

countries including the chairman of G-77 and China noted that by advancing the preparation of the initial Communications from non-Annex 1 Parties, the implementation of their commitments under Article 4.1 was fulfilled. These countries also emphasized the relationship between the commitments of non-Annex 1 Parties and the provision of financial resources and transfer of technology by Annex 1 countries. Most of the developed countries, on the other hand, encouraged all Parties to develop long-term strategies for the mitigation of climate change, and noted the importance of the ongoing work on technology transfer and cooperation, the programmes for capacity building, and exchange of information and training in facilitating further actions by developing countries under Article 4.1. They also noted that the work by non-Annex 1 countries on guidelines for national communications was a good first step.

Protocol or another Legal Instrument

The legal debate focussed on the choice of an amendment or a protocol as the legal instrument to contain new commitments. Much of the discussion related to institutional issues of a protocol or amendment approach as raised in Secretariat paper FCCC/AGBM/1996/4. A number of delegations supported going forward with a protocol (EU, AOSIS, Poland, Iceland); others suggested that the choice of instrument should be made after commitments have been further developed (US, Canada, Japan). Most delegations, and virtually all JUSCANZ delegations who spoke to the issue, emphasized the need to avoid the creation of new institutions and to minimize duplication. The implications of lack of agreement on rules of procedure regarding decision making within the Convention were raised as a concern with respect to the choice of instrument (amendments can go ahead with a three-quarters majority while a protocol must be adopted by consensus given the absence of agreed rules of procedure on decision-making.) A number of delegations stressed that the emphasis of the commitments was on enhancement of specific areas under the Convention notably on Annex 1 countries.

IPCC Second Assessment Report

As this was the first mtg of the Convention Bodies since the adoption of IPCC's the Second Assessment Report (SAR) in Rome in Dec 1995, it was a key agenda item at QELRO's and Policies and Measures Workshops as well as the SBSTA. Bert Bolin, the Chairman of the IPCC, also spoke both at SBSTA and AGBM plenaries. In general, it turned out to be a difficult issue, which was discussed at length.

There was a consensus that IPCC's Second Assessment Report (SAR) was the most authoritative, intergovernmentally-agreed source of available scientific and technical information on causes, impacts, and response policies to address climate change. However, in terms of whether some of the key findings should or should not be included in the conclusions of the SBSTA to the