

Report to the 10th Session of SBSTA on the Status of the IPCC

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Distinguished delegates, it is a real pleasure and honor for me to be invited to address you today. I, and all my colleagues associated with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), appreciate the close collaboration that exists between the IPCC and the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the subsidiary bodies to the UNFCCC, and the Secretariat to the UNFCCC. There continues to be excellent collaboration with the FCCC and its subsidiary bodies (SBSTA and SBI) through Joint Working Group meetings, and coordinated meetings of SBSTA and IPCC experts, such as those related to Articles 3.3 and 3.4 of the Kyoto Protocol.

Since I last had the opportunity to address you six months ago in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the IPCC has continued to make significant progress. We now have the most intense work program ever, largely in response to requests made by the Subsidiary Body on Technological and Scientific Advice (SBSTA) of the UNFCCC. These requests from SBSTA, I believe, reflect the importance that the UNFCCC places on the high-quality and impartial scientific and technical information that is provided by the IPCC, and acknowledges the expertise and dedication of many hundreds of scientific, technical and socio-economic experts from all over the world from universities, government agencies, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations.

Since Buenos Aires, the IPCC held a Bureau meeting in Geneva in March, 1999 and a Plenary session in Costa Rica in April 1999. It was very encouraging to observe that all delegates to these meetings worked with a common purpose, and were willing to constructively seek compromises when differences of opinion surfaced. I believe that this demonstrates that the IPCC has continued to mature even while the work load has increased and the issues that we have been asked to address by the UNFCCC are becoming scientifically and technically more complex and, at times, closer to policy. However, the IPCC has continued to ensure that while the assessments are policy-relevant, they are policy-neutral and not policy prescriptive.

A major milestone was achieved at the Plenary meeting in Costa Rica. We finally approved the Procedures for the Preparation, Review, Acceptance, Approval and Publication of IPCC Reports, which will become an Annex to the Principles Governing IPCC Work that were approved in Vienna, in October, 1998. The Principles and Procedures will ensure that all aspects of the IPCC, including the selection of coordinating lead authors, lead authors and review editors, and the expert and government/expert review processes, will continue to be open and transparent, hence ensuring the credibility of the IPCC process.

In addition, the IPCC approved and accepted the Special Report on "Aviation and the Global Atmosphere" and approved the list of Policy-Relevant Scientific Questions that will be addressed in the Synthesis Report of the Third Assessment Report (TAR) at the Plenary in Costa