

Statement on behalf of IPCC regarding the Special Report on Methodological and Technological Issues in Technology Transfer

by Dr. Bert Metz, co-chair IPCC Working Group III, Bonn June 13, 2000

Mr. Chairman,

It is my pleasure to introduce to this Subsidiary Body the Special Report on Methodological and Technological Issues in Technology Transfer, that was approved by the Plenary of IPCC on May 7 in Montreal. The Report was prepared in response to a specific request from the Subsidiary Body on Scientific and Technological Advice to help Parties implement article 4.5 of the Convention.

The IPCC Report takes a broad approach in assessing the literature. It tries to look into all aspects of the various processes that result in the development, application and diffusion of technology. It specifically looks at what is known about environmentally sound technologies. It looks at technology transfer for adaptation to climate change as well as for mitigation. It looks at processes within countries and between countries. It has defined technology to include both hardware as well as software, such as knowledge and practices. When using the term technology transfer the Report includes technology co-operation and diffusion. In doing so, the Report addresses the issues of technology transfer in a very broad manner, providing a context for implementation of article 4.5, and reflecting on questions that the Consultative Process on Technology Transfer was focussing on.

The Report was produced by more than 180 of the best experts in the field of technology transfer, coming from all relevant disciplines and all regions of the world. As usual, it underwent two rounds of extensive review: an expert and a combined government/ expert review, in which several hundreds of comments were received, that enabled the authors to improve the quality of the Report. This review process was overseen by a number of outstanding experts that acted as review editors who all testified to the fact that review comments were taken into account properly by the authors. I think I can say that this IPCC Special Report on Technology Transfer is the most comprehensive and thorough assessment of the scientific and technical literature currently available on the issue.

The IPCC appreciated very much the opportunity it got to report on the ongoing work during the African, Asia and Latin American workshops as part of the Consultative Process. It is our impression that this exchange of views with experts and practitioners in these regions has been quite fruitful. It is encouraging to see that there is similarity between many proposals originating from the Consultative Process and the findings of the IPCC Report.

What are the key messages of the Special Report?

First, the assessment of the literature on technology transfer makes clear that there are no simple solutions that are generally applicable. National circumstances and sector specific situations require tailor-made approaches for enhancing transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

Second, there are many important elements that determine the effective transfer of environmentally sound technologies. The weakest component determines the overall strength of the system. Therefore a key finding is that integration of activities to enhance the system of technology transfer and building partnerships between public and private stakeholders is essential. The Report identified the notion of National Systems of Innovation as a potentially useful way to put this integration idea into practice. Such an approach might facilitate cooperation with bilateral and multilateral institutions.

Third, technologies are spreading around the world on a day to day basis as a result of many different decisions taken by governments and the private sector. Enhancing technology transfer means removing obstacles to increase the flow of technologies, but also improving the quality of this technology transfer by shifting it to environmentally sound technologies.

Fourth, capacity building was identified as a key prerequisite for effective technology transfer. Such capacity building however needs to be targeted to specific aspects and requirements and should cover human as well as organisational and institutional capacities. Access to information and the capacity to utilise and apply this information is another important component of capacity building for technology transfer.

Fifth, creating an enabling environment for effective action by private investors and public institutions is a vital

element of an effective technology transfer system. Governments, both in industrialised countries, in countries with economies in transition and in developing countries, have a key role to play. On the one hand this would focus on making commercial markets for environmentally sound technologies work more effectively. On the other hand, many technologies that can mitigate or contribute to adaptation to climate change have not yet demonstrated their commercial viability. For this category it takes extra efforts beyond enabling commercial markets to enhance their transfer.

Sixth, existing international mechanisms such as ODA, Multilateral Development Banks, GEF and the Kyoto Protocol Mechanisms (if implemented) have a potential to further enhance technology transfer.

And last but not least, for each specific sector the literature assessment has identified measures to enhance transfer of environmentally sound technologies that have shown to be effective in particular circumstances. This information can help target government policy to the specific sector situation.

Mr. Chairman, I sincerely hope this Report will assist Parties to find ways to enhance technological innovation and the rapid and widespread transfer and implementation of technologies in order to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention and to reduce vulnerability to climate change.