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# EUROPEAN SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT FORUM

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**EMBARGO : 14.30 MARCH 4, 1996**

## SCIENTISTS ATTACK 'OFFICIAL CONSENSUS' ON GLOBAL WARMING

On 4 March 1996... A group of internationally-renowned scientists challenge the 'official consensus' on global warming in a volume published today by the European Science and Environment Forum (ESEF). The 'official consensus' of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), the main governmental organisation addressing these issues, is criticised for presenting premature certainty to policy-makers on many issues which are far unresolved amongst scientists.

Four scientists contributing to the report offer a range of alternative views to the official consensus on global warming:

The study of global climate change has emerged as a relatively new multi-disciplinary branch of science, but the debate is not advancing because the IPCC has imposed a consensus upon it, which is demanded by politicians to make policy decisions.

The IPCC undermines its scientific integrity by condoning over-simplified summaries of extremely complex studies in such a way that they can be easily misinterpreted.

The IPCC's predictions of global climate change are generated from models which are based on crude approximations, have an inadequate physical basis, and exclude several extremely important factors.

EMBARGO : 11 A.M. MARCH 4, 1996

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*Geneva, March 4, 1996...* A group of internationally-renowned scientists challenge the "official consensus" on global warming in a volume published today by the European Science and Environment Forum (ESEF). The "official consensus" of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), the main governmental organisation addressing these issues, is criticised for presenting premature certainty to policy-makers on many issues which are far from resolved amongst scientists.

The 24 scientists contributing to the report offer a range of alternative views to the official consensus on global warming :

- they argue that the case made by the IPCC is "oversimplified" and "unjustified" ;
- the models on which the cases rest are crude and inadequate ;
- many of those making the case are driven by the need to attract more funding.

Dr. John Emsley, editor of the report and Science Writer in Residence at Imperial College, London, said :

"The IPCC summaries have persuaded the public that there is a scientific consensus on the causes, degree and possible effects of global warming. There is no such consensus - except where it has been achieved by excluding the many dissenting scientific voices on these issues.

- These predictions formed the basis of the UN Climate Treaty in 1992. Improvements in these computer-generated models over the past five years have resulted in predicted warming being reduced by a third, but policy remains unchanged.
- The pressure for scientific consensus on climate change predictions arose not from researchers, but from managers who had to attract funding to major global research programmes and believed that policy-makers demanded such a consensus. The delivery of a scientific consensus on global warming has given legitimisation to a series of policy objectives which have little to do with science and has allowed governments to promote particular objectives in global diplomacy.
- There are many factors affecting global temperature, most of which are not properly understood, yet the IPCC Policy Makers' Summary attempts to explain climate change almost entirely in terms of changes in man-made emissions of carbon dioxide (the quality of the data on this and its interpretation by the IPCC Policy Makers' Summary is also highly questionable). Dr. Jack Barrett of Imperial College, London, concludes "All the factors which are responsible for influencing the Earth's surface temperature need to be more firmly established and understood, together with their interdependencies, before any meaningful predictions can be made."
- The human contribution to atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> (through burning fossil fuels) is at most 4%. The warming potential of this amount of CO<sub>2</sub> is well within natural climatic variability.
- The oceans are able to absorb most of these 'extra' emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>. Global climate is primarily determined by the enormous heat energy stored in the oceans.

- Any benefit of climate change is usually ignored in favour of pessimistic visions. Rising levels of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere could cause “dangerous” warming, but will definitely promote plant growth and at the same time reduce plants’ demand for water. This should lead to a greening of the Earth and there are signs that this has already begun.

Dr. John Emsley, editor of the report and Science Writer in Residence at Imperial College, London, said:

“The IPCC summaries have persuaded the public that there is a scientific consensus on the causes, degree and possible effects of global warming. There is no such consensus - except where it has been achieved by excluding the many dissenting scientific voices on these issues.

Global climate change is an important issue that requires a free and mature debate about the scientific validity of many of the predictions and hypotheses being made about it. Unfortunately, the IPCC and many politicians and organised interests are stifling this debate by demanding a premature and wholly unjustified consensus on global warming. The ESEF is determined to open up the debate so as to promote the practice of good science and free debate on one of the most critical issues facing scientists and policy-makers today.”

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*to editors:*

The ESEF (the European Science and Environment Forum) was established in 1994 by John Emsley (a chemist at Imperial College, London), Dr. Frits Böttcher (Director of the Royal Institute for the Study of Natural Resources, The Hague) and Roger Bate (Director of Environment Unit at the Institute of Economic Affairs, London). The Forum has 54 members drawn from 12 countries across Europe who, while holding many different scientific views, are deeply critical of and concerned about the premature certainty and consensus that exists among many organisations and politicians who seek to influence or shape policy on environmental issues. The Forum is independent, non-profit making and is funded entirely by revenues from publications.

*The Global Warming Debate : The Report of the European Science and Environment Forum*. Available for £ 17.00 (cheques payable to "ESEF" ; price includes p&p) from Elaine Mooney, ESEF, 73 McCarthy Court, Banbury Street, London, SW11 3ET or fax (71 924 2307 or e-mail : 101627.2464@compuserve.com - ISBN 0952773406