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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPCC CONFLICT OF INTEREST (COI) POLICY

Report of the Chair of the COI Committee

(Submitted by the IPCC Secretariat)

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At its 35th Session (Geneva, 6-9 June 2012) the Panel approved the Method of Working of the IPCC COI Committee. In the margins of the 35th Session the Second Meeting of the COI Committee was held, which was conducted over two evening sessions on 7 and 8 June 2012. Upon receipt of the first round of COI disclosure forms of the IPCC Bureau and Task Force Bureau (TFB) members, the Committee at its Second Meeting discussed how to facilitate the improved implementation of the IPCC COI Policy, which is based on voluntary disclosure of information relevant to a discussion of real or perceived potential conflicts of interest. To make the process more effective, it was agreed that the Chair would send a letter to the thirteen elected members of the Executive Committee (ExCom) who serve on the COI Committee, requesting them to update their COI forms by providing more detailed information, if any, on their relationships and activities that might be conceived as potential conflicts of interest.

At its Third Meeting, which was held in-person in Geneva on 1 March 2013, the Committee agreed that in accordance with paragraph 4 of the Implementation Procedures of the IPCC COI Policy, stipulating that all IPCC Bureau and TFB members will inform the Secretariat annually of any changes provided in their previously submitted COI form, the Chair would send a similar letter as was sent to the ExCom members, to all Bureau and TFB members requesting them to provide additional information on their COI forms. Consequently the Committee reviewed the first round of 45 forms submitted by the Bureau and TFB members, while appreciating that 100% compliance was achieved. All forms were found in order and no conflict of interest was found. There was however one case that needed further examination by the Committee and the Chair was requested to write a letter to the Bureau member to provide more detailed information. At its Fourth and Fifth Meetings, which were conducted as teleconferences on 8 May 2013 and 10 July 2013 respectively, the Committee examined the more detailed information submitted by the Bureau member and concluded that the Bureau member had no conflict of interest based on the information provided.

At its Third Meeting the Committee took note of the annual reports on COI activities submitted by the Co-Chairs of the three Working Groups and the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories in accordance with paragraph 11 of the Implementation Procedures of the IPCC COI Policy. One of the Co-Chairs of the Task Force expressed the hope to receive elaborated COI forms from the Task Force authors.

The Panel should be informed that the legal expert appointed by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to serve on the COI Committee resigned from her function by e-mail message to the Chair dated 7 June 2012. Despite repeated requests for a replacement, WMO has not yet appointed another legal expert.

The Panel should furthermore be informed that the COI Committee has welcomed the initiative of the IPCC Secretary to issue the three members of the COI Expert Advisory Group (EAG), who were jointly selected by the Secretary-General of WMO and the Executive Director of UNEP, with a contract for the period of one year per 1 April 2013. The Chair of the COI Committee has indicated that it would be useful to meet the EAG members in person to discuss future cooperation. So far however there was no need to request the EAG for advice on COI issues.

The next meeting of the COI Committee will be held in the margins of the 37th Panel Session (Batumi, 14-18 October 2013) during two evening sessions on 14 and 16 October 2013, during which the annual updates of the COI forms submitted by the Bureau and TFB members will be reviewed.

The Panel may wish to welcome this report.