level of climate change, which can be reduced by effective and adequate mitigation measures involving a significant reduction in the current emissions of greenhouse gases. However, the inevitability of a certain level of climate change would require adaptation by human society as well as existing ecosystems. In that respect the emphasis of the Eighth Conference of Parties (CoP-8) on vulnerability and adaptation is timely and extremely relevant. We believe that existing technologies as well as those that are now approaching the market place would provide attractive and viable options for lowering the cost of mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Third Assessment Report of the IPCC provides a wealth of information for all decision makers facing climate change issues. I encourage you to make maximum use of it as you further develop activities under the Framework Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. I would also urge that the importance of science and knowledge on climate change and the relevance of the work of the IPCC be highlighted in the Delhi Declaration.

In the Fourth Assessment Report my colleagues and I in the IPCC intend to focus on technology issues in far greater detail

than was possible earlier and also provide accurate assessment of the costs and benefits of various mitigation options. I believe it is also important for the IPCC to look closely at the socio-economic impacts of climate change, which would vary substantially on a regional basis. We hope that by the time our report is completed in 2007, the climate models that provide scenarios and assessments on a regional basis and related knowledge would have reached a level of sophistication and reliability that would make both regional assessments of climate change as well as their socio-economic impacts possible.

We are also looking forward to being able to complete an integrated assessment that considers likely regional climate change associated with a range of agreed scenarios, and assesses mitigation and adaptation options as complementary activities.

Further, we believe that the IPCC has to play an important role in communicating results of our work to the public at large and policy makers in particular. We hope, therefore, to intensify our programme of outreach as early as possible and in partnership with other organizations at the international, national and sub - national levels.

Mr President

I cannot conclude without saying something about the IPCC. While I have the honour of chairing this organization, its high reputation rests of the work of the scientists who volunteer their time, and on the governments and UN agencies that give financial support to its work.

The IPCC is a unique global resource. It provides authoritative assessments of climate change, and in so doing assists in keeping the sometimes-emotive debate about climate change anchored in scientific facts and findings.

I thank all of you for your support in the past, and urge you to continue this support through our Fourth Assessment, for I feel that given the state of the international debate on climate change some clear thinking, underpinned by good science, is needed now more than ever before.

Thank you Mr President
