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FUTURE WORK OF THE IPCC

First progress report by the Task Group on the Future Work of the IPCC

(Submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Task Group)

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At the conclusion of each assessment cycle, the IPCC generally reflects on the report preparation process and draws lessons with respect to its future work programmes and processes. The IPCC agreed at its 37th Session (Batumi, October 2013) to set up a Task Group (TG) on the Future Work of the IPCC, co-chaired by New Zealand and Saudi Arabia, and determined the terms of reference (TOR) of the TG.

- Recalling the TOR, the IPCC has asked the TG to develop options and recommendations for consideration by the Panel on:
 - The future products of the IPCC;
 - The appropriate structure and modus operandi for the production of these IPCC products;
 - Ways to ensure enhancement of the participation and contribution of developing countries in the future work of the IPCC.
- Governments had already provided submissions on the future work of the IPCC in advance of the 37th Session (first round of government submissions in response to a letter of the IPCC Secretary dated 13 March 2013).
- Governments were invited to make further submissions on the basis of a questionnaire attached to a letter of the IPCC Secretary dated 9 December 2013.
- An informal meeting of the TG was held in the margins of the 38th Session (Yokohama, March 2014) to inform governments about the agenda for the first meeting of the TG.
- The government submissions were compiled by the Secretariat (documents IPCC-XXXIX/INF.1 and IPCC-XXXIX/INF. 1, Add.1).
- The Secretariat also prepared a synthesis of the submissions (document IPCC-XXXIX/Doc.7), which served as an input for the first meeting of the TG, which was held on 6 April 2014 back-to-back with the 39th Session in Berlin.
- The synthesis of submissions shows that there are areas of convergence with respect to:

Products of the IPCC: Most countries commented that the mandate of the IPCC to produce high quality, policy relevant and policy neutral scientific assessments on climate change remains important and appropriate. The unique value of the IPCC as a scientific assessment body is its comprehensiveness, thoroughness and credibility when delivering assessment reports.

Appropriate structure and modus operandi: Many governments thought that the current IPCC structure and modus operandi are adequate. A range of views were provided on how to improve the structure and functioning of the Technical Support Units (TSUs).

Enhancement of the participation of developing countries: The submissions provided a range of ideas on how to enhance such participation, many of which would be mutually supportive.

- Next steps for the TG:
 - Seeking input from those involved in the preparation of reports during the AR5 cycle (WGs and TFI Co-Chairs and authors) as well as from IPCC Observer Organizations and scientists involved in the IPCC process and other relevant stakeholders. Input will be sought using a targeted questionnaire to be circulated end of April 2014 giving a 4 weeks deadline for responses.
 - Preparation by the TG Co-Chairs of an Options paper for discussion at the next meeting of the TG. The Options paper will draw from submissions from governments, scientists involved in the preparation of IPCC reports, IPCC Observer Organizations and other relevant stakeholders.
- Since the TG is expected to provide a second progress report providing different options for discussion at the 40th Session (Copenhagen, October 2014), the TG suggested to organize a meeting/workshop before that Session, if the Panel agrees and if there is a budget to support this proposal.
- At the 40th Session member countries will discuss a refined Options paper.
- After the 40th Session the Co-Chairs will further refine their Options paper based on the discussions at the 40th Session and create a Recommendations paper.
- January 2015: the Secretariat will release the Recommendations paper to governments for their comments.
- February 2015: deadline for government submissions on the Recommendations paper.
- At the 41st Session (Spring 2015) the TG will finalize a paper containing recommendations which will be submitted to the Plenary for its consideration and approval.