

Opening statement for outreach event on the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report

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Excellences,
Dear members of the IPCC family,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good morning, günaydin!

It is a honour and a pleasure for me as Vice-Chair of IPCC to be able to open this IPCC outreach event at the Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. I am sorry I have not been able to come physically to where you are, due to an already very heavy travel schedule at the moment, as we are preparing the IPCC Bureau elections in a month from now in Dubrovnik, less than a thousand kilometres from here.

I regret even more that I cannot be with you as you are in a university Physics department, and that is also where I am speaking from, at the Louvain-la-Neuve University in Belgium.

I understand decision makers, experts, and stakeholders from Turkey and many neighbouring countries are present, and that is good. Thank you to the Turkish authorities and all those who contributed to the success of this event for their hospitality and efforts.

The IPCC, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, is a unique organization. It was created in 1988 to do something even more original than additional research on climate change. It was created by the United Nations to assess the state of knowledge about the different dimensions of the climate change issue, in the most rigorous, objective, and transparent manner. Its mandate is to provide policymakers with quality information about the scientific, technical, and socio-economic aspects related to climate change, its impacts, and options for adaptation and mitigation. A very important aspect of the IPCC work is that it must be *policy-relevant* -- that is useful to policymaking, but it must be *neutral with respect to policy*.

The need to be policy-relevant without being prescriptive means the IPCC authors cannot recommend choices on the basis of particular value judgments. Policymakers are chosen for that purpose, and IPCC authors should refrain from invading their "terrain". What IPCC authors must do instead is to deal objectively with scientific, technical, and socio-economic factors relevant to the application of particular policies, so that policymakers are fully informed.

The IPCC is an intergovernmental body, which has 195 Member countries (essentially like the UN). Its main products are the assessment reports published every 5 to 7 years. The report you will hear about today is the fifth one, called "AR5" in our jargon: the "Assessment Report number 5". It was produced in three parts, because there are three

Working Groups in IPCC: the first one deals with the physical and natural science aspects of climate change, the second deals with impacts, vulnerability and adaptation, while Working Group III deals with mitigation: how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

More than 800 lead authors, from all over the world, including many authors from this region, have contributed to the AR5. You will hear today some of them. I hope the next round of IPCC assessments will include even more scientists (men and women) from this region, and from more disciplines, including social sciences, as a broad participation in the scientific authorship of IPCC reports is very important for the relevance of the information assessed, and for the sense of ownership of the reports.

The assessment is mostly based on peer-reviewed scientific literature. The review process of the draft IPCC reports is an essential part of the IPCC process: more than 140 thousand comments (!) have been collected and processed by the authors of the AR5, so that it really represents a top-quality product.

You will hear much more about the content of the AR5, and how it relates to this region in particular, but I would like to take a bird's view of its key messages.

The first key message is that "Human influence on the climate system is clear". There is no ambiguity there, and it means humans can do something about it.

The second is that "Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will increase the likelihood of severe, pervasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems": we better do something, taking into account the fact that the poor everywhere are the most vulnerable to climate change.

The third key message is that "While climate change is a threat to sustainable development, there are many opportunities to integrate mitigation, adaptation, and the pursuit of other societal objectives". This is good news, it gives hope! It shows there are ways to mitigate and adapt to climate change that allow other priorities, sometimes more urgent, to be addressed. This is particularly important in the context of the soon to be adopted by the UN General Assembly "SDG", the sustainable development goals.

In a nutshell, the ultimate message of AR5 is that humanity *has* the means to limit climate change and to build a more sustainable and resilient future.

This is very important to remember ahead of the Paris climate conference in December, COP21.

I am confident all this will become more concrete for you thanks to this outreach event in Istanbul today. I wish you an excellent dialogue with the IPCC scientists who came here, and I look forward to hear from the IPCC Secretariat representatives in Istanbul the suggestions you may have expressed so that the IPCC becomes even better in the future.

Thank you for your attention, teşekkür ederim.