



WMO

# INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE



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INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL  
ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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## REVIEW OF IPCC TERMS OF REFERENCE

(Submitted by the Secretariat)

## **Background:**

When establishing the IPCC in 1988 the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the WMO Executive Council (EC-XL) in Resolution 4 agreed

"(1) That the activities of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) should be aimed at (i) assessing the scientific information that is related to the various components of the climate change issue such as emissions of major greenhouse gases and modifications of the Earth's radiation balance resulting therefrom, and that needed to enable the environmental and socio-economic consequences of climate change to be evaluated; and (ii) formulating realistic response strategies for the management of the climate change issue,

(2) That the Panel should report on its activities to the governing bodies of WMO and UNEP".

In 1991 the 11<sup>th</sup> WMO Congress in Resolution 11 endorsed the continuation of the IPCC and formulated inter alia the following terms of reference:

- “(a) Undertake scientific and technical work in support of the negotiations of a framework convention on climate change;
- (b) Periodically update the assessments of the available scientific information on climate change and the resulting environmental and socio-economic impacts;
- (c) Undertake further environmental and socio-economic analyses for the various policy options from near- and long-term perspectives posed as response strategies;
- (d) Evaluate the special problems of the developing countries and small island States in their efforts to address the issue of climate change and assess possible options to deal with these problems;
- (e) Further pursue studies on the incremental costs to developing countries and small island States of combating climate change, as well as on the sources from which such costs may be met and on mechanisms for the channelling of these resources, and present these studies for consideration at the negotiating sessions as soon as possible;
- (f) Take all appropriate steps to ensure the effective participation of developing countries and small island States and the broad dissemination of its work;
- (g) Such other terms of reference as the Executive Council may deem fit to assign to the Panel, this to be done after careful consideration of related decisions of the UN General Assembly.”

In 1992 EC-XLIV requested the Panel, under provisions of subparagraph (g) above to, inter alia to:

- “(a) Provide scientific and technical assessments in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular:
  - (i) Such assessments related to the objective of the Convention of "stabilization of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system" (article 2 of the Convention);
  - (ii) Ways and means to strengthen developing country capacities and capabilities in terms of research, systematic observation/detection of climate change and its impacts;
  - (iii) Innovative and state-of-the-art technologies and know-how;
- (b) Participate in the development and assessment of methodologies, working in concert with other relevant international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in support of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular:

- (i) Comparable methodologies for national inventories of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removal by sinks (article 4.1 of the Convention);
  - (ii) Methodologies for the calculation of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removal by sinks, including effective capacity of sinks and respective contributions of gases (article 4.2 (c) of the Convention);
- (c) Continue to undertake periodic and timely updates assessing the available information on climate change and the resulting environmental and socio-economic impacts with the goal of furthering the understanding and reducing or eliminating the remaining uncertainties regarding the causes, effects, magnitude and timing of climate change and the economic and social consequences of various response options, with particular emphasis on the most vulnerable regions of the world;
- (d) Take appropriate measures to further strengthen the scientific and technical character of the Panel in all its work, to co-ordinate its work within scientific and other bodies, and to provide for the effective participation of scientific and technical experts from developing countries in its activities.
- (e) Make recommendations on, and take appropriate measures to raise public awareness and facilitate education with respect to climate change including through the broad and timely dissemination of the Panel's work and its information exchange seminars effort.”

After the completion of the three Working Group contributions of the TAR in 2001 EC-LIII requested "(b) the Panel to continue to update assessments, globally and regionally, of factual information on various issues related to climate change and to continue to assess and, as appropriate, develop methodologies for use and applications".

The 14<sup>th</sup> WMO Congress (2003) encouraged the planning for a Fourth Assessment Report (AR4). Since then EC noted progress in preparing the AR4 and requested the Panel “to continue to work closely with the UNFCCC and provide scientific, technical and socio-economic advice through the development of Special Reports, Technical Papers and Methodology Reports”.

#### **Review of Terms of References:**

In Resolution 8 the 14<sup>th</sup> WMO Congress (Geneva, 5-24 May 2003), encouraged the IPCC "to review its terms of reference and propose updated terms of reference for consideration and endorsement by the WMO Executive Council and, as appropriate by the Governing Council of UNEP". No specific target date for that review was requested but it can be assumed that the 15<sup>th</sup> WMO Congress, which will meet from 7-25 May 2007, would expect a report on how this matter has been addressed by the Panel and the WMO Executive Council. The 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the WMO Executive Council will meet from 20-30 June 2006 in Geneva, the 59<sup>th</sup> Session will meet immediately after the 15<sup>th</sup> WMO congress from 28-30 May 2007.

An appropriate time for a review of the terms of reference of the IPCC would be after completion of the AR4. However, according to the current IPCC calendar the approval and acceptance of the Working Group III contribution to the AR4 is scheduled during the week preceding the WMO Congress. This does not leave the Panel much time for consideration of the terms of reference before the 15<sup>th</sup> WMO Congress. Alternatively the Panel may wish to address its terms of reference and future work programme at a session in early 2008, after completion of all elements of the AR4. Provisions for such a session have been included in the forecast budget for the year 2008, contained in document IPCC-XXV/Doc.3.

The Panel may wish to consider the matter of review of its terms of reference at this session and with a view to inform the WMO Executive Council how it intends to carry out that review and when it would propose updated terms of reference, as appropriate, for consideration and endorsement by the WMO Executive Council and, appropriate by the Governing Council of UNEP.