



WMO

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE



UNEP

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL
ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE OUTPUT FROM THE AR4 SYR SCOPING MEETING

Geneva, 6-8 July 2004

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FROM THE AR4 SYR SCOPING MEETING
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GOVERNMENTS:

Australia
Austria
Canada
China, People's Republic of
Denmark
Germany
Mauritius
Japan
The Netherlands
New Zealand
Pakistan
Romania
Slovenia
Sudan
Sweden
Switzerland
Uzbekistan
Zimbabwe

EXPERTS:

John Church
Bob Reinstein

LATE COMMENTS RECEIVED:

Morocco

AUSTRALIA

Australia broadly supports the proposal recognising that it has incorporated the views of participants at the meeting held in Geneva in July. Of particular importance to Australia is that the proposal:

- supports commencement of work on a synthesis report at the earliest possible time;
- supports a format that maximises the effectiveness of communicating the key messages of the AR4 to decision makers; and
- supports a framework which addresses important and complex cross-cutting issues. We note that while many cross-cutting issues have been identified as topics to be covered it is not clear how issues such as 'current scientific knowledge and the ultimate objective of the convention' and 'uncertain and unresolved issues' will be addressed.

We look forward to continued development of this vital tool for policy-makers.

AUSTRIA

1) The output reflects well the results of the meeting in Geneva (6-8 July 2004). There are only some editorial comments (see below) with the exception of reference to the format of questions. It is expected that this issue will be addressed in the oral report on the meeting. The broad support to prepare an AR4 SYR seems also to be worth noting.

2) Editorial comments

- Second line of heading: substitute "for" by "from".
- "Background, para 2": Combine first and second sentence by substituting "The output of the scoping meeting" by "and"
- "I.Scope", para 2: Substitute "report" by "SYR".
- "I Scope", para 4: Substitute "SYR publication" by "SYR".
- "I. Scope", para 4: Insert "a" before "glossary".
- "I. Scope", para 5: Insert "largely" before "self-contained".

CANADA

The Government of Canada thanks the Chair of the IPCC for circulating the output from the scoping meeting of the AR4 Synthesis report. As we have stated before, we fully support the preparation of a Synthesis Report for the Fourth Assessment. We encourage the Chair to prepare a paper that will facilitate the IPCC 22nd Plenary reaching a decision on this topic.

Specific comments on the report of the scoping meeting:

- We understand that the Process Breakout Group felt that it was important for the SyR to equally discuss both uncertainties and robust findings. We understand that there needs to be a balance between the discussion of uncertainty and robust findings and think this could be framed under a discussion of irreversibility. We suggest you include the following under the introduction section:
 - Uncertainty should be discussed in the background material, as well as under each issue.
 - The degree of robustness of the findings, using consistent language, also needs to be highlighted.
- Under Process/Management of the SyR, the need for considerable technical support is very valid. However, the option of the WG TSUs supporting this process is not feasible. The WG co-chairs have made it clear that they do not have the staff to support the SyR. Support from the Chair's office (as in-kind support from the Government of India) makes practical sense as he will be the one leading the core writing team. If the TSU is to be housed with the IPCC Secretariat in Geneva, a proposal will need to be submitted to the Financial Task Team (FiTT) regarding the cost of hiring support staff.
- Regarding management of the SyR, Canada supports the Chair's document as it is currently written. We feel that the Chair should be given the flexibility to choose the core writing team.

The Government of Canada would also like to take this opportunity to comment on the current list of topics. We feel that this outline looks more like a summary of the 3 working group reports rather than a true synthesis of their findings. The current list of topics is actually a much narrower subset of the Chair's former list and are very working group specific. In addition, the cross cutting themes were treated better in the Chair's previous document. It is currently not clear where the synthetic statements on the cross cutting themes will appear in the SyR.

We would also like to see the issues of irreversibility and time lags highlighted in the list of topics. We feel that as this is the fourth assessment report, there are likely to be more confident scientific conclusions that should guide policy-makers regarding the timing for a variety of actions and areas where we may face inevitable change over the next few decades due to inertia in the climate system.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Referring to the letter from the secretary of the IPCC, dated 26 July 2004, which requested comments on the proposal for a synthesis report of the IPCC AR4 based on the output from the scoping meeting 6-8 July 2004, Geneva, the Chinese government would like to reiterate that its fundamental position on this issue remains in effect, and that it continues to doubt the added value of a possible AR4 synthesis report.

However, the Chinese government would like to express its support to the decision of the IPCC 21st session, establishing a process that would enable the Panel at its 22nd Session to take decisions on matters relevant to the preparation of the AR4 SYR. Please see the following comments and suggestions as China's contribution to facilitating further discussion at the IPCC 22nd Session.

I. Scope

Generally speaking, this part follows the IPCC procedures and defines the scope of the IPCC AR4 SYR. Therefore, We don't have comments on this part.

II. Content

We appreciate that a possible synthesis report will adopt a "themes" style, which will allow comprehensive description around a particular issue. However, we have some special comments on the contents of these topics.

1. On topic "Observed changes"

As regards this topic, it is suggested to change it to "Observed climate and its effects".

2. On topic "Climate change and its consequences in the near and long term under different baseline scenarios"

(1) As regards this topic, it is suggested to delete "baseline".

(2) As regards first bullet "Key vulnerabilities", it is suggested to change it to "Integrated vulnerabilities".

(3) As regards second bullet "Hazards and risk", it is suggested to delete it in order to avoid some overlap with last bullet.

(4) As regards last bullet "Risk of abrupt or irreversible changes", it is suggested to change it to "Assessing risk of abrupt or irreversible changes at different levels".

3. On topic "Adaptation and mitigation options and responses"

(1) As regards this topic, it is suggested to change it to "Adaptation and mitigation options and responses at global and regional levels".

(2) Under this topic, it is suggested to add an additional bullet "Special needs of developing countries".

4. On topic "Long-term stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations"

(1) As regards this topic, it is suggested to change it to "Sustainable development under different climate scenarios".

(2) As regards first bullet, it is suggested to change it to "Sustainable development possibility at different levels".

(3) As regards second bullet, it is suggested to change it to “Costs, benefits and avoided damage at global, regional and national level”.

(4) Under this topic, it is suggested to add an additional bullet “Regional equity and sustainable development”.

III. Process

We think this process could ensure the implementation of those principles for compiling a possible SYR.

DENMARK

Denmark appreciates the progress in scoping of the AR4 SYR.

The proposed outline seems to cover all relevant issues, but the extent of the SPM text is substantially shorter than the TAR SYR, depending however on the number of tables, graphs and figures. As the issue of climate change has not become simpler, on the contrary much more is known about the complexities and details now, the extent of the SPM may need to be somewhat enlarged. The extent must, however also be manageable by the Panel.

Certain subparagraphs cover several topics. As an example, “Past Climate Change” covers the observed changes over the time of instrumental record, as well as longer-term changes from the paleo-record, including some regional details. Hence, overall, there might be a need to subdivide this section.

It is a question whether the separation of the observed changes from their causes and the mechanisms of the climate system is best dealt with separately (as in paragraph 2 and 3) or integrated with the description of observed changes.

Also, the present and future direct effects of increased CO₂-levels, on calcifiers and ocean biology, need a home, presumably under paragraph 2.

Hazards and risks deserve special attention, in order to stress that in many aspects, the Climate Change problem might not be about our ability to predict better and better what changes may follow from definite scenarios, but rather about our capability to quantify probabilities of certain unfavourable changes, and their risk of occurrence. Ideally, the hazards and risks should be systematically related to the level and rate of stabilisation, to improve policymakers ability to consider what constitutes “dangerous levels” of change.

The distribution of the topics on the two issues “Hazards and risks” and “Risks of abrupt or irreversible changes” is not clear from the outline.

“Mitigation – past experience and current options and policies” need to be complemented with mitigation options in the middle to long-term, including scenarios for primary energy and technologies, which would presumably be covered in the last paragraph of section 5.

The phenomenon of learning by doing, needs thorough discussion, and economic estimates must be discussed from the angle of whether or not this was taken explicitly into account in the modelling (in paragraph 5). Costs should be shown as graphs over time, rather than as Net present values, to be useful for policy makers.

Overall, the outline seems to be OK, but a scoping of what will be covered in each paragraph should be made before the final decision on the outline.

GERMANY

The government of Germany thanks the Secretary of the IPCC for providing the proposal for scope, content, and process for a Synthesis Report of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) and welcomes the opportunity to express views on this document.

As expressed in the German Views on the Scoping of the Synthesis Report of the Fourth Assessment Report (29 June 2004), Germany sees a Synthesis Report as a substantial part of the Fourth Assessment Report, in order to maximise its usability for policymakers and other decision-makers as well as the general interested public.

Therefore, we welcome the proposal elaborated at the scoping meeting on the Synthesis Report of the Fourth Assessment Report and consider it to be a very useful basis for a decision of the IPCC Panel at its 22nd session on all matters relevant to the preparation of the AR 4 Synthesis Report, in particular on its scope, content, and process for its preparation.

We fully agree with the proposal with regard to scope and process. It is in accordance with the IPCC Procedures, that, in particular, states that the SyR should address "policy-relevant, but policy-neutral questions". We welcome the proposal for a time schedule that would permit starting writing the SYR at an earlier point in time compared to the TAR SYR, to avoid overstretching the work in hand.

With regard to the content, we consider the proposed structure as a very useful basis for a decision at the 22nd session of the IPCC Panel. It allows the formulation of specific policy-relevant but policy-neutral questions and the appropriate incorporation of the cross-cutting themes. Germany considers that the format of questions and answers has proven successful for the TAR SyR and should be aimed for again for the AR4.

Germany would like to provide a few specific comments with regard to some details, as the basic structure as outlined by the five topics is supported. However, the following aspects should be clarified:

- The assessment of consequences of climate change for different baseline scenarios could additionally refer to reasons of concern such as those identified in the TAR.
- The assessment of inter-relationships between adaptation and mitigation options in chapter 4 should additionally include the relationship with other environmental issues and with sustainable development, as is addressed by question 8 in the IPCC TAR.
- The synthesis of the assessment of implications of different stabilisation levels in chapter 5 should take into account the sectors and topics listed in chapter 3, including the reasons of concern identified in the TAR.
- The discussion of scenarios and timing of options should in particular be focused on which mitigation options can contribute to avoiding certain levels of climate change, and the timing issues involved, in particular taking into account inertia both in the climate and the social systems.
- Progress in knowledge as compared to the TAR should be made visible.

JAPAN

1. Japan highly appreciates the output from the scoping meeting which will be a good basis for a decision by the Panel at its 22nd Session. Based on the proposal from the scoping meeting, Japan strongly supports the idea that the Panel should make a decision to prepare the AR4 SYR at the 22nd Session.
2. As for the scope, Japan agrees that the primary audience for the AR4 SYR would be policy makers. However, we believe that it is extremely important that the AR4 SYR should be also shared by a wide range of stakeholders in the society to improve the public awareness of climate change, which will be a most critical basis for the promotion of the climate change policies. Therefore, due attention should be paid so that the AR4 SYR will be something which can be easily understood by broad stakeholders.
3. As for the content, the proposed structure of the AR4 SYR is fine as it is simple, policy relevant and has a clear story line. The AR4 SYR should be kept relatively short, while effective guidance should be provided for the readers to access detailed information.
4. As for the process, Japan believes that it should be transparent, efficient and in accordance with the existing IPCC Procedures. In this sense, Japan can generally support the process proposed in the paper.

MAURITIUS

There is nothing much to add and the members, attending the meeting, need to be congratulated for their excellent work.

The Republic of Mauritius fully endorsed the structure of AR4 SYR, as presented by the chairman of the IPCC.

THE NETHERLANDS

As for the content we broadly agree on the proposed outline. There are, however, a few remarks:

- * In our view topic nr. 3 lacks a paragraph generally describing Climate Change Scenarios.

- * Also we would propose a final paragraph under topic 3 describing "decision making related to scientific uncertainties". In our opinion the analyses of scientific uncertainties need to be more unified.

Concerning the process we have one comment:

- * The sentence "Review Editors would assist the writing team", should be changed into: "Review editors will critically supervise the review process and report to the plenary in writing."

NEW ZEALAND

- New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to provide its views on the Chair's Proposal for a Synthesis Report (SYR) of the IPCC's 4th Assessment Report (AR4). We wish to congratulate the Chair for organising a successful meeting and for producing a clear proposal for further comment and consideration by governments.
- New Zealand strongly supports production of a SYR. We believe the topic areas suggested in the proposal allow the concise presentation of findings in a policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive way. The SYR will add substantial value to the information provided by the IPCC by making the information from the individual Working Groups (WGs) accessible to audiences which tend not to make use of the full WG reports.

Scope

- We believe that a short and concise report is more likely to meet the interests of relevant audiences than an extended report. We believe that it would be preferable to produce a SYR that consists only of a summary report, of about 25 pages in text including all figures and tables, plus glossary, index, acronyms and list of reviewers, but no longer underlying report.
- We do not believe that including maps in an appendix to the SYR, as suggested in the notes on scope, would be a manageable process or lead to a desirable outcome. We would prefer the SYR to not reproduce regional information in detail, but instead to clearly cross-reference to the underlying WG reports whenever detailed regional information is available in the WG reports (see further comments below on Content).

Content

- We agree broadly with the topics and their sequence as outlined in the scoping paper. However we do not see a role for WG III information to contribute to either topics (1) "Observed changes", or (2) "Causes of change". For topic (3) "Climate change and its consequences in the near and long term under different baseline scenarios", based on the bullet points provided, we assume that the contribution from WG III would be limited to describing possible baselines rather than discuss specific mitigation issues, which are addressed in topics (4) and (5).
- The scoping paper suggests a "user guide" for regions and sectors to be part of the Annexes. We believe that any user guide, pointing to underlying sources of information and how they have been used, should be covered in the chairman's foreword or introduction. We do not believe that including detailed regional or sectoral information in the SYR in an Annex is feasible and would be counterproductive to the report being short and concise; instead the SYR should provide clear links to such information in the underlying WG reports.
- It would be helpful to have an intelligent indexing system that allows readers to readily access any available regional information in the underlying WG reports. It might be worthwhile for the Secretariat to investigate the possibility of developing an intelligent electronic search tool for the web-publication of the AR4, which could allow complex searches for regional information across the WG reports and SYR. We believe that this option could meet the demand for regional information without overburdening the SYR.

Process

- We support the general method for choosing the core and extended writing teams for the SYR. However we would like to suggest that Review Editors of the WG reports should also be considered as part of the pool of authors available for writing the SYR. The overview the Review Editors will necessarily develop through their work on the WG reports will make them invaluable authors in the difficult task of condensing key information in a balanced way for the SYR, and will broaden the pool of authors available to work on the SYR while the WG reports are still being finalised.
- We see some risks in choosing the authors for the core writing team as early as July 2005, because at this stage the structure, content, and associated workload of the chapters of the individual WG reports are not yet well defined. It might be beneficial to choose authors only after the third lead author meeting, when the WG report structures and content, as well as individual capacities and work loads of authors, have become clearer.
- We are concerned by the proposal that lead author meetings be used as opportunities to facilitate inputs from the WG lead author teams to the SYR. Such a process would risk pre-judging the content of the WG by expectations of what the SYR would or should contain. Input to the SYR from lead author meetings should only occur at the 4th lead author meetings, when the overall structure and content of the WG reports has undergone a robust assessment and two rounds of expert peer-review.
- We agree with the Chair's observation that preparation of the SYR will require considerable technical support, including for the management of the review process, editing and layout of the report, and welcome the Chair's offer to provide support for this process from his office. We would like to suggest, however, that the management of the review process, including choice of appropriate illustrations and figures, must also make use of the expertise and experience resting with the TSUs. This is necessary to ensure consistency and balance between the SYR and the underlying WG reports. We therefore suggest that while management of editing, layout, and input to graphic design suggestions could be very usefully supported through the Chair's office, there should be a clear role and mandate for the three WG TSUs in the review part of the SYR.
- Having considered the work loads for authors, co-chairs and TSUs associated with production of the WG reports, we note that the proposed completion date for the SYR poses the risk of creating very high work loads for authors in the second half of 2006 and early 2007. During this time, the individual WGs would need to address government and expert review comments on WG reports, write the SPM and Technical Summaries, and begin writing the SYR. We suggest that in case of a conflict of schedules or work overload for either authors, co-chairs or the TSUs involved in managing the review process of the WG reports and SYR, any work needed to ensure the timely and quality production of the WG reports should take precedence over production of the SYR. The resource implications for TSUs of assisting in the production of the SYR need to be carefully considered and agreed to by the co-chairs who have responsibility for the TSUs. If either the authors, co-chairs or the TSUs cannot support the workload involved in the proposed schedule, we would suggest delaying completion of the SYR until early 2008.
- In summary, New Zealand supports the production of a SYR as part of the AR4, with some modifications and clarifications to the Chair's proposal, and hopes that the Panel will be able to come to an agreement on the production of the SYR.

PAKISTAN

Topic 5: Long term stabilization of green house gas concentration : This topic requires to be clarified as there are more than one green house gases, which effects the climate while the topic indicates the long term stabilization of only green house gas concentrations.

This may please be treated as an interim reply final reply will be submitted after perusal & approved of competent authority please .

ROMANIA

We would like to inform you that we agree with the structure proposed for the AR4 SYR.

SLOVENIA

Comments

The above mentioned output reflects very well the discussion at and conclusions from that meeting. To my opinion, the wording is in many cases improvement of the papers “A logical structure for the AR4 Synthesis Report” and “Process Breakout Session” adopted in Geneva (e.g. the paragraph under **Foreword**, page 1; text under **Introduction**, page 2; text in bullet 3 under **Topics**, page 2).

I have, however, few remarks.

In the first paragraph under **I. SCOPE** (page 1) I propose the following wording for the last sentence but one: It would be written in an accessible, “non technical style suitable for policymakers and address a broad range of policy-relevant questions, but in a policy-neutral way”. Rationale: I believe that these questions are not necessarily policy-neutral, however, IPCC must deal with them in a policy-neutral way. (in the paper from the meeting it is written: policy-neutral issues.)

In point 4. under Topics (page 2) I suggest to insert the word “environment” in the 3rd bullet so that it would be more in line with the paper from the meeting: Inter-relationships between adaptation and mitigation options: timing, technology, development, environment and integration issues.

SUDAN

We studied your proposal thoroughly and it is an excellent one. It seems that you have exerted a lot of effort till you reached this stage. Comments are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Background | Fully acceptable |
| 2. Scope | Fully acceptable |
| 3. Content | Acceptable with a minor comment about adaptation and Mitigation and sustainable development. Although it is embedded in chapters 4 and 5 but not clearly spelled out which needs to be explicitly mentioned |
| 4. Process | Fully acceptable |

Thanks once again for your tremendous efforts hoping that the panel at its 22nd session will take the appropriate decisions to proceed ahead with AR4 SYR.

SWEDEN

We would like to stress the importance of having a product which is easy to understand also for experts who are not experts in a scientific meaning, but experts in other fields such as policy makers, consultants, business managers etc.

We find the proposed outline more or less appropriate and we just have a few comments:

Scope:

We prefer a shorter report and rather 5 pages SPM and 30 pages for the longer report.

Content:

We would like to stress that the SYR should only include what is new since TAR.

The cross-cutting perspective should be the base for the synthesis.

Topics:

1. Observed changes

Effects of past climate change on natural systems and society is not so much covered in earlier IPCC reports. It would be valuable to have a better knowledge of that.

2. Causes of change

Natural and antropogenic factors could be hold short with a reference to TAR.

Feedbacks are very important and should be elaborated more on.

3. Climate change and its consequences

We find the link to the Millenium goals very important.

Economic impact should be included in the regional implications.

SWITZERLAND

1. The Swiss Government supports the elaboration of a Synthesis Report (SYR) of the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report. We consider that the SYR will be a very valuable part of the AR4.
2. The IPCC Procedures contain appropriate provisions defining the scope and content of SYRs that is to : "synthesize and integrate material contained within the IPCC Assessments Reports and Special Reports". This wording provides the IPCC with a clear mandate to elaborate the SYR.
3. We agree with the basic steps (scope, content and process) for the SYR of the AR4 as proposed by the Chairman of the IPCC in its conclusions from the scoping meeting on these matters held in Geneva last July.
4. We propose to consider ways to address in the SYR :
 - Costs of mitigation options and responses (short, medium and long term), including no-regrets measures
 - Probabilities and uncertainties in projections.
5. We also would like that the IPCC clarifies how the process will be managed, in particular what will the role of the Secretariat in Geneva and the one of the TSUs.

UZBEKISTAN

The Republic of Uzbekistan considers a draft document related with preparations of the AR4 SYR and has agrees on the general scope, content and process for preparation of the Synthesis Report of the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report.

Uzbekistan would like to recommend to IPCC Working Group and Writing Team that the AR4 SYR would be written in accessible style suitable for policymakers and stakeholders and address a broad range of public.

I am looking forward that above proposals will be accept into attention at preparation of revised scoping document and submission it at IPCC scoping meeting at its 22nd Session.

ZIMBABWE

It is my observation that adaptation issues may be dealt with from a general perspective. Adaptation issues are better dealt with on a regional basis as the adaptive capacities differ from region to region and the fact that the types of extreme events, their magnitude of impact and preparedness differ from region to region. Already the developing world is suffering from climatic extremes caused by climate variability and change. So adaptation should be given precedence and a message clearly put across for policymakers to appreciate, understand and advise them to take appropriate action, particularly in Africa.

When looking at long-term stabilisation of greenhouse gases, it should also be emphasised that some countries are net sinks of GHGs and these countries should not be lumped together with net emitters. In this regard, conditions of stabilisation of these gases should differ depending on the status of the country in respect of this issue.

The selection of the Core Writing Team should have a geographical balance without fail in order to get balanced, practical and region specific information that has meaning to the policy/decision makers in various affected countries.

Otherwise the proposal looks quite comprehensive.

JOHN CHURCH - EXPERT

My only substantial comment on the report relates to the length of the proposed Synthesis Report.

For the longer report, the notes specify a 30-50 page report PLUS figures and tables. I clearly recall that there were specific arguments that it should be 30-50 pages INCLUDING figures and tables. I do not believe this issue of length was resolved.

BOB REINSTEIN – EXPERT

I have looked at the paper sent to me as the output of the July scoping meeting. It seems to be missing some critical elements that I thought there was general agreement to include, in particular:

- 1) The chairman's foreward was also to describe the IPCC itself, what it is and what it is not (e.g., in general does not do independent research but assesses the published literature), what the synthesis report is and what it is not (e.g., is not a peer-reviewed document prepared by the experts but a selection from such documents approved by government representatives in their government not scientific capacity). These distinctions are important and often overlooked or misrepresented by the media.
- 2) The introduction was to discuss not only knowledge gaps but also uncertainties (i.e., the science is never "settled" but is a constant process of exploration and testing by experience). Also, timescales, inertia and lags are relevant to climate change and to both mitigation responses and adaptation responses. This could be mentioned in the introduction as well (I see it is scattered over the later sections).
- 3) The emphasis on stabilization of GHG concentrations by having a separate section seems to imply that such stabilization is entirely within the control of humans. This is in fact not yet scientifically established, and is not likely to be, since many factors affect concentrations (including both natural factors and lagged feedback from GHG emissions already in the atmosphere). IPCC should be very careful about placing humans at the center of the universe. Remember the fate of the Ptolemaic model of the solar system.

MOROCCO

1. The AR4 SYR may draw information from other IPCC special and technical paper other than AR4. What about this ??
2. The Review Editors would assist the writing team. I suggest that one or two bureau members from each region assist the writing team as a Review Editors.
3. The time schedule: The SYR and its SPM are separate or unique document?? I suggest to be a unique document.

I suggest also that the adoption and approval of the SYR and its SPM is foreseen in the first quarter of 2008 to allow more time for the circulation and the initiation of the utilisation of the AR4.