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IMPROVING PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING/EIT COUNTRIES IN THE IPCC

Summary and recommendations

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Summary and recommendations

Background

At the 30th Session of IPCC in Antalya, within the framework of the topic “Future Work of IPCC” the IPCC took a decision (Decision 7): “The Panel charges the IPCC Vice-Chairs to carry out over the next six months an assessment of the current shortcomings in involving an adequate number of developing/EIT country scientists and to propose approaches to address this issue.” In order to carry out this assessment, the IPCC Secretariat, in consultation with the IPCC Vice-chairs, conducted a survey on Developing/EIT (economies in transition) country participation in IPCC, summarized Bureau members comments on this issue, and made a statistical analysis of the origin of experts in the past assessment reports. This document summarises these results and proposes appropriate recommendations. Further details (detailed analysis of the survey, Bureau comments, participation statistics) are available in electronic form as document IPCC-XXXI/INF.1.

Introduction: DC/EIT participation in SAR, TAR and AR4

To provide an objective basis for this reflection, an extensive analysis of the number and origin of coordinating lead authors, lead authors and reviewers to the second, third, and fourth assessment reports was conducted by the IPCC Secretariat, in consultation with the IPCC Vice-chairs. The results are summarised below and further details are available in electronic form as document IPCC-XXXI/INF.1.

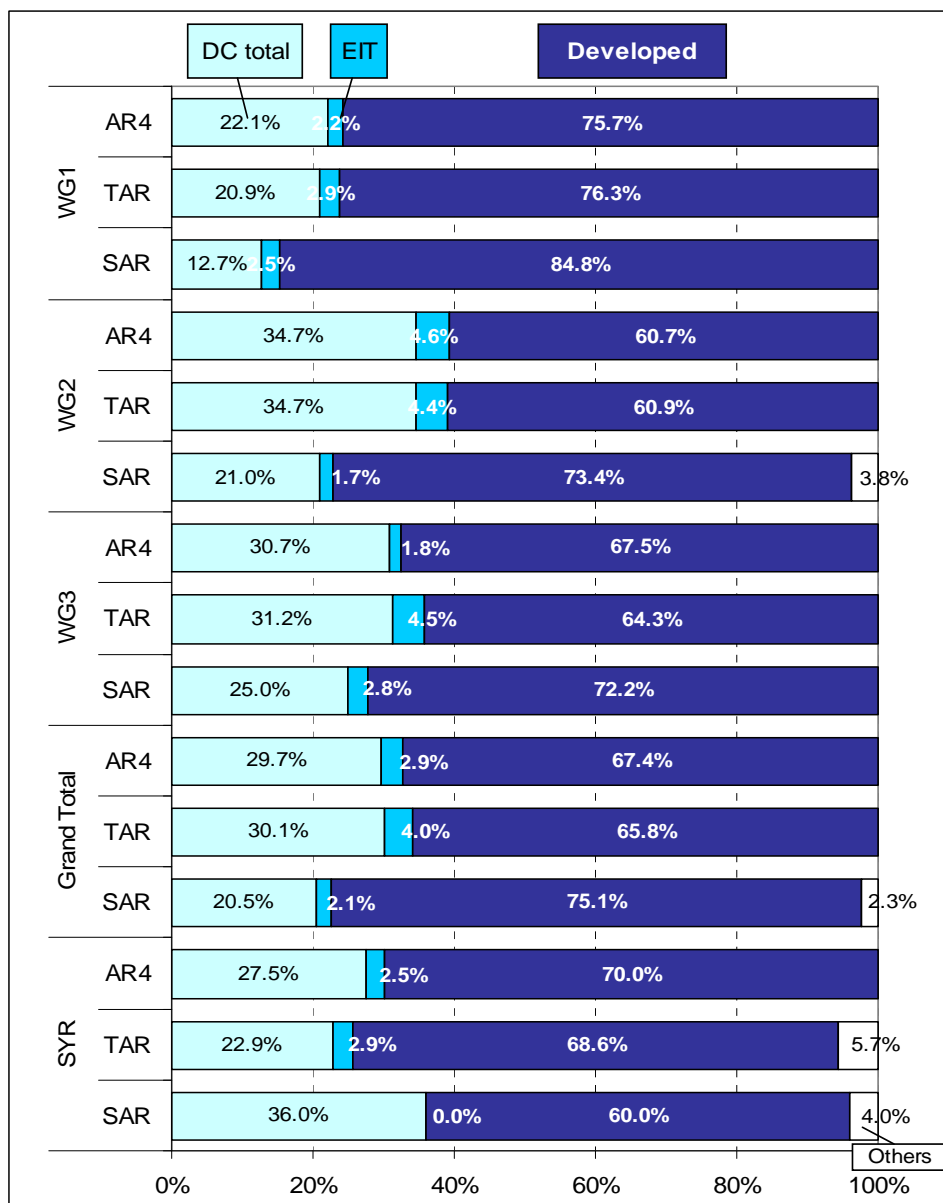


Figure 1: Share¹ of authors (CLA+LA) from DC, EIT, and developed countries in the second, third, and fourth Assessment Reports. The “Grand Total” includes WGI +II+III. See document IPCC-XXXI/INF.1 for details.

The results summarized in Figure 1 clearly show that the majority of experts were coming from the developed countries (67% of authors of AR4 WGI+II+III contributions). In addition, while the balance improved from the SAR to the TAR, the share of authors from developing countries did not increase between the TAR and AR4. Involvement of DC/EIT country authors is not the same in all working groups, being larger in WGII. This is likely due to the regional chapters in the WGII contributions. The evolution and share between groups is similar for reviewers (see Figure 2), but the overall participation of developing and EIT countries to the review of reports is significantly smaller (more than 80% of reviewers were coming from developed countries). The stagnation of DC/EIT participation between the TAR and AR4 justifies that measures be taken to improve their participation. In this context it should be noted that requests for EIT country scientist funding has decreased as members of the EU which were considered EIT countries have been encouraged to support their respective experts and delegates.

¹ The origin of authors or reviewers is based exclusively on the country of the institution they are affiliated to because in FAR, SAR and parts of TAR, there is no information other than institutional affiliation, This tends to underestimate the numbers of DC/EIT authors and reviewers.

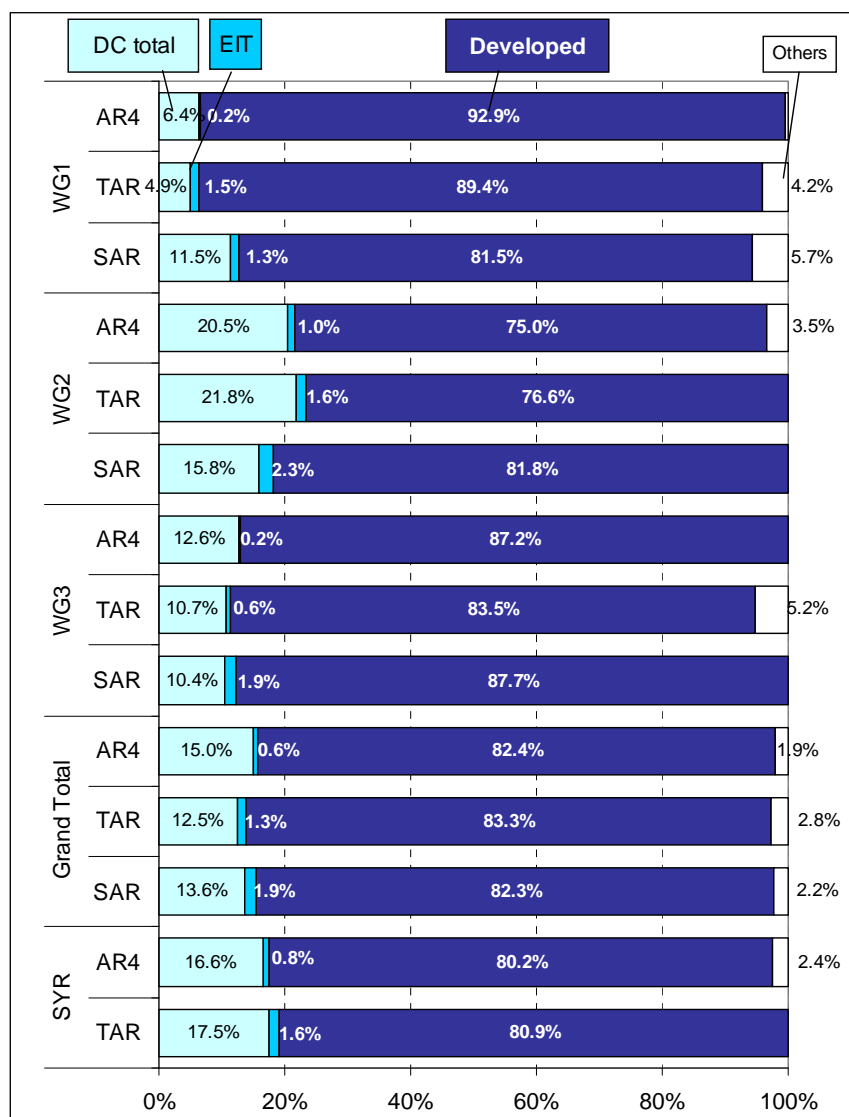


Figure 2: Share¹ of reviewers from DC, EIT, and developed countries in the second, third, and fourth Assessment Reports. The “Grand Total” includes WGI +II+III. See IPCC-XXXI/INF.1 for details.

Survey of government views

To carry out the assessment of the current shortcomings in involving an adequate number of developing/EIT countries that was decided at the 30th Session of the IPCC, the Secretariat, in consultation with the IPCC Vice-chairs conducted a survey based on a questionnaire that was sent to the Focal Points. The aim of the survey is to explore the most relevant issues for improving the involvement of experts from developing / EIT countries in the IPCC work:

- as authors and reviewers in IPCC products (AR, SR, TP, etc)
- as participants in IPCC expert meetings.
- and for the outreach activities related to IPCC

The survey was conducted by e-mail. The questionnaire was delivered to the IPCC Focal Points (or Ministries of Foreign Affairs) on September 9th, 2009. The closing date for the questionnaires to be returned was September 18th 2009 and 38 responses were received. Their distribution is shown in Table 1.

Country	Answers
DC (Developing Countries)	18
EIT (Economy In Transition)	4
Developed Countries	16
Total	38

Table 1: Number of questionnaires returned

The following paragraphs attempt to synthesise the views of the respondents about the current situation and the ways to improve it; for more details, see document IPCC-XXXI/INF.1 (parenthesis in the text below refer to the question number in that document).

The survey suggests that there is a lack of nominations of experts by Focal Points from developing countries: 50% of the DC/EIT respondents answered that no expert was nominated (Q1.1). However, in spite of the low share of reviewers from DC/EIT countries involved in the past Reports, the answers show that there is interest for reviewing IPCC assessment drafts in many DC/EIT countries.

The respondents unanimously supported the organisation of Regional Meetings because these meetings could increase the level of interest in IPCC activities (Q3). These meetings may have several objectives such as gathering local knowledge, involving local scientists, organising reviews, building capacity and outreach.

The answers regarding the availability of scientific literature (Q4) are mixed, with 60% of the developing countries reporting that there is insufficient literature regarding climate change in their country (more frequently missing in small countries). According to most developing (77%) and developed countries, 'grey literature' from their countries is not used enough (Q5). About 70% of respondents also said that non-English literature from their countries is not exploited enough.

For most respondents (about 80%) in both developing and developed countries, language is not a significant barrier to IPCC participation. However, about 40% of DC's consider language as a barrier to the use of reports by stakeholders and outreach, and 60% would like more translation of texts in UN languages. More than half of answering DC's would agree to provide some help with additional translations (into non-UN languages), and about 20% of developed countries would provide financial support for text translations that would go beyond current practice. One respondent also made the suggestion that the organisation of regional meetings in the UN languages spoken in the region should be supported by the IPCC.

Improving capacity and expertise on climate change is an issue for all developing countries; some report it as a major issue (Q7). Conversely, respondents unanimously assert that the participation in IPCC and the exchange of experience during the IPCC meetings enhance the scientific capacity of the countries on climate change.

Data availability is regarded as an issue in most DC's (80%), more than computational capacity (Q8,Q9). More than 80% of DC's consider that the participation of experts from their countries in the preparation of "new scenarios" in the AR5 is not sufficient.

Comments and suggestions have also been made on other issues, as Q11 was "open" (see document IPCC-XXXI/INF.1) and are taken into account in the following recommendations.

Recommendations on ways to improve DC/EIT country scientist participation in IPCC

Recommendation 1

Invite the IPCC secretariat to consider ways to enhance the awareness of the Focal Points regarding IPCC activities and possible funding for participation of scientists from their countries, for example by setting up a communication and outreach initiative. Also, it would be important that the Focal Points and Bureau members be encouraged to nominate more experts from developing/EIT countries.

The need for the nomination of more experts clearly appears from the answers to question 1, as 50% of the answering FPs did not nominate any expert. It should be recalled that Members of the IPCC Bureau are expected to play a facilitating role in this context.

Recommendation 2

Ensure that procedures for the nomination and selection of authors and reviewers are conceived in a way that facilitates the identification and selection of suitable experts from developing countries/EIT (e.g. easy multi-criteria searching into a single database of experts, for all types of IPCC products including AR, SR, and TP, as well as expert meetings). Ensure an adequate balance in the selection of CLAs, LAs and REs, by taking care that the nominations of suitable experts are considered, with specific attention for poorly represented regions and developing countries/EIT.

The need for improvements in the selection process was suggested in particular by answers to Q11. A single nomination process for the AR5 (as has been used in the AR4) is strongly supported to allow the identification of suitable experts from DC/EIT regions across all WGs.

Recommendation 3

Consider ways to increase the provision of financial support for the attendance of more experts from developing and EIT countries to IPCC meetings (increase the number of journeys supported by the Trust Fund), noting that past experience suggests that funding journeys is not sufficient to increase participation in itself.

At the 30th Session the Panel invited governments that may be in a position to do so to make stable contributions to the IPCC Trust Fund, noting that there is growing difference between the demand on the budget and expected income. The need for increased funding also appears in the responses to the present enquiry. However, in the past some of the funding for DC/EIT participation was not spent, in particular in case of expert meetings and workshops, because not enough experts could be identified or they were unable to attend due to other commitments. As the problem of DC participation is not limited to funding attendance to meetings, increased funding for meeting participation will not solve all problems.

Recommendation 4

Organize more regional meetings in developing regions. These may in particular contribute to the identification of grey and non-English literature, drawing it to the attention of the relevant author teams.

The respondents to the survey unanimously supported the organisation of Regional Meetings because these meetings could increase the level of interest in IPCC activities (Q3). These meetings may have several additional objectives such as gathering local knowledge, involving local scientists, organising reviews, building capacity and outreach.

UNFCCC National action plans for adaptation (NAPAs) and National Communications can be useful but it can be a challenge to find national and local assessments, evaluations of the costs and effectiveness of climate change strategies, policies, and measures, and other relevant documents.

This literature can be of very high quality, but can be missed because there is no easy mechanism to identify it. Regional meetings could help in bringing this information to the fore.

Recommendation 5

Encourage the participation of experts from developing countries/EIT in the outreach process of IPCC products.

Recommendation 6

The IPCC Bureau in general (and the WG Bureaux, in particular) should encourage more involvement of young experts from the developing countries/EIT in the IPCC process.

Recommendation 7

The Panel invites the Task Group set up in Plenary XXX, regarding the catalytic role of the IPCC regarding scenario development, to explore possibilities to facilitate DC/EIT country scientist participation. This may in particular include an invitation to the Focal Points in developing/EIT countries/EIT to encourage their experts to contribute scenarios to the library of new socio-economic scenarios anticipated in the report "Towards New Scenarios" (IPCC, 2008).

Scenarios were identified as a critical area for capacity building, as developing country experts contribute new insights about future pathways, particularly relevant to local circumstances. The IPCC report "Towards New Scenarios" (IPCC, 2008) identified specific recommendations regarding increasing developing/EIT country participation in scenario development (section V.5).

Final remark

Improving national scientific capacity is regarded as a key issue by responding Focal Points (Q7, Q11). Funding is also an issue frequently mentioned by the Focal Points and cited by the Bureau members.

However, the mandate of IPCC is to produce assessments, and not to support capacity building. The suggestion has been made to work with international research programmes and other institutions so they would provide financial support to experts from DC or EIT countries in such a way they could better participate in IPCC-related work (beyond the funding of their attendance to meetings). The IPCC Peace fund can also play some role in this area.