

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**Statement by Rajendra K. Pachauri, Chairman of the IPCC,
to the Opening Ceremony of the UN Climate Summit
23 September 2014**

Good morning. I salute His Excellency the Secretary-General for organizing this landmark event.

I am privileged to be here to present a summary of the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report. The report, compiled by hundreds of scientists, is the most comprehensive assessment of climate change ever undertaken.

Three key messages have emerged from the report:

One: Human influence on the climate system is clear – and clearly growing.

Two: We must act quickly and decisively if we want to avoid increasingly destructive outcomes.

Three: We have the means to limit climate change and build a better future.

Let me address each of these points.

We have abundant evidence that we are changing our climate.

The atmosphere and oceans have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, and sea level has risen.

Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850.

Greenhouse gases in our atmosphere have increased to levels unprecedented in the past 800,000 years.

Our time to take action is running out. If we want a chance to limit the global rise in temperature to 2 degrees Celsius, our emissions should peak by 2020. If we carry on business as usual, our opportunity to remain below the 2-degree limit will slip away well before the middle of the century.

Moreover, the longer we wait the higher the risk of severe, widespread and irreversible impacts.

- Food and water shortages.
- Increased poverty.
- Forced migrations that could increase the risk of violent conflict.
- Extreme droughts and floods.
- The collapse of ice sheets that flood our coastal cities.

And a steady rise in our death toll, especially among the world's poorest.

How on Earth can we leave our children with a world like this ?

I'm not sure I could stand before you if the threats of climate change had no solutions. But they do.

We already have the means to build a better, more sustainable world.

The solutions are many and allow for continued economic development. While some technologies need additional development, many are already available.

Renewable energy is a real option. Half of the world's new electricity generating capacity in 2012 came from renewables.

We also have tremendous opportunities to improve energy efficiency.

And we can further reduce emissions by stopping deforestation.

We are told that limiting climate change will be too expensive. It will not. But wait until you get the bill for inaction. There are costs of **taking action** – but they are nothing compared to the cost of **inaction**.

It comes down to a matter of choice. We can continue along our existing path and face dire consequences.

Or we can listen to the voice of science, and resolve to act before it's too late.

That's our choice.

Thank you for listening.

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