

10 March 2010

Dear Dr. Dijkgraaf,

We are writing to request that the InterAcademy Council (IAC) conduct a thorough, independent review of the processes and procedures followed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in preparing its Assessment Reports.

As you are aware, the IPCC was established in 1988 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 43/53, to provide policymakers with a comprehensive and objective scientific risk assessment of the current status of climate change and its potential consequences for both people and the planet. The Assessment Reports of the IPCC, which are endorsed by the world's governments, are made possible thanks to the efforts of thousands of scientists who voluntarily contribute their time and expertise. Over the years, these reports have provided much of the scientific foundation for climate policy, in particular for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In recent months, a very small number of errors have been brought to light in the Fourth Assessment Report (AR4) of the IPCC, a document containing thousands of peer-reviewed and independent scientific studies. However, the bedrock scientific consensus on climate change as described in the Fourth Assessment Report remains unchanged, and indeed was reaffirmed by the world's environment ministers meeting last month in Bali, Indonesia.

Given the gravity of the global threat posed by climate change, it is vitally important to ensure full confidence in the scientific process underpinning the assessments of the IPCC. Governments and the public at large look to the IPCC as the world's most authoritative scientific body for assessing climate risk and informing climate policy.

Dr. Robbert H. Dijkgraaf
Co-chair
InterAcademy Council
Amsterdam

As the IPCC embarks on its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), it is imperative that its work be as accurate, objective, comprehensive and transparent as possible, and that the potential for any future errors is minimized. It is vitally important that every step of the assessment process be clear, consistent, and comprehensible. The IPCC must also be able to respond quickly and transparently to any questions of its work, recognizing that the world now operates in a 24-hour media cycle.

To this end, we, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, along with the Chair of the IPCC, are requesting that the IAC conduct an independent review of the IPCC processes and its procedures for preparing future Assessment Reports. Please find Terms of Reference attached for this independent review.

Consultations for conducting such a review were carried out within the United Nations system, in particular with the organizations sponsoring the IPCC, WMO and UNEP, as well as with the Vice-Chairs and Co-Chairs of the IPCC. Consultations were also held in February 2010 with environment ministers and senior government officials at the 11th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum. While expressing support for the unique role and value of the IPCC, ministers also recommended the need for an independent review of the processes and procedures of the IPCC.

UNEP and WMO, the parent organizations of the IPCC, have agreed to provide administrative support and channel the necessary government funds to support this review.

In order for the IPCC to benefit from the recommendations of the IAC in preparing its Fifth Assessment Report, we would ask you to submit your report by 31 August 2010. The results of the review will then be submitted for consideration and decision to the 32nd Session of the IPCC to be held in October 2010.

We would be grateful if you would accept this invitation, and look forward to a reply at your earliest convenience. A similar letter has been addressed to Dr. Lu Yongxiang.

Yours sincerely,


BAN Ki-moon
Secretary-General
United Nations


Dr. Rajendra K. Pachauri
Chairman
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change



THE UNITED NATIONS

ipcc

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change



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Dr. Lu Yongxiang
Co-chair
InterAcademy Council
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Chairman

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