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# INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

PNUE
UNEP

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Mr. John Shlaes
Executive Director
Global Climate Coalition
1331 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20004
USA

COPY

Mr. Donald H. Pearlman
Executive Director
The Climate Council
Suite 700
2550 M Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20037
USA

Dear Mr. Shlaes and Mr. Pearlman,

I am replying to your letter dated 30th May in which you make allegations that IPCC procedures were not followed in the preparation of the final version of chapter 8 of the Report of Working Group I in the IPCC Second Assessment Report (1995). As I explain below, your allegations are completely unfounded.

The detailed procedures for acceptance of the background documents that underpin the scientific assessments are described under the heading 'Reports Accepted by Working Groups' in the IPCC Procedures . Here, the detailed procedures for review of the drafts by experts and by governments are described. In particular, the responsibilities of the Lead Authors are clearly laid out both in the main text and in Annex 2. It is clear that the Lead Authors have the overall responsibility for the background documents, for ensuring that review comments are properly considered and for ensuring that 'the reports present a comprehensive, objective and balanced view of the areas they cover'.

The role of the Plenary Meeting of the Working Group is also explained in the Procedures. The background documents are not to be 'approved in detail' but accepted by the Working Group. In 'accepting' the draft documents the Working Group is expressing its view that the objective stated above that they are 'comprehensive, objective and balanced' has been achieved.

IPCC Secretariat, WMO, 41, Av. Giuseppe-Motta, C.P. N° 2300, 1211 Geneva 2 SWITZERLAND
Phone: +41 22 7308 215/254/284 Fax: +41 22 7331 270 Telex: 414199 OMM CH E-mail: narasimhan.sundararaman@itu.ch

After the draft of the chapters of the Report of Working Group I had been sent out on 9 October 1995, in preparation for the Working Group Plenary Meeting in November in Madrid, additional significant review comments were received, including a number which referred to chapter 8. For instance, the United States government wrote in with their points for review and also commented as follows: "Finally, in comparing the text in the Summary for Policymakers and in the chapters, we have noted several inconsistencies, including some between different sections of the chapters. In keeping with past practice in WG I, it is essential that the chapters not be finalized prior to the completion of the discussions at the IPCC [WG I] Plenary in Madrid, and that the chapter authors be prevailed upon to modify their text in an appropriate manner following discussion in Madrid."

A substantial proportion of the Madrid meeting of Working Group I in November was devoted to presentation and discussion of the material regarding the detection of climate change in chapter 8 and in the relevant part of the Summary for Policymakers. Two of the Lead Authors, Dr B. Santer and Dr T.M.L.Wigley, were present at the Madrid meeting and spent a great deal of time both in the sessions themselves and outside the meetings to explain the content and the balance of their chapter.

Further review comments from experts and government delegates were also received by the Lead Authors in Madrid and, during the course of the Plenary, suggestions were made to them for improvements in the clarity, the overall consistency and the presentation of the chapter. On several occasions during the Meeting they were formally asked by the Meeting itself to consider modifications. In 'accepting' the chapter, the Plenary Meeting clearly expected that the Lead Authors would review the draft in the light of the proposals for improvement which had been made. Subsequent changes to the draft of the chapter were under the full scientific control of Dr Santer, the Convening Lead Author of chapter 8.

I was present myself at the Madrid meeting and I have consulted with Sir John Houghton and Dr Gylvan Meira Filho, the Co-Chairmen of Working Group I, and some members of the IPCC Bureau who were present at Madrid. We are completely satisfied that the revisions made by the Lead Authors to chapter 8 conformed to the guidance given to them at the Plenary Meeting of the Working Group in Madrid.

At the tenth session of the IPCC (Nairobi, 10-12 November 1994), Governments agreed to a work plan which resulted in only two weeks being available between the WG I Plenary Meeting (Madrid, 27-29 November 1995) and the eleventh session of the IPCC (Rome, 11-15 December 1995). This made it impossible to have the full WG I assessment in final form for the Rome session. While this did not involve overriding the Procedures as amended and the time table agreed to at Nairobi, having the documents available for the Rome plenary would have allowed all delegates, including NGOs, to be informed about the precise text which had been crafted as a result of the WG I Plenary and which was to be submitted for publication. The difficulties which the approved schedule presented were known in Nairobi. NGOs, including the GCC and the Climate Council, attended the Nairobi meeting, and were informed of this schedule at that

time. In retrospect, while not a violation of procedure, it would have been desirable to avoid this very close scheduling.

Regarding the relation between the material in the chapter and that in the Summary for Policymakers which you also raise in your letter, I agree completely with your statement that science should inform policy not be conformed to policy. The Madrid Plenary Meeting illustrated very well this particular point. The presence of Lead Author scientists at Madrid ensured that the Summary for Policymakers was based on the science as presented in the draft chapter and as expounded and explained by the scientists themselves. I fully support the manner in which the Lead Authors consistently refused to bow to the very substantial pressure apparent in Madrid to modify the scientific conclusions for politically motivated or policy reasons.

I invite you to compare carefully the revised chapter 8 as now published, the draft version of it which was available at Madrid (the Madrid draft) and the Summary for Policymakers. The scientific information contained in each is the same both as regards its content and its balance. It should be noted in particular that the essential contents of the last section of chapter 8 of the Madrid draft are now contained within the earlier parts of that chapter in the published version. I am fully convinced that the changes incorporated in the revised version were made with the sole purpose of producing the best possible and most clearly explained assessment of the science and were not in any way motivated by any political or other considerations.

I wish to express my disquiet at the way in which you have impugned the scientific and procedural integrity of the IPCC and of some of those scientists who have contributed to its work. Further, you have given your allegations wide circulation before allowing the IPCC or the Lead Authors to comment.

I can assure you that the IPCC will continue to pursue its task in an open, transparent and fair manner.

I am copying this letter to the Lead Authors and contributors of chapter 8 and those to whom you sent . ours.

Yours sincerely,

Bert Bolin

Bert Bolin
Chairman, IPCC

# Statement of Dr. Bert Bolin

Dr. Fred Singer of the University of Virginia has distributed a press release, in which he refers to remarks I made, when he early this month presented his views about the IPCC Second Assessment (SAR) in Stockholm. As Chairman of the IPCC, and on the basis of the assessment conducted by the IPCC, I criticized a number of his "findings" severely. His account of what happened at this meeting is inaccurate and misleading.

The six "latest findings" that he refers to in his press release have either been considered by the IPCC and refuted or have not been published in the open scientific literature so that they could be assessed for their validity. The view that man is not so important as to affect the climate (quotation attributed to Professor Wibjorn Karlen) is irrelevant, since no evidence is presented that supports this view. Regarding Singer's self-congratulatory statement that the "discussion appeared to go decidedly against Dr. Bolin's IPCC position," I had rather the impression that Dr. Singer's views did not convince those present.

Singer misinterprets several of my statements:

I do not mistrust the "Greens". This is not to say that I agree with everything they say, however, just as I do not agree with everything that might be said by representatives of the fossil fuel industry, for example. My role as Chairman of the IPCC is not to trust or mistrust any of the participants in the climate-change debate, whether they belong to environmental groups, industry associations or individual scientists. My role is to ensure that the IPCC process is fair and unbiased, as far as possible, and open to all those with a scientifically-supportable viewpoint based in research.

The occurrence of extreme events requires careful analysis. The problem with Fred Singer's press release is that he is not as precise as he should be. There are different types of extreme events. In fact, the IPCC SAR, which Singer says provides an accurate account of the state of scientific knowledge, highlights some of these distinctions, see pp. 168-173 of Volume I of the SAR for a discussion of our present scientific knowledge about extreme events. Observations show that some extreme events are becoming more intense(heavy rainfall events in some regions), some are becoming less intense(cold spells), while others show no statistically significant changes (hurricanes). These changes are consistent with the kind of changes that would be associated with a warmer climate. While it cannot yet be concluded that these changes are caused by human-induced changes of climate, neither can this association be excluded. To state that these sorts of changes that 'are consistent' with the predicted effects of climate change, as Vice

President Gore is quoted to have stated, is a scientifically accurate statement and no cause for criticism.

The key issue is of course, if a human induced change of climate can be detected. The global mean temperature has increased by 0.3-0.6 degrees C, since the late 19th century and about 0.3 degrees over the last 40 years. Is part of this change due to our emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere? Climate varies naturally and the issue is if we can detect a human-induced change of climate in spite of the "noise" due to the natural variability. The IPCC concluded: "our ability to quantify the human influence on global climate is currently limited because the expected signal is still emerging from the noise of natural variability and because there are uncertainties in key factors. These include the magnitude and patterns of long term natural variability and the time-evolving patterns of forcing by, and response to, changes in concentrations of greenhouse gases and aerosols, and land surface changes. Nevertheless, the balance of evidence suggests that there is a discernible human influence on global climate." It should be noted that the inertia of the climate system and the counteracting effects of aerosols delay the appearance of a climate change, makes the issue more difficult to grasp, but does not diminish the possible seriousness of the issues.

Finally, I did not take issue with Tim Wirth, Under-secretary of State for Global Affairs in this debate. As Chairman of the IPCC, I have no reason to comment on the views of Mr. Wirth on this matter, nor did I do so at the meeting in Stockholm. Regarding the substance of the comment attributed to Mr. Wirth, namely that scientific questions about climate change have been resolved, considerably more research is required to fully clarify and interpret what is happening to climate, especially on a regional scale, and how changes will affect human societies over the years to come. It is also important to note that most governments at the Ministerial segment of the Second Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (held in Geneva in June 1996) concluded that there is sufficient evidence to warrant reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, based on IPCC's Second Assessment Report. Therefore, the large majority of governments, while recognizing uncertainties, believe that we know enough to take some actions now. This position was supported by an independent group of 2000 scientists in a letter to President Clinton several weeks ago.

I find it most annoying that the account of the meeting in Stockholm has been presented in such a biased manner.

Bert Bolin (signed)