

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL
ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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Agenda item: 6
ENGLISH ONLY

MATTERS RELATED TO UNFCCC

(Invitation from the UNFCCC Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) to undertake further technical assessment of alternative common metrics - Letter to the Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC)

Our ref.: 4959-09/IPCC/GEN

Mr Yvo de BOER
Executive Secretary
UNFCCC
Climate Change Secretariat
P.O. Box 260 124
D-53153 Bonn
Germany

GENEVA, 27 January 2009

Dear Mr de Boer,

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) at its 29th Session considered the invitation from the UNFCCC Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under Kyoto Protocol (AWG-KP) to undertake further technical assessment of alternative common metrics. In particular, considerations are required on:

- a) The most appropriate carbon dioxide (CO₂) equivalence factors for anthropogenic emissions including Global Warming Potentials and Global Temperature Potentials (GWPs and GTPs);
- b) Gases and groups of gases that are included in the IPCC's Fourth Assessment Report (AR4).

Based on two documents presented at its 38th Session (BUR-XXXVIII/Doc.7 and BUR-XXXVIII/Doc.10), the IPCC Bureau took note of the limited literature available on possible metrics which are used to calculate the CO₂ equivalence of anthropogenic emissions by sources, and removals by sinks, of greenhouse gases listed in Annex A to the Kyoto Protocol.

The WGI AR4 addressed this subject in Chapter 2 as comprehensively as possible given the literature available at that time. In addition, the subject matter is made complex because of differences in the physical and biogeochemical cycles of the various substances resulting in a large range of lifetimes, and because of secondary effects caused by feedbacks.

Starting from the physical science basis underlying any metrics, mitigation and cost considerations determine emission pathways. Therefore, these issues are to be assessed across all three IPCC Working Groups with Working Group I taking the lead, and including information from the IPCC Task Group on Data and Scenario Support for Impact and Climate Analysis (TGICA) as appropriate.

At its 38th Session, the IPCC Bureau decided to task a small Steering Group, chaired by Mr Thomas Stocker (Co-Chair of Working Group I), to convene an Expert Meeting on Alternative Metrics with the goal to review the basis of current scientific research on this topic, in particular to assess the status of knowledge on GWPs and GTPs, as well as any other recent developments to calculate the CO₂ equivalence of anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases listed in Annex A to the Kyoto Protocol. One of the major foci of the meeting is expected to be the timescales at which possible metrics can be applicable.

.../...

The Expert Meeting will take place in Oslo from March 18 to March 20, 2009. A preliminary, not exhaustive, list of experts who will attend this meeting has already been compiled. A short report from this Expert Meeting will be submitted to the Panel at its 30th Session (April 21-23, 2009) for its initial consideration of any future actions by the IPCC.

Addressing point b) above, the IPCC Bureau at its 38th Session took note of the fact that Table 2.14 in "Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis", the Working Group I Contribution to the Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC, was inadvertently missing a number of species and that this table has now been replaced by a corrected version. The corrected table, referred to as Table 2.14 (Errata), is available on <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg1/ar4-wg1-errata.pdf>.

The IPCC will be pleased to be of further assistance to UNFCCC in this important matter and will forward the report of the Expert Meeting as soon as it has been approved by the Panel.

Thank you for your attention.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachauri', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(Rajendra K. Pachauri)
Chairman of the IPCC