

IPCC PRESS RELEASE

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IPCC completes review of processes and procedures

Over the past two years, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) undertook a complete review of its processes and procedures – effectively the IPCC’s “constitution”. Decisions on governance and management, conflict of interest, and procedures were taken by a meeting of the Panel, the IPCC’s governing body, at its 35th session in Geneva on 6-9 June 2012. The Panel also adopted a communications strategy.

The decisions taken in Geneva complete the process of implementation of a set of recommendations issued in August 2010 by the InterAcademy Council (IAC), the group created by the world's science academies to provide advice to international bodies. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and IPCC Chair Rajendra Pachauri jointly asked the IAC to undertake an independent review of IPCC processes and procedures in March 2010. The decision documents are posted on the IPCC website www.ipcc.ch.

The decisions taken in Geneva in June include:

- adoption of a communications strategy governing how the IPCC communicates with policy-makers, other stakeholders and the media, based on guidance agreed by the IPCC at its 33rd session in Abu Dhabi in May 2011;
- further steps to implement the Conflict of Interest policy approved in Abu Dhabi and at the 34th session of the IPCC in Kampala in November 2011;
- revisions to procedures for electing the IPCC’s Bureau – the Chair, IPCC Vice-Chairs, Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (TFI) and the Vice-Chairs of the Working Groups – including strengthening the representation of Southwest Pacific states;
- further clarification of the functions of the IPCC Secretariat and of the Technical Support Units (TSUs) that support the Working Groups, TFI and Synthesis Report, and
- approval of mostly editorial revisions to procedures agreed in Kampala.

“These latest changes further strengthen IPCC operations as it prepares to release its Fifth Assessment Report in 2013 and 2014. With the completion of the review, the IPCC can now focus fully on its mandate to assess in a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of the risks of climate change, its potential impacts, and options for adaptation and mitigation,” IPCC Chair Rajendra Pachauri said.

The IPCC’s 32nd session in Busan, Republic of Korea, in October 2010, adopted most of the IAC recommendations, and set up Task Groups to work on their implementation. The bulk of the work was completed for approval at the IPCC’s 33rd and 34th sessions. Decisions at these meetings covered a strengthening of the IPCC procedures including the review process for IPCC reports, the use of non-peer-reviewed literature, the selection of authors, and the treatment of uncertainty. Other decisions involved the creation of an Executive Committee to strengthen IPCC governance between Panel sessions, and the limitation of the term of office of the Chair, IPCC Vice-Chairs and Co-Chairs to one term – usually the timeframe of one assessment.

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For documents approved at the 35th session of the IPCC, go to:

http://www.ipcc.ch/scripts/_session_template.php?page=_35ipcc.htm

For a summary of results of the Review of IPCC Processes and Procedures, go to:

http://www.ipcc.ch/organization/organization_review.shtml