



WMO

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PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH ASSESSMENT REPORT

Special Report on Climate Change and Water

(Submitted by the Co-Chairs of Working Group II)

SPECIAL REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND WATER **Submitted by the Co-Chairs of Working Group II**

Background

In Decision 8 of the 19th Session, the Panel asked the TSUs of Working Groups I and II, in consultation with Working Group III, to prepare a scoping paper for a possible Special Report on Climate Change and Water, the latter to be complete by the end of 2005. However, this issue needs to be considered in the context of the related decision to develop a decision-making procedure for Special Reports and Technical Papers (Decision 4 at the 18th Session of the Panel held in Wembley in September 2001).

2. The need for consistency between the two decisions was, therefore, considered further by the 27th session of the IPCC Bureau, Geneva, 7-8 August 2002. Moreover, taking into consideration that there are at least 17 international organisations involved in water issues, the Bureau agreed that it would be necessary to confer with a broader cross-section of the water community before the IPCC could decide upon options for dealing with the water issue. There was a consensus that an expert meeting should proceed as soon as Working Group II, with assistance from Working Groups I and III, could organise it. The aim of the meeting would be to advise whether the IPCC should:

- (a) either prepare a Special Report on Climate Change and Water (noting the criteria implicit in the decision tree in the “Decision Paper”); or
- (b) treat it as a theme/cross-cutting issue in the 4th Assessment Report; or,
- (c) give it no special priority.

Expert meeting to consult on Water and Climate Change

3. Accordingly, Working Group II organised an Expert Meeting on Climate Change and Water, which was held on 11-12 November, 2002, at WMO in Geneva. The aims of the meeting were: a) to consult with as many as possible of the international organisations with interests in the water and with key experts, and b) to formulate a recommendation, for consideration by the Bureau at its 28th session in December 2002, as to the most appropriate way for IPCC to deal with the issue of climate change and water over the next assessment cycle, and to submit the Bureau’s recommendation to the Plenary for consideration.

4. Twenty-six international organisations were invited, of which 14 were able to attend together with 11 experts. Some organisations that were unable to attend provided written statements to the meeting.

Report to Bureau from the meeting

5. The view of organisations and experts at the meeting was that there would be little value in an IPCC Special Report in 2005 or 2006. The reasons given for this were that:

- (a) The Dialogue on Water will publish a comprehensive report on climate and water in 2003, which will be based on information contained in the IPCC Third Assessment; and,
- (b) Any further report produced before completion of the Fourth Assessment would be likely soon to become outdated.

6. It was considered preferable that water be given a more integrated and expanded treatment within the Fourth Assessment than it was in the TAR. It was also considered that the audience (e.g. water managers and users) would benefit if this material were also reported in a Technical Paper derived from the Fourth Assessment and produced in about 2008.

Recommendation by Bureau

7. The 27th Session of IPCC Bureau considered the above report and agreed to recommend, for the reasons given above, that Plenary should:

- (a) review its previous decision to request a scoping paper for a Special Report in 2005;
- (b) ask Working Group Co-Chairs and their Bureaux to consider how best to enable a more integrated and enhanced treatment of the issue of climate change and water in the preparation of the Fourth Assessment; and,
- (c) subsequently, when the outline of the Fourth Assessment is presented for its approval, consider the additional value of a Technical Paper on Water to be completed in about 2008. In order to progress this, it is suggested that a scoping paper for a Technical Paper be prepared for Plenary at its next meeting, and that this can be then considered alongside the proposed content of AR4. Since water is one of the proposed themes for AR4, it is logical that the anchor-person(s) for this theme lead the writing of the scoping paper. Joint anchor-persons from developed and developing countries would be appointed by the Bureau of Working Group II, in consultation with the other Working Groups.