

REPORT OF THE
SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE IPCC BUREAU
VIENNA, 28 SEPTEMBER 1998

1. The following abbreviations have been used in this report:

COP	Conference of the Parties to the UN FCCC
FCCC	Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN)
HFCs	Hydrofluorocarbons
GCOS	Global Climate Observing System
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SBSTA	Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice of the COP
SPM	Summary for Policymakers
TAR	Third Assessment Report of the IPCC
UN	United Nations
WG	Working Group of the IPCC.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. The session was opened by the Chairman, Dr. Robert T. Watson, at 0955 hours on Monday, 28 September 1998 in the United Nations Office in Vienna/Vienna Conference Centre. He requested that a minute's silence be observed honouring the memory of Dr. Katsuo Seiki, a Vice-Chairman of the IPCC, whose untimely death the previous month had shocked the members of Bureau and of the Secretariat. He then introduced Prof. Tomihiro Taniguchi who had been named by the Government of Japan to be the Bureau member from Japan.

Approval of the agenda

3. Consideration of the question of HFCs was proposed for the agenda under item 8, IPCC – UN FCCC INTERACTION. With its inclusion, the agenda was approved (see appendix A for the approved agenda).

APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE SIXTEENTH SESSION

4. The Bureau requested the Secretary to introduce two new paragraphs after paragraph 3k as follows:

Crosscutting issues

3l. The Bureau discussed a number of issues having common application to many chapters in the reports of Working Groups II and III in the TAR. It recalled that Dr. Pachauri, Prof. Odingo and the late Dr. Seiki had been working on them. It requested Dr. Pachauri and Prof. Taniguchi to continue to work on the plan to address these issues (see table 1 below) in the TAR.

Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)

3m. The Bureau reviewed the outcome of the SBSTA consideration of GCOS and agreed that there should be a further review by the IPCC at its Fourteenth Session (Vienna, 1-3 October 1998), on the basis of the revised GCOS document, which should be available by then.

5. With these paragraphs, the draft was approved.

TAR SYNTHESIS REPORT

6. The Bureau expressed the view that the Synthesis Report could contain a summary of “key” conclusions from the TAR reports of the Working Groups. This would require much care, however. One method of handling this could be for the Working Groups to include their key conclusions as such in their respective SPMs.

7. The Synthesis Report should be published in the same volume with the Summaries for Policymakers of the Working Groups. (The SPMs will continue to be published in the reports of the Working Groups as in the past.) Some flexibility needs to be maintained with respect to page length at this juncture; 50 pages could be a goal to begin with. The Synthesis Report should be structured around policy-relevant scientific/technical questions.

8. The IPCC should approve the policy-relevant scientific/technical questions. The questions as drafted for the Bureau comments require rewording to remove policy sensitivities and could be clustered according to themes. They could also be ordered according to their importance. Each question may need to be addressed in more than one Working Group and some may not be answerable as yet.

9. The Chairman requested the Bureau to make specific suggestions on the issue of policy-relevant scientific/technical questions.

10. With respect to the process for the acceptance/approval of the Synthesis Report, the Bureau did not reach consensus and could not offer a recommendation to the Chairman to take to the Panel.

IPCC SPECIAL REPORT ON LAND USE, LAND USE CHANGE AND FORESTRY AND CARBON EMISSIONS

11. The IPCC would approve the SPM and accept the underlying report. The title would be changed to the Special Report on Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry, thus conforming it to the SBSTA request. The report would make no policy recommendations.

12. A Steering Committee consisting of the IPCC Chairman, the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups and the proposed Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, and the Co-ordinating Lead Authors would be helpful in overseeing the completion of the report. The report might benefit from having one or more Report Co-ordinators, as was the experience in the case of the Special Report, Aviation and the Global Atmosphere.

PROGRESS ON TAR AND ONGOING WORK

Working Group I

13. The Co-Chairmen reported that 126 Lead Authors/Review Editors from 32 countries (16 of which were developing/transitional economy countries) had been chosen for the WG I TAR report. Of this, 13 were women, 28 were from developing/transitional economy countries and 3 from industry. The number of Lead Authors during the Second Assessment was 88 (2 women, 12 from developing/transitional economy countries, total number of countries 19 of whom 7 were developing/transitional economy countries).

14. The Special Report, Aviation and the Global Atmosphere, was on schedule and slated for completion in March/April 1999. A meeting of Lead Authors to consider comments from the government review would take place in Montreal on 26-28 October 1998.

Working Group II

15. The Co-Chairmen reported that there were 19 chapters in the WG II TAR report with 42 Co-ordinating Lead Authors. A total of 170 Lead Authors had been chosen from 60 countries of whom about 45% were from the developing/transitional economy countries and 23 were women.

16. The Special Report, Methodological and Technological Aspects of Technology Transfer: An Opportunity for Technical Co-operation, was expected to be completed around September 1999. A meeting of Lead Authors was planned for New Delhi on 9-11 December 1998.

Working Group III

17. The Co-Chairmen reported that there were 10 chapters in the WG III TAR report with 112 Lead Authors and Review Editors (4 women, 35% from developing countries and 7% from transitional economy countries) from 40 countries (with 24 developing/transitional economy countries and 3 industries).

18. With respect to the Special Report, Emissions Scenarios, the so-called "open-process" for comments on the scenarios would last until the end of 1998. The expected date of completion of the report was late 1999.

All Working Groups

19. The Bureaux of the Working Groups were still considering additional names for Lead Authors/Review Editors which would be further discussed in the sessions of the Working Groups scheduled to follow on 29-30 September 1998 in Vienna.

20. The question of when Review Editors should start attending the meetings of Lead Authors arose. The Bureau expressed the view that the Review Editor who is also a member of the WG Bureau would be involved ab initio. Other experts chosen as Review Editors should start attending the meetings not later than the meeting of Lead Authors where expert-review comments are addressed. The Review Editors would be expected to attend the sessions of the Working Groups where approval/acceptance occurs. The Review Editors will be listed along with the Co-ordinating Lead/Lead Authors in the beginning of a chapter.

IPCC – OECD MANAGEMENT ISSUE: UNIT ON GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORIES

21. The Bureau noted that since the inception of the efforts by the IPCC to assess/develop methodologies for national greenhouse gas inventories in early 1991, the programme had been hosted, housed and administered by the Environment Directorate of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Funding for the programme had been channelled by the donor governments directly to OECD in the early days and been part of the IPCC budget since 1996. The Environment Directorate and the International Energy Agency (IEA) had also given technical guidance to the programme.

22. The Bureau further noted that the Environment Directorate would carry on the programme until about the middle of 1999. Thus there was a need to find other avenues of continuing the programme.

Possible establishment of an IPCC Task Force for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories

23. The Bureau was informed that Governments had been invited by letter (reference no. 18044/M/IPCC/WGI dated 22 July 1998) for their views on (a) the aims and objectives of the programme and the division of responsibilities between the IPCC and the COP and (b) establishing an IPCC Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. The Governments were also requested to

(a) express their willingness or otherwise of funding and hosting a Technical Support Unit for the potential Task Force and (b) nominate experts for consideration as Chairperson of the Task Force.

24. The Bureau noted that nineteen responses to the letter had been received. It requested the Chairman to establish an Ad Hoc Group at the forthcoming IPCC session to produce a paper for IPCC decision.

IPCC – UN FCCC INTERACTION

25. The Bureau noted that a meeting of the IPCC/FCCC Joint Working Group was scheduled for 1 October 1998. It requested the Chairman to include the following items in the proposed agenda for the meeting:

- * GHG inventories
- * HFCs.

POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO THE IPCC PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

26. The Chairman of the Ad-Hoc Group on Principles and Procedures, Mr. David Warrilow, informed the Bureau that the document on the topic circulated to Governments for consideration at the Fourteenth IPCC Session contained the revisions to the proposed amendments resulting from Governments' comments received as of 21 August 1998. It was decided to continue the discussion at the next session.

OTHER BUSINESS

27. There was none.

TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

28. The Secretary would inform the Bureau of the time and place of the Eighteenth Session as and when the decision is made.

CLOSING OF THE SESSION

29. The session closed at 1850 hours on Monday, 28 September 1998. The list of attendees is attached in appendix B.