

Accelerate Climate Action Now

Opening Address

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Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Excellencies, Ladies, and gentlemen,

Limiting climate change is critical to sustainable development.

Not just for SDG 13 -- combating climate change and its impacts – but for many of the SDGs.

The IPCC's latest reports indicate that mitigation and adaptation have more synergies than trade-offs with SDGs.

In other words limiting climate change will facilitate achievement of many other SDGs.

Climate change is a threat multiplier.

Climate hazards and non-climate threats interact to aggravate the adverse impacts.

These complex threats are occurring now with the warming of 1.1°C and will get worse with additional warming.

It's not surprising then to see that the mid-term scores for SDGs signal that they are in deep trouble.

Only 12% of the 140 targets are on track.

Progress is severely inadequate for about half of the goals including Goal 13.

Climate change has exposed about half the world population to acute food insecurity and reduced water security, with the largest adverse impacts in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, LDCs, small island states, and the Arctic.

Climate change has slowed the growth in agricultural productivity globally over the past 50 years.

Heat waves, heavy precipitation, droughts, and tropical cyclones have increased their frequency and intensity in all regions.

Many recent extreme weather events would not have occurred in the absence of global warming.

Loss of human life from floods, droughts and storms in highly vulnerable regions, ie., developing countries, was 15 times higher, compared to regions with very low vulnerability.

Climate extremes are increasingly driving displacement in many regions.

Global warming attacks human health.

It has increased the geographic dispersion of food-borne, water-borne, and vector-borne diseases.

Adaptation efforts have increased in all sectors and regions over the past decade.

But adaptation efforts lag and gaps will widen at the current implementation trend.

Many ecosystems have a limited capacity to adapt and further warming will cause some tropical, coastal, polar and mountain ecosystems to reach hard adaptation limits.

Further damage to ecosystems will lead to losses in their intrinsic value and disruption in the provision of services to benefit life on earth.

Additional warming will increase the risks of species extinction and irreversible loss of biodiversity in ecosystems.

Further warming will increase the likelihood of irreversible changes in the climate system, which includes changes triggered when tipping points are reached.

At warming levels between 2°C and 3°C, the Greenland and West Antarctic ice sheets will be lost almost completely and irreversibly over multiple millennia, causing several meters of sea level rise.

So, deep, rapid and sustained cuts to global GHG emissions is the best option for sustainable development.

To limit warming to 1.5°C, the emissions of greenhouse gases should peak as soon as possible no later than 2025, and decline rapidly towards net zero emissions by 2050.

Yet global emissions continue to increase.

Sustainable energy and sustainable land use are key to limiting warming to 1.5°C.

Approximately 79% of global GHG emissions came from production and use of energy in industry, transport, and buildings.

The rest (21%) came from agriculture, forestry, and other land uses.

Emissions vary substantially across countries.

Least developed countries and small island developing states have much lower per capita emissions (1.7 tCO₂-eq and 4.6 tCO₂-eq) than the global average of 6.9 tCO₂-eq.

High emitters must make larger emission reductions to get to net zero.

2050 is a global average for achieving net zero.

The Paris Agreement recognizes that developing countries' GHG emissions will peak later than those of developed countries.

Developed countries have financial capital and technology to tackle climate change.

They promised to provide financial and technological support for developing countries climate action.

Now is the time to deliver that promise.

Global emissions in 2030 – seven years from now – should be 43 % lower than in 2019 to limit warming to 1.5°C.

Countries' current Nationally Determined Contribution pledges to limit GHG emissions are not sufficient to meet the 2030 target.

And current policies will not achieve the NDC targets – there is an implementation gap.

We have the tools and know-how to tackle climate change.

At least 18 countries have sustained a decade of declining CO₂ emissions.

Mitigation options including solar, wind, electric vehicles, batteries, various energy efficiency measures and actions to reduce methane emissions are cost-effective in many locations.

It is clear that the path to net-zero emissions requires political commitment and coordinated policies nationally and globally.

It is hard to differentiate climate action from achievement of the SDGs.

Both rely on international cooperation, effective ecosystem stewardship, inclusive governance, the sharing of diverse knowledge, and the sharing of benefits and burdens.

In particular, global climate investment needs to increase three to six times from current levels.

Accelerated financial support for developing countries is critical to achievement of the global net zero goal.

There is sufficient global capital and liquidity to close global investment gaps.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We live in a diverse world in which everyone has different responsibilities and different opportunities to enact change.

Some can do a lot while others will need help.

Our collective future will be shaped by the choices we make -- starting now.

We need to make the right choices.

I urge all parties to redouble their efforts to fulfill the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.

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