

REPORT OF THE
FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE
IPCC BUREAU

Geneva, 10 March 1998

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

1.1 The Chairman of the IPCC, Dr. Robert Watson, opened the session at 0910 hours in Sir Arthur Davies Hall on the fourth floor of the headquarters building of the World Meteorological Organization at 41 Avenue Giuseppe Motta in Geneva. The agenda as adopted is attached in Appendix A.

2. ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE FOURTEENTH SESSION

2.1 The draft was adopted without amendments.

3. IPCC WORK PROGRAMME IN THE CONTEXT OF THE KYOTO PROTOCOL INCLUDING QUANTIFICATION OF THE SINKS OF GREENHOUSE GASES

3.1 The Bureau noted that the IPCC technical inputs in the context of such issues as the Clean Development Mechanism, Joint Implementation and Emissions Trading are already implicit in the TAR outline and covered well in the Special Report on the Methodological and Technological Issues in Technology Transfer. One way of developing additional inputs would be through workshops and/or expert group meetings.

3.2 The question of weighting the influence of the fluorinated compounds, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆), either using Global Warming Potentials (GWP) or otherwise, on the global warming was discussed. The Bureau noted that there was disagreement within the expert community as to the applicability of GWP in this matter.

3.3 With respect to the issue of vulnerable countries, as coming within the meaning of paragraph 8 of Article 12 of the Kyoto Protocol, the IPCC could attempt better treatments of the questions of vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, and could continue to examine the implications of response measures.

3.4 On the question of the sinks of the greenhouse gases, the Bureau expressed the view that sinks form part of the IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. A Special Report on sinks could be prepared which could include, inter alia, such topics as definitions and terminology, uncertainties in calculating the magnitude of the sinks and the issue of verification. The Bureau agreed that the IPCC Experts Meeting scheduled to take

place in Dakar, Senegal, on 5-7 May 1998 on Emissions from Wood Products could discuss the broad question of sinks.

3.5 The Bureau urged caution because of the political sensitivity associated with the issue of sinks. It requested the Chairman, through the IPCC/FCCC Joint Working Group, to identify the questions of interest to the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the UN FCCC in this connection.

3.6 In the context of the interactions between the IPCC and the FCCC, the wider issue of IPCC relationship with other Conventions and Protocol, as for example, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Conventions on Desertification and Biodiversity was raised. The Bureau deferred discussion to a future session.

4. IPCC-UN FCCC INTERACTIONS: THE JOINT WORKING GROUP

4.1 The Chairman informed the Bureau of his meetings with the Chairman of SBSTA and the Executive Secretary/UN FCCC in Bonn recently and of their exchange of views on the Joint Working Group (JWG). It had been decided to utilize the JWG mechanism more regularly in the future. The JWG would serve as the forum wherein the UN FCCC Bodies could express their requirements with respect to such IPCC tasks as the Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories and could help identify key policy-relevant scientific/technical questions for inclusion in the Third Assessment Report (TAR). It may be recalled, in this connection, that the SBSTA has requested inputs on the latter from governments for onward transmittal to IPCC.

4.2 The Bureau agreed that there should be more frequent contacts between the IPCC and the Subsidiary and other Bodies of the UN FCCC. It was suggested that the JWG meetings be held well in advance of the sessions of SBSTA in order to be helpful to the latter's agenda and that the Bureau, and the IPCC, be informed of the outcome of these meetings.

4.3 In the matter of who would attend the JWG meetings from the IPCC, the Bureau agreed that the Chairman should decide based on the meeting agenda and could draw upon the Co-Chairmen of the Working Groups, the IPCC Vice-Chairmen and the Technical Support Units as the case may be.

4.4 The following agenda items were suggested for the next JWG meeting:

- a) Identification of the policy-relevant scientific/technical questions for inclusion in the TAR;
- b) Sinks of greenhouse gases;
- c) Issues of interest to the UN FCCC related to the IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories;
- d) The new gases under the Kyoto Protocol, namely, SF₆, HFCs and PFCs;
- e) Long-term observations of the climate system.

Another possible topic would be adaptation priorities. In this connection, the IPCC could write to SBSTA or prepare a Technical Paper describing adaptation-related findings in the First and Second Assessment Reports. It was also suggested that the need for improved co-ordination between the IPCC and the UN FCCC constituencies in countries be raised informally.

5. IPCC-OECD MANAGEMENT ISSUES: NATIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORIES

5.1 The Bureau agreed with the view that as a result of the Kyoto Protocol, IPCC tasks in the matter of National Greenhouse Gas Inventories were likely to increase. There was also a need to re-examine the IPCC/OECD/IEA Programme on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, for re-prioritization and additions, particularly on matters related to land use change and monitoring/verification. Also, more interaction between the IPCC efforts and the UN FCCC operational experience is necessary for the further development of the methodology.

5.2 In addition, questions of funding and the eventual transfer of the programme to the UN FCCC Bodies need to be addressed. The Technical Support Unit of Working Group I would prepare a paper for the next Bureau session on the issue.

6. LONG-TERM OBSERVATIONS OF THE CLIMATE SYSTEM

6.1 The Director of the Department of Global Climate Observing System/WMO, Dr. Thomas W. Spence, briefed the Bureau on his department's activities related to the observations of the climate system. It may be recalled that the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the UN FCCC has been requested by the Conference of the Parties (COP)/FCCC to consider the adequacy of the issue, with the assistance of the FCCC Secretariat and in consultation with the IPCC, and to report to the Fourth Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN FCCC (COP-4).

6.2 The Bureau agreed that, if requested, it could review the document being prepared by the WMO under the aegis of the Climate Agenda for presentation to COP-4. The Chairman of the IPCC would emphasize the importance of maintaining and improving the climate observing system in his remarks to COP-4.

6.3 The representative of the WMO informed the Bureau that efforts to collect and archive past climate data in many stations over the globe forms an important part of the World Climate Programme activities.

7. TAR SYNTHESIS REPORT

7.1 The Chairman invited discussion on the issue of the approval/acceptance of the report underlying the Summary for Policymakers. The Bureau deferred the matter to a future session.

8. SCHEDULE OF THE TAR SCOPING MEETING AND THE FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE IPCC

8.1 Because of the overwhelming response from governments and organizations to the IPCC invitation to nominate Lead/Contributing Authors and Review Editors, the Bureau of the Working Groups would require more time to complete their selection. As a result, the TAR Scoping Meeting which was scheduled for 11-14 May 1998 in Kathmandu was rescheduled for 29 June to 1 July 1998. The Secretary would arrange for a venue.

8.2 The Bureau agreed on the dates of the Fourteenth Session of the IPCC and associated sessions as follows:

28 September 1998	Seventeenth Session of the Bureau
29-30 September 1998	Sessions of Working Groups I, II and III, two meeting in parallel sessions at a time
1-3 October 1998	Fourteenth Session of the IPCC.

The Secretary would arrange for a venue.

9. IPCC CONTINUING WORK PROGRAMME AND THE 1999 BUDGET ESTIMATE

9.1 The Bureau requested Mr. D. Reifsnyder (USA) and Dr. L.G. Meira Filho (Brazil) to serve as Co-Chairmen of the IPCC Financial Task Team. The other members of the team would be designated at the next session.

9.2 A first-cut estimate of CHF 6,547,200 for 1999 was presented by the Secretary. The Bureau suggested that a budget for the entire TAR period be attempted so donor governments could anticipate the levels of their possible contributions for the period.

9.3 A question was raised as to whether some assistance could be made available from the IPCC Trust Fund to the Working Group Vice-Chairmen from the developing/transitional economy countries.

10. POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE IPCC PROCEDURES

10.1 The proposals for editorial and other amendments would be circulated to governments for comments in 2-3 weeks.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 The Bureau was informed that (i) the secondment from UNEP to the IPCC Secretariat was still pending, (ii) the IPCC Workshop on Adaptation to Climate Variability and Change would be held in San Jose, Costa Rica from 30 March to 1 April 1998 with the kind co-sponsorship of the Governments of Canada and Costa Rica and (iii) the Experts Meeting on Risk management would be hosted by Canada on 30 April - 1 May 1998 in Toronto.

12. TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

The Sixteenth Session of the Bureau would take place in Switzerland on Thursday, 2 July 1998. The venue would be announced by the Secretary as soon as possible.

13. CLOSING OF THE SESSION

The session closed at 1745 hours. The list of participants is attached in Appendix B.