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PRESS RELEASE

UN Climate Chief: IPCC Science Underlines Urgency to Act Towards a Carbon Neutral World

Global Climate Change Agreement in 2015 Must Pave the Way towards a Decisive Bending Down of the Emissions Curve

(Bonn, 13 April 2014) – The latest government-agreed science shows that the world can still combat climate change but only if nations raise their collective ambition to achieve a carbon neutral world in the second half of the century, the UN’s top climate change official Christiana Figueres said on Sunday.

“This new report challenges decision makers by presenting to them alternative futures and spelling out the pathway to each. The only safe path forward is to arrive at a carbon neutral world in the second half of this century. We cannot play a waiting game where we bet on future technological miracles to emerge and save the day - and why would we,” said Ms. Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

“We already have the finance and proven technologies needed to do what is required now. The challenge and the opportunity is to increase the speed and scale of action and to make full and comprehensive use of the tools and the levers of international cooperation. Everyone who can make a difference needs to be engaged: business and investors, cities and citizens as well as governments,” she added.

“Above all, governments must strengthen and expand bold policy incentives to reduce emissions at home and together construct a new climate change agreement in Paris next year which can play its full part in reversing the growth in greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible,” she said.

On Sunday, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released the third installment of its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), which shows that human-generated emissions of greenhouse gases are continuing to rise to unprecedented levels, underlining the inadequacy of existing levels of effort to curb emissions.

It spells out a wide array of technological and behavioral changes that can limit the increase in global average temperatures to less than two degrees Celsius, the point at which science shows that climate impacts start to overwhelm human efforts to cope.

The report says that to stay below two degrees will also require major changes in the way the world’s institutions work. “Governments under the UN climate change negotiations have put in place a new system of international institutions to assist developing countries in dealing with climate change and it is



essential that they have the expected impact soon,” said Ms. Figueres. “In particular, I urge governments to step forward this year with generous capital contributions for the new Green Climate Fund so it can assist developing nations to rapidly shift their economic development paths.”

Governments are presently working on the design of the new universal climate change agreement and on ways to increase action before the Paris agreement enters into force in 2020. This immediate rise in action is essential, if the IPCC’s latest warnings are to be avoided.

In order to increase pre-2020 climate action, governments under the UNFCCC have identified renewable energy, energy efficiency, urban environments, land-use, including forests and agriculture, and short-lived climate pollutants as key thematic areas with significant scope for action, and in which they can achieve short-term results.

These are the same key areas the IPCC identifies in its new report as having significant potential to reduce global emissions. In March, in Bonn, governments launched with partner organizations focused effort to unlock this vast mitigation potential and to help nations realize concrete, immediate results. Technical expert meetings on renewable energy and energy efficiency are to continue throughout the year, and governments will focus on urbanization and land use at the next round of UN climate talks in Bonn in June.

“The global climate change agreement currently under design must be catalytic in achieving our collective goal of putting the world on a safer, long-term path. At the same time, we must make full use of the available options we have before 2020 in order to bend the emissions curve back down and we must see results that can be announced in Lima at the end of this year,” said the UNFCCC Executive Secretary.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has invited government, business and civil society leaders to a climate Summit in New York in September to announce greater climate ambitions, which will provide further momentum towards the 2015 global agreement.

The IPCC will complete its AR5 report by synthesizing all the findings in one high-level summary for policy makers due at the end of October 2014. Meanwhile, governments have agreed to put a first draft of the 2015 Paris agreement on the table by the UN Climate Change Conference in Lima, in December of this year.

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About the UNFCCC

With 195 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 192 of the UNFCCC Parties. For the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, 37 States, consisting of highly industrialized countries and countries undergoing the process of transition to a market economy, have legally binding emission limitation and reduction commitments. In Doha in 2012, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol adopted an amendment to the Kyoto Protocol, which establishes the second commitment period under the



Page 3

Protocol. The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

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