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**FUTURE OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE
CHANGE**

Revised issues paper based on discussions at the
Seventeenth Session (Nairobi, 4-6 April 2001)
and

Written comments on the interim issues decision paper of 27 May 2001

(Submitted by the Chairman)

The document is submitted for decision by the Panel.

Future of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Revised issues paper based on discussions at the Seventeenth Session (Nairobi, 4-6 April 2001) and written comments on the interim issues decision paper of 27 May 2001

**Robert Watson, Chairman of the IPCC
August 10, 2001**

This final decision paper is based on discussions of the initial draft paper at the seventeenth session of the IPCC and written comments from more than 20 countries on the May 27th interim issues paper¹.

The following schedule for determining the future scope and structure of the IPCC was agreed in Nairobi:

- September 2001 plenary session of the Panel in London: agreement on the working group structure of the IPCC, and possible requests from COP-6 bis, and
- February/March 2002 plenary session of the Panel - Geneva: election of a new Bureau and agreement of the broad scope and timetable of the work program and Special Reports and Technical Papers (if any).

While there are eleven issues for which decisions are needed, it is essential that decisions are taken in London regarding issues 8 (Working Group structure), 10 (Inventories Task Force or Working Group) and 11 (size, structure and composition of the IPCC Bureau), and possibly 2 (timing of the Fourth Assessment Report). If these decisions are taken, then governments will be in a position to nominate members for a new Bureau to be formed at the next meeting of the Panel in 2002. Obviously, this does not preclude other decisions being taken in London, but they are less urgent.

Mandate for the Continuation of the IPCC

Comments: There is very strong support for the continuation of the IPCC from both the sponsoring organizations, all governments participating in the IPCC and a large number of National Academies of Science. The Governing Council of UNEP and the Executive Council of WMO both formally endorsed the continuation of the IPCC earlier this year, with strong personal support from the Secretary-General of WMO, Prof. G.O.P. Obasi, and the Executive Director of UNEP, Dr. K. Toepfer. Governments and the two parent organizations noted that the IPCC must continue to maintain its high scientific and technical standards, independence, transparency, geographic balance, and ensure a balanced reporting of viewpoints. It should continue to be policy relevant, but not policy prescriptive or policy driven.

¹ Written comments were received from 21 countries: Argentina, Barbados, Belgium, Chile, China, Denmark, Finland, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Qatar, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, UK, USA, Uzbekistan,

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides that its work must continue to maintain its high scientific and technical standards, independence, transparency and geographic balance, to ensure a balanced reporting of viewpoints and to be policy relevant but not policy prescriptive or policy driven.

Key Issues and Recommended Decisions

Issue 1: Should the IPCC continue to prepare comprehensive assessments?

Comments: There is unanimous support for the IPCC to continue to prepare comprehensive assessments with the current structure of a Summary for Policymakers (SPM), a Technical Summary and an underlying report. However, a number of governments have suggested that the underlying reports could be shortened with increased emphasis on recent results, thus reducing some of the work load on the expert community. In addition, a number of governments have suggested that the SPMs could be shorter and less technical.

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides to continue to prepare comprehensive reports, and recommends that the new Working Group co-chairs and other members of the Bureau examine whether it is feasible to: (i) shorten the underlying reports, while maintaining their comprehensive nature, and increase the focus and emphasis on new findings, and (ii) shorten the SPMs and make them less technical and more comprehensible to policymakers. Each Working Group report should continue to consist of a Summary for Policymakers (SPM), a Technical Summary (TS) and an underlying report, prepared and peer-reviewed according to the IPCC Principles and Procedures.

Issue 2: What is an appropriate time interval between the Third Assessment Report and the Fourth Assessment Report?

Comments: There continues to be a small divergence of views with governments suggesting an interval between the Third Assessment Report and the Fourth Assessment Report ranging from 5 to 7 years, with the majority supporting the middle ground of 6 years. Governments recognize the trade-off between meeting the needs of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN FCCC) for frequent updates in the state of knowledge, the time it takes to generate new knowledge and the problem of over-taxing the expert community. While the decision could, in principle, be delayed to a later meeting of the Panel, many governments, implicitly or explicitly, supported making the decision now prior to the election of a new Bureau. This would allow governments to understand the implications of nominating Working Group co-chairs and other Bureau members.

Recommended Decision:

EITHER the IPCC decides to complete the Working Group I report of the Fourth Assessment Report in early 2007 (the timing of the reports of Working Groups II & III and the Synthesis Report will depend upon decision 3).

OR the IPCC requests its new Bureau to make a recommendation within 9 months, after consultation with the expert community and Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) of the UN FCCC.

Issue 3: Should the Working Group that assesses past and future changes in climate (current Working Group I) precede the Working Group that assesses the impacts, adaptation and vulnerability (current Working Group II) and if so, by how long?

Comments: There continues to be a divergence of views, with a slight majority of governments arguing that there is no need for Working Group I to precede Working Group II, while others argue that WG I should precede WG II by time intervals ranging from months to a year or more. Several governments noted that a delay of a few months between the Working Group reports would allow a more orderly government review process and ensure consistency of key results among Working Group reports. There is probably no need for a significant delay between the Working Group reports, if the emissions scenarios to be used by Working Group I are finalized at least 3 years prior to finalization of the Working Group I report. This would allow the scenarios to be incorporated into climate models and the climate projections used by the impact/vulnerability and mitigation communities. A critical question for the Panel is whether a set of "mitigation" scenarios need to be developed to complement the recent "non-mitigation" scenarios of the Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (SRES). Several governments noted that if there is a Synthesis Report associated with the Fourth Assessment Report, then staggering the WG reports will complicate its preparation and peer review.

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides to request the new Bureau to recommend, after consultation with the expert community, the relative timing of the Working Group and Synthesis reports.

Issue 4: Should the comprehensive reports be supplemented by shorter, more focussed Special Reports on specific issues, especially reports that integrate science, impacts, economics and policy options, as in the Synthesis Report?

Comments: There is unanimous support for the IPCC to continue to prepare Special Reports subject to adequate financing and a careful evaluation of the workload on the experts. A number of governments suggested that priority be placed on holistic reports, reports addressing cross-cutting issues and the most policy-relevant issues. It is suggested that the new Bureau be charged with developing a framework with a clear set of criteria (financing, Working Group/experts work loads, scientific readiness, climate-change-related, policy relevant, and holistic versus focussed scope) to establish priorities that would include requests for Special Reports from the UNFCCC (decision 5) and bodies of other Conventions (decision 6).

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides to endorse the preparation of Special Reports and requests the new Bureau to develop a framework and set of criteria for establishing priorities to be approved by the Panel. Special Reports will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Panel.

Issue 5: Should the IPCC continue to be responsive to the needs of the UNFCCC through the preparation of Technical Papers, Special Reports and reports on methodological issues?

Comments: All governments responded with an unqualified yes, recommending that decisions should be taken on a case by case basis taking into account the scope of the request, the availability of appropriate financing and the current work load of the Working Groups and their technical support units.

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides to endorse considering requests for Technical Papers, Special Reports or methodological work received from the UNFCCC with decisions being taken on a case by case basis by the Panel using the priority framework and criteria established under decision 4.

Issue 6: Should the IPCC be responsive to the needs of other Conventions or organizations, e.g., the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) or the Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer through the preparation of Technical Papers, Special Reports and reports on methodological issues?

Comments: Governments responded with a qualified yes, with most suggesting that priority for Special Reports be afforded to requests from the UNFCCC. The reports should be prepared jointly, wherever possible, be mutually beneficial, related to climate change and must follow IPCC Principles and Procedures. Approval will be subject to the availability of funds; indeed several governments suggested that IPCC request financial support from the entity requesting the report(s). A number of governments stated that studying the interactions between climate change and other local, regional and global environmental issues should be a priority and could stimulate an understanding of linkages among Conventions.

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides to receive requests for Technical Papers or Special Reports from other Convention bodies. It would decide to prepare the products on a case by case basis, using the priority framework and criteria established under decision 4.

Issue 7: Should the current IPCC Principles and Procedures apply for Special Reports, i.e., a sequential expert review followed by expert/government review, or could a single step simultaneous expert/government peer-review process be used, subject to approval at a plenary session of the Panel, in order to be more responsive to the needs of the Parties to the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol?

Comments: All governments strongly supported the current Principles and Procedures regarding the preparation, peer-review and acceptance/approval procedures for Special Reports.

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides that there will be no changes to the existing procedures regarding the preparation, peer-review and acceptance/approval procedures for the Special Reports.

Issue 8: What is the appropriate Working Group structure?

Comments from plenary: There was unanimous support to maintain the current Working Group structure with the three Working Groups continuing with about the same mandate, although several governments noted that the economics aspects of Working Groups II and III and the technical aspects of Working Group III need to be strengthened. There was widespread

recognition that there needs to be closer coordination and integration among the three Working Groups, especially between Working Groups II and III. There needs to be greater consideration of how to improve the approach to related, over-lapping and cross-cutting issues, which was only partly successful in the Third Assessment Report (TAR), e.g., development, equity and sustainability; uncertainties; decision-making frameworks; and costing. Governments should be prepared to nominate co-chairs and Bureau members with the appropriate expertise for the three Working Groups assuming the mandates to be similar to those for the TAR. Whether the inventories Task Force becomes a fourth Working Group is dealt with separately (see decision 10).

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides to maintain the current Working Group structure, and to charge the new Working Group co-chairs and Bureaus to develop plans to ensure that related, over-lapping or cross-cutting issues are addressed in a more satisfactory manner than in the Third Assessment Report.

Issue 9: How should Special Reports be managed?

Comments: Most governments recommended that Special Reports would be assigned to the most appropriate Working Group, where the Working Group co-chairs would chair the Special Reports and the respective Technical Support Unit (TSU) would manage the process. This would ensure that no new management structures would be required, minimizing the costs. Several governments recognized that a Special Report covering cross-cutting issues may need to be managed outside of the Working Group process, as was the case for the Special Report on Land-Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry.

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides that in most instances, Special Reports should be assigned to the most relevant Working Group. However, for a Special Report where the scope cuts across several Working Groups, the Panel may wish to assign the Special Report to either the Chair or a Vice-Chair of the IPCC and to assign the IPCC Secretariat in Geneva to coordinate/manage it with assistance of one or more of the Working Group TSUs.

Issue 10: Should the inventories Task Force become a fourth Working Group?

Comments: Given the importance of the inventories work there is wide-spread recognition among governments that there is a need to "mainstream" these activities into the formal IPCC structure. However, there continues to be a range of views regarding whether the current Task Force on inventories should be transformed into a fourth Working Group or remain a Task Force with more formal ties with the IPCC Bureau. The majority of governments appear to support the formation of a fourth Working Group, which would have implications for the current structure of the IPCC Bureau. The current inventories Task Force Bureau was charged by the Panel in Nairobi to produce an options paper covering: (a) the pros and cons regarding transforming the inventories Task Force into a Working Group; (b) an evaluation of appropriate approval/acceptance processes for reports; (c) the financial implications of each option; (d) any amendments that may be needed to the current Principles and Procedures; and (e) scope of work to be covered. Unfortunately at the time of writing this draft decision paper, the draft of the requested inventories Task Force Bureau paper has not been finalized (however, I assume it will be finalized and submitted to all governments prior to the Panel meeting in September). Based

on a number of considerations outlined in Annex I to this decision paper, I have formulated a recommended decision because a decision must be taken in London so that the structure of the Bureau can be finalized (Annex I also discusses and recommends a review process and approval/acceptance procedures for inventories reports). This will allow governments to nominate and form a new Bureau at the Panel meeting in February 2002. My personal recommendation is to maintain the inventories work as a Task Force², co-chaired by two vice-chairs of the IPCC, with six or twelve additional inventories Task Force Bureau members (one or two per IPCC region). This would formalize the inventories work by bringing it more under the direct guidance of the Bureau, while leaving the basic structure of the IPCC Bureau unchanged.

Recommended Decision: (i) The IPCC decides to maintain the inventories Task Force, but chaired by two vice-chairs of the IPCC (one from an industrialized country and one from a developing country), with six or twelve additional inventories task force Bureau members (one or two per IPCC/WMO region).

Issue 11: What is the appropriate size, structure and geographic representation of the Bureau?

Comments: There is almost unanimous support to maintain the current size and geographic composition of the Bureau with each IPCC/WMO region selecting its representatives. Many governments noted that Bureau members have specific obligations to represent their region, not their country, and therefore, willingness to represent their region should be a Bureau selection criterion. However, two decisions must be made prior to seeking government nominations for Bureau positions: (a) whether there will be three Working Groups (as present) or four Working Groups (the inventories Task Force becoming the fourth Working Group) – see decision 10; and (b) the number of vice-chairs. While many governments suggested reducing the number of IPCC vice-chairs, others argued to retain five vice-chairs but provide them with more specific responsibilities. Consistent with issue number 10, I recommend that the inventories work be continued as a Task Force, but chaired by two IPCC vice chairs, and that the remaining vice-chairs be assigned specific responsibilities for the IPCC Financial Task Team and the IPCC Communications Strategy Group.

Recommended Decision: The IPCC decides that the size of the Bureau remains at 30 with the current geographic balance. The IPCC also decides that, subject to the inventories Task Force remaining a Task Force, the IPCC Bureau would consist of a chair, five vice-chairs with specific responsibilities, and three Working Group Bureaus, each with two co-chairs and six Bureau members. Under this construction the IPCC decides that two of the IPCC vice-chairs chair the inventories Task Force.

Additional Issues that need to be considered by the new Bureau

There were a number of issues that should be addressed by the new Bureau.

Mechanisms must be developed to ensure:

² The majority of the current members of inventories Task Force Bureau also favor the Task Force Bureau option rather than the Fourth Working Group option.

- appropriate representation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition - Bureau members, in conjunction with IPCC focal points, must take responsibility for identifying appropriate candidates;
- that the non-English literature is appropriately assessed - Bureau members must take responsibility to assist Coordinating Lead Authors identify appropriate literature;
- a deeper engagement with industry and NGOs - possible formation of informal IPCC-industry and IPCC-NGO task groups;
- greater transparency of the Bureau;
- stability in IPCC financing; and

A decision is also needed at some time whether the Synthesis Report should act as a guide to the rest of the assessment.

Annex I: Inventories Work

There are three specific issues that need to be addressed.

1. How should the greenhouse gas inventories work be conducted? The options are:
 - By a Task Force with guidance provided by a Task Force Bureau, i.e., status quo, with no “formal” tie to the IPCC Bureau;
 - By a Task Force with guidance provided by a Task Force Bureau, but with the two co-chairs being vice-chairs of the IPCC and other members of the TFB being either from Bureau members or nominated from countries which are members of the IPCC Bureau;
 - By a fourth Working Group, with a Working Group Bureau.
2. What procedures should be used to accept, adopt or approve greenhouse gas inventories work products?
 - Should the inventories reports, which would be accepted, have an Executive Summary or a Technical Summary that could be adopted or approved?
3. What are the financial implications of the Task Force on Inventories
 - remaining a Task Force versus being converted into a fourth Working Group?
 - adoption/approval procedures instead of a simple acceptance process?

Before suggesting a particular option, I have developed a set of points that have guided my suggested decision:

First, there must be clear rules for the preparation, peer-review and acceptance/adoption/approval of inventories reports consistent with, but probably requiring an Annex to, the existing IPCC Principles and Procedures.

Second, it should be noted that while Working Groups I, II and III assess the scientific/technical literature, the inventories work is in developing methodologies and best practice guidelines for adoption by Parties to the UNFCCC, based on the latest scientific understanding of the issues. Thus the nature of the inventories work is quite different and this needs to be recognized when deciding whether the inventories work is conducted under a Task Force or a fourth Working Group.

Third, given the political importance and scientific and technical complexity of the inventories work, the reports should normally be subjected to two expert/government reviews.

Fourth, given the political importance of the inventories work, governments should not only accept the full underlying text but be afforded the possibility of approving an executive summation.

Fifth, given the importance of the inventories work, and recognizing the need to minimize costs, acceptance/approval of inventories reports could be done at regularly scheduled meetings of the Panel in a plenary session.

Sixth, the role of the Bureau (Working Group or Task Force) is to guide the inventories work, recognizing the political importance of the product; hence the (Working Group or Task Force) Bureau members should be scientifically and technically competent and sensitive to, and familiar with, the needs of the Parties to the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol.

Seventh, the inventories work must be performed by the World's best scientific and technical experts.

Eighth, it is critical that the IPCC Bureau and the Panel feel they have full ownership of the inventories work.

Ninth, the work should be limited to that relevant to inventories, i.e., it should not be broadened to include all methodological work, e.g., costing methodologies, adaptation methodologies, etc.

Based on the points above, with respect to issue 1, I suggest that the status quo is insufficient given the emerging importance of the inventories work to the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol and that the inventories work needs to be "mainstreamed" into the work of the IPCC and its Bureau. The question is, then, whether the Task Force should remain a Task Force with two co-chairs who are IPCC vice chairs or whether the Task Force should be transformed into a fourth Working Group. In my opinion, either could work. However, I suggest that the best solution is for the Task Force to remain a Task Force rather than be transformed into a fourth Working Group, given that the inventories Task Force Bureau members need to be politically conversant with the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol as well as scientifically and technically competent. I believe that it would be easier to select such a Task Force Bureau by having the two IPCC vice-chairs be specifically selected to co-chair the Task Force Bureau and then complete the membership of the Task Force Bureau by requesting governments to nominate potential members with the scientific, technical and political expertise needed to guide the work. The inventories Task Force Bureau could consist of 8 or 14 members, i.e., two co-chairs plus one or two members per IPCC/WMO region. Approval and acceptance of inventories products would then be performed by the Panel meeting in a plenary session, rather than a Working Group, given the importance of the products.

With respect to issue 2, I suggest that given the importance of the inventories work within the UNFCCC process, it may no longer be adequate to simply accept the inventories reports following an expert/government review process. A careful analysis needs to be performed to

assess the viability of preparing an executive summation that would be approved by the Panel in a plenary session.

With respect to issue 3, the financial implications of the previous recommendations, i.e., a Task Force with acceptance/approval of the reports by the Panel in a plenary session would minimize the costs compared to acceptance/approval of the reports by a fourth Working Group. This assumes that the Panel meetings for acceptance/approval of the reports will be scheduled with regular Panel meetings.

Therefore, in summary, I recommend:

- the inventories work is conducted under the guidance of a geographically-balanced Task Force Bureau, where the co-chairs of the TFB are vice-chairs of the IPCC;
- the inventories reports should normally be subjected to two expert/government reviews;
and
- the Panel should accept the full technical reports and approve an executive summation.