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SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE

Sixth session

Bonn, 28 July - 5 August 1997

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

COOPERATION WITH RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Structure and content of the Third Assessment Report by the IPCC

Comments by Parties

Note by the secretariat

The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA), at its fourth session, invited Parties to submit comments on the planned structure and content of the Third Assessment Report (TAR) to the secretariat, by 30 May 1997 (FCCC/SBSTA/1996/20, para. 25), for compilation into a miscellaneous document.

The secretariat has received four such submissions. In accordance with the procedures for miscellaneous documents, these submissions are attached and reproduced in the language in which they were received and without formal editing.

FCCC/SBSTA/1997/MISC.4

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PAPER NO. 1: CHINA

An electronic version of this text was not available

(UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION)

**China's Comments on the Planned Structure and Content
of the Third Assessment Report
from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)¹**

1. The Third Assessment Report of the IPCC should not simply follow the structure of the previous assessment reports. It should focus on new facts and findings which were not included in the last two reports, particularly on the progress that have been made in clearing up the uncertainties.
2. In assessing climate change and the impacts of human activities upon the climate system, the Third Assessment Report of the IPCC should reflect comprehensively different views and findings.
3. The Third Assessment Report of the IPCC should provide answers to the questions that are of concern to most developing countries, such as what adverse effects the policies and measures adopted by the developed countries may have upon the developing countries, what policies and steps the developed countries should take for the transfer of technology to the developing countries and how to achieve such transfer.

¹ This submission has been retyped. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure the correct reproduction of the text as submitted.

PAPER NO. 2: EGYPT

**Comments on the draft discussion paper on
the IPCC Third Assessment Report ²**

1. No comments on the discussion paper concerning the structure of the working groups and the Evaluation framework as well as the contents of the Working group reports.
2. The second option on the Structure of the working groups is agreed. The first WG I should take care of the Science of Climate Change, while WG II should encompass Impacts and Adaptation including the social and economic aspects. WG III should encompass the mitigation options including social and economic aspects.
3. The proposals concerning the Composition of the Bureau are agreed.
4. Concerning Funding for Technical Support Units, there is a support for Option III that provides for the participation of one developing country professional to be financed from the IPCC Trust Fund.

² This submission has been retyped. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure the correct reproduction of the text as submitted.

**Comments on the Planned Structure and Content
of the Third Assessment Report**

1. As requested in FCCC/SBSTA/1996/20 para.30 the EU would like to offer its comments on the planned structure and content of the Third Assessment Report (TAR) from the IPCC. The EU welcomes the proposals being put forward by the IPCC to prepare a third full assessment report on the scientific, technical and economic aspects of climate change. The EU would reiterate the importance it attaches to the work of the IPCC. In its view it will be essential for the IPCC to maintain its scientific credibility, its independence and impartiality. It welcomes proposals for the future of the IPCC and the Third Assessment put forward in the chairman-elect's discussion paper. In particular it welcomes proposals to broaden participation in the IPCC process by aiming for greater involvement of developing countries and experts from both the environmental and industrial NGOs.

2. With regard to the TAR the EU supports a broad review of the science, impacts adaptation and mitigation strategies, technology options and socio-economic issues as carried out in the 2nd Assessment Report. The structure is largely a matter for the IPCC but the EU would make the following observations: it would support option II on the structure of the TAR and would encourage an increased focus on the regional impact of climate and the greater integration of social economic aspects. It would also wish to see some assessment of the impact of policies and measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change as well as the impact of inaction. It would also be useful in furthering our understanding of global greenhouse gas processes to compare total emissions from developing and developed countries' inventories with emissions calculated from global flux cycles.

3. The EU would strongly support the preparation, in addition to the full three volume assessment, of an over-arching report synthesising the results of the assessment and answering key questions which are of relevance to the Parties to the Convention and the future Protocol, and dealing with cross-cutting issues not easily covered in the working group reports. In preparing a synthesis report the IPCC should consider working closely with the FCCC secretariat and invite some policy makers into working groups as advisors.

4. With regard to the contents of the synthesis report, the EU would like the IPCC inter alia to address the following questions:

- what further progress has been made in detection and attribution of climate change, both at a global and regional level.

- for a range of non-intervention scenarios for the future of all greenhouse gas emissions and sinks and aerosols, what are the resulting atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and aerosols, the global and regional climatic changes and associated impacts.
- what policy intervention scenarios for emissions and sinks would be needed to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations at a range of levels giving particular attention to CO stabilisation between 350 and 750 ppm.
- what are the impacts of climate change associated with each of these scenarios and with different stabilisation levels (noting that impacts may take longer to stabilise e.g. sea level rise, ice melt and ecosystem adjustments)?
- what possible combination of policies concerning all sources and sinks might be able to achieve stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations at different levels and for different constraints on rates of change.
- what are the technological, economic and equity implications of mitigation and adaptation policies or developed and developing countries at a regional level, for the intervention as well as for the non-intervention scenarios?
- where possible, identify the risk of "surprises" in particular in the form of rapid and or irreversible changes to the climate system.
- can thresholds for severe impacts, climate instability etc. be identified for different greenhouse gas concentrations and rates of change which might give some insight into consideration of dangerous levels of greenhouse gas concentrations?
- where is there significant interaction between climate change and other environmental changes and what are the implications for impacts, policy responses and economic and social costs?

5. The EU recognises that there are a number of very challenging questions which may not be easily or readily answered from the scientific and technical literature. To this end, it may be helpful if the IPCC makes widely known well in advance of the publication of the TAR those questions which it will be seeking to address, thus giving the scientists and economists time to consider such focused questions, carry out and publish research in time for the TAR.

6. Throughout the TAR in its presentation of material it would be helpful if the IPCC could do more to quantify uncertainties. Too often in the previous reports phrases have been added referring to uncertainties without providing an indication of the size of the uncertainties and what they imply. In particular it would be helpful if the sensitivity of the climate system

to a doubling of CO₂ could be revisited. The range has stuck at 1.5°C to 4.5°C for sometime. The EU would like to see a full reassessment of this parameter as a ready indicator of the likely scale of climate change.

7. Regarding the timing of the TAR publication, the chairman elect has suggested mid-2001, 5 years after publication of the 2nd Assessment Report. The EU would strongly support this provided the report is completed by the end of 2000 and if possible earlier.

8. Finally the EU would like the Secretariat to convey its best wishes to the IPCC towards the preparation of the TAR, recognising that the voluntary efforts of many scientists worldwide will be called upon to provide the scientific expertise and impartiality for which IPCC is justifiably noted.

**Comments on the Third Assessment Report of the IPCC.
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA)
Sixth session, 28 July - 5 August 1997, Bonn
Third Assessment Report of the IPCC**

In response to the call at SBSTA 4 for comments concerning the planned structure and content of the Third Assessment Report (TAR) of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Switzerland presents the following views.

1. Objective of the TAR

The objective of the TAR should be to provide to all stakeholders, including policy makers and the scientific community, an assessment of the current knowledge on climate change. It should bring elements allowing to make progress in the determination of the "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system". It should help in the process of implementing the Convention.

2. Overall structure of the TAR

The overall structure of the TAR should be analogous to that of the SAR. It should address the scientific, economic and social aspects of climate change relevant to the implementation of the Convention. The division of the TAR in three thematic groups, i.e. the science of climate change, impacts and adaptation, and mitigation, seems appropriate. Nevertheless, the IPCC should proceed to some minor changes in order to overcome limitations and overlaps of chapters noticed in the SAR.

3. The Synthesis Report

The TAR should comprise a Synthesis Report. This Synthesis Report should be a "true" synthesis of information contained within the three Working Groups (WG) reports. It should help all stakeholders to implement the Convention. The Synthesis Report should be a "self-generating" process. This means that when writing up summaries for policy makers, the relevant information for various aspects of the Convention should be extracted and presented in a short, separate document. Therefore, the structure and scope of the Synthesis Report should not be established prior to the initiation of the TAR or before the three WG reports are finalized.

4. TAR and Technical Reports

Innovative ways of improving the presentation of the TAR should be found in order to avoid difficulties when disseminating the findings of the TAR. The fact that the bodies of the Convention have asked for Technical Reports based on the SAR indicates that there is a need to present the information in a more userfriendly way.

5. Publication of the TAR

There are two issues related to the dissemination and availability of the IPCC works : the publication of the documents in all UN languages', and the dissemination of the findings of the IPCC.

The translation of the TAR into all UN languages', as well as that of all "approved/accepted" documents related to TAR which will be produced by the IPCC, should be assured. The IPCC, the Convention and the countries should provide financial means for these translations. In particular, countries should be invited to provide translation services as contributions in kind for the TAR.

The IPCC, the Convention and the countries should assure a broad diffusion of the TAR. The documents of the TAR should be made available to all stakeholders and the findings of the TAR should be disseminated through seminars, workshops and campaigns of information assuring a broad public awareness. The Secretariat of the IPCC should make all IPCC documents available on the Internet in a userfriendly way.

6. Timing of the TAR

Two aspects are important : the time needed by the authors and reviewers (peer and governmental) to produce a high quality work, and the time needed by Governments to understand the TAR and start implementing its findings.

The key to the success of the TAR will be its quality. This quality will depend on the time left to authors and reviewers to complete their work. Therefore, the TAR should not be approved/accepted before 2001.

Concerning the time needed by Governments to understand and start implementing the findings of the TAR, what is important is the effort on the part of the IPCC and other bodies, such as the Information Unit on Convention from UNEP, to present and to disseminate the findings of the TAR in a userfriendly way.

7. IPCC Bureau, Secretariat and TSUs

The current composition of its Bureau has allowed the IPCC to achieve important goals such as the completion of the SAR. Switzerland considers that a certain continuity in the composition of the Bureau would assure the quality of the work of the IPCC.

The Technical Supports Units (TSUs) help the co-chairs of the Working Groups in accomplishing their task. There should be a good co-ordination between the IPCC Secretariat and the TSUs. The Secretariat plays an essential role, assuring the coherence of the IPCC process. The TSUs should not act separately from the Secretariat. In the division of labour, they should serve as ancillary units of secretarial and support nature the work of which should be embedded in the

Secretariat's line of work and not acting separately from it. Duplication of work between the Secretariat of the IPCC and the TSUs should be avoided.

Innovative ways of improving the efficiency of both the Secretariat and the TSUs should be investigated, as e.g. reinforcing the staff capacity of the Secretariat. We wonder if the latter could not perform part of the current work of the TSUs in a more efficient way. It could also be envisaged to share the costs of the TSUs between two or three Annex I countries. Staff from non-Annex I countries may be included in the TSUs for capacity building purposes. In any case the establishment and financing of the TSUs should not constitute a condition for a country to become eligible as member of the Bureau of the IPCC.

9. Financial means

Countries should secure financial means to help the scientific community to take part in the elaboration of the TAR. Individual investigators should be supported and their scientific independence should be safeguarded.

10. Appreciation

Finally, Switzerland would like to thank again the Chairman of the IPCC, Professor Bert Bolin, and all the scientists who have contributed during years to assessing the understanding of climate change. We consider the elaboration of the SAR a major success of the IPCC. We are confident that the Third Assessment Report will be, at the time of its completion, the most comprehensive and authoritative work in the field of climate change. We extend all our good wishes to the Chairman elect Robert Watson who will have the responsibility to conduct this challenging task.

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