



WMO

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE



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PROGRESS REPORT ON AR4 COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

(Submitted by the IPCC Secretariat)

Background

The Panel at its 26th Session considered the responses to a questionnaire circulated by the IPCC Secretariat on priorities for information and outreach activities. Additional comments made at the Session included the importance of high quality figures and easy accessibility of IPCC reports by developing countries. Further specification of priority areas for partnership and clear distinction of IPCC report and outreach activities were noted. The Panel at its 26th Session approved also the position of an Information Officer. Ms Carola Traverso Saibante has taken office on 28 August 2006.

Information and outreach activities have been planned and implemented consistent with the priorities identified by governments. However, it needs to be noted that, in particular activities with partners, and other workshops and seminars are still evolving as suggestions and requests are received more or less on a daily basis. The Secretariat responds to those requests while keeping in mind that all regions and relevant user groups receive sufficient attention and coverage. To ensure sufficient regional coverage, additional efforts will be required and additional financial resources for activities in developing countries would be welcome.

Media relationships and press conferences

Targeting the media is not a priority for the IPCC except in eras of major reports' releases, which is currently the case. Therefore building and reinforcing media relationships has been a crucial point of the outreach work so far. Climate change has clearly reached its momentum as far as media attention is concerned. Nevertheless, and because of that, a strong communication and organizational effort is required in order to launch a major scientific report. An important element is also managing expectations in particular through explaining the IPCC process, timeline and scope of upcoming reports. Webcast has become now a standard requirement for major IPCC press conferences.

The Paris experience - launch of the Working Group I contribution to AR4

The effort put in the preparation of the Paris event has been rewarding. More than 500 media representatives accredited for the press conference on the 2 February, and the report's release received an excellent and fair coverage worldwide. The main preparatory steps have been:

- Build a press list (the IPCC had none, now it has more than 1000 media contacts)
- Alert the press about the upcoming report (prepare and circulate information material, e.g. at the Nairobi COP, e-card for the New Year, UNIFEEDS)
- Manage daily media contact e.g. interview requests, all kind of queries about upcoming reports, embargoed news
- Organize the press conference (coordinate with the WG, establish and implement an accreditation system, arrange venues and all technical details, etc.)

The launch of the Working Group II contribution to the AR4

The report "Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability" drew a lot of attention. In Brussels – despite the fact that it was a holiday in many countries in the region – there were around 350 press accreditations for the press conference.

Fifteen regional briefings were scheduled after the Brussels launch. The aim was to provide the opportunity of focussing on the in depth information about a particular region and explore the richness of the full report with the scientists from that region. More than that, the regional briefings were meant to be the first step towards further outreach efforts and dissemination of the IPCC reports in the region. Thanks to them, the IPCC established good local contacts with partner organizations, raised interest and coordinated with the authors from that region; follow-up communication activities will be planned and implemented in the upcoming months.

Following is the list of the regional briefings that took place in between 10 and 23 of April. Approximately 400 media representatives (or more) joined in total.

Europe – the Alpine Region (Switzerland)
Europe – the Mediterranean Region (Spain)
East Africa and the Great Lakes Region (Kenya)
Southern Africa (South Africa)
North Africa, the Middle East and the Sahara Region (Egypt)
China (China)
Russia (Russia)
Asia- except China and Russia (India)
North America (USA)
South America (Argentina)
Central America (Mexico)
Brazil (Brazil)
The Caribbean Region (Guyana)
Australia (Australia)
New Zealand and the small Pacific islands (New Zealand)

Strengthening partnership within and outside the UN

To fully take advantage of the IPCC capacity in the dissemination of the climate change science, and to overcome its limitations, more time and attention is devoted to the development of partnerships with other UN bodies and other appropriate organisations.

Since last autumn, UN agencies dealing with climate change communication have undertaken the path of a closer cooperation, setting up video and teleconferences to update each other on the respective communication activities and in an attempt to share some plans. On 1 and 2 March 2007 the IPCC hosted in Geneva the first meeting of the “UN Climate Change Communication Group” (UNDPI, UNEP, WMO, GEF, World Bank, UNDP, etc.). A shared calendar of ongoing activities and planned events allows the group to take actions to support each other’s activities and identify further outreach opportunities. For the IPCC, it means support for the AR4 launch (e.g. media advisories, UNIFEEDS, Video News Releases), ensuring consistency of messages and building up mid- and long-term joint communication activities beyond the media work. It is planned to expand this cooperation to include further UN agencies.

A broad and ever-growing range of different possible other partners has been identified, contacted and given feedback to. International environmental organizations (e.g. Greenpeace, WWF, CAN); media organizations (e.g. BBC, EBU, MTV); business communities (e.g. World Business Council for Sustainable Development, American Council for Renewable Energy); international and regional organizations and institutions (e.g. the European Commission) and national IPCC focal points are expressing interest in getting involved in AR4 dissemination projects. The challenge for the Secretariat is to identify the most appropriate form of IPCC involvement, such as presentations and briefings by authors and Bureau members, or potential co-sponsorship of events.

Presentations of the reports

Presentations at major international meetings, the “traditional” and key IPCC outreach activity, are well on stage, and the year 2007 schedule provides great opportunities. The UNEP Governing Council took place just a few days after the WG I release and a presentation was given by the IPCC Chair and Mr Jallow, Vice-Chair of WG I. During the UNFCCC meetings and the WMO Congress in May special sessions to present all 3 Working Group reports are planned.

Alongside with the AR4 presentations to UN bodies, major conferences and meetings of international bodies will provide many more occasions, e.g. the International Conference on Climate Change in Hong Kong in May, the DSDR Open Forum in Geneva in June, the FAO Agricultural Committee.

Seminars-workshop-briefings

Contacts and plans are carried on to explore and develop opportunities for regional/national road shows and seminars to bring the science back to their final users. Targets are the policymakers, technical experts,

special audiences (e.g. the energy industry) and the media. Some countries (e.g. Indonesia, Malaysia, the Maldives, New Zealand for the Pacific Region), international organizations (e.g. UNEP, FAO, WHO, ISDR), NGOs and various scientific organisations (e.g. ICLEI, WEC, IUGG, the Royal Geographic Society) have expressed their interest in such events. The IPCC will decide on a case-by-case basis on its appropriate role, in particular whether it would act as organizer or co-sponsor.

AR4 based information material and other outreach tools

The main ways how the IPCC can contribute to the development of AR4 based products by partners are through facilitating the liaison with experts and arranging their active involvement in outreach activities and materials, through providing scientific expertise and reviewing communication products to ensure correctness of the scientific information. Such products include video products, books, brochures, interactive tools, manuals, and educational materials. The TGICA Data Distribution Centre could also play a role in this respect, e.g. by featuring interactive demonstrations of climate models. A few examples of “AR4 derivatives” currently considered, are a brochure by the European Commission to be delivered during the Brussels Green Week, a UN information Kit on Climate Change, and a book prepared by UN Habitat on climate change and human settlements.

The Secretariat is engaged in improving some other communication tools, the Internet site above all. It has begun a restructuring of the site, taking into account the different main user groups (governments & experts and media & general public). Some new design lines for the IPCC, to better support its visual identity, are also on the way.