

March 10, 2010

Remarks to the United Nations
by

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Thank you and Good Afternoon.

I am Robbert Dijkgraaf, president of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and professor of mathematical physics at the University of Amsterdam.

Together with my colleague Lu Yongxiang, president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, I co-chair the InterAcademy Council, a multinational organization of the world's science academies.

As you know, the InterAcademy Council has been asked by the United Nations Secretary-General and the chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to undertake an independent review of the IPCC's processes and procedures.

Today, subject to final approval from the IAC Board, I am pleased to respond to the United Nations' request.

The InterAcademy Council is ready to take on the challenge of this important review of the IPCC. Our goal will be to assure nations around the world that they will receive sound scientific advice on climate science with which governments and citizens alike can make informed decisions.

First, let me tell you a bit about the InterAcademy Council. Founded in the year 2000, the IAC was created by science academies around the world to mobilize top scientists and engineers from all nations to provide evidenced-based, peer reviewed advice to international bodies like the UN.

The board of the InterAcademy Council is currently composed of presidents of 15 national academies of science – representing Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

We provide a function that has been identified as important to the United Nations. In fact, our first report *Inventing a Better Future – A Strategy for Building Worldwide Capacities in Science and Technology* was released in this building in 2004. Our second IAC study, *Realizing the Promise and Potential of African Agriculture*, was commissioned by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and released here as well.

How do we work?

When we are asked to provide advice on a particular issue, the IAC assembles an international panel of scientific experts. Serving on a voluntary basis, panel members meet, investigate

relevant questions, and prepare a draft report with their findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

All IAC draft reports undergo intensive peer review by other scientists also selected for their expertise. Only when the IAC board is satisfied that peer review has been thoughtfully considered and incorporated will we issue a final report.

For this study, the IAC has been asked to establish an Independent Evaluation Group to conduct a review of the IPCC's practices and procedures. Our task is forward-looking: We have been requested to recommend measures and actions to ensure the quality of IPCC reports in the future. We enter this process with no preconceived conclusions.

Specifically, we have been asked to address the following:

1. Data quality assurance and data quality control at the IPCC
2. Guidelines for the types of literature appropriate for inclusion in IPCC assessments, with special attention to the use of non peer reviewed literature
3. Procedures for expert and governmental review of IPCC material
4. Handling of the full range of scientific views
5. Procedures for correcting errors identified after approval, adoption and acceptance of a report

We have also been asked to analyze the overall IPCC process, including the management, administration, and transparency of the IPCC and the way in which it handles possible errors and communicates them to policymakers and the public.

We will look at how the UN Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organisation, and how the UN system and other relevant stakeholders relate to the IPCC -- this with a view to strengthening and improving assessments as well as ensuring consistent application of IPCC procedures.

Finally, we have been asked to analyze appropriate communication strategies and examine how the IPCC interacts with the public and the media. The goal here is to better ensure the public is kept informed of IPCC's work.

In this study, as in all our work, the IAC will conduct its review independently according to the IAC's own procedures. Neither the United Nations, the IPCC, the WMO, nor the UNEP will exercise any oversight or control over the study process or our final report.

For this study, we have been assured that we will receive financial support from the United Nations. When finished, it will be delivered to the Secretary-General, the IPCC Secretariat, UNEP, and WMO.

And because work on the IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report has already begun, the IAC will endeavor to submit its report by the end of August 2010. This, we hope, will allow governments time to consider our report and take actions that may be necessary.

As with all our studies, the IAC will appoint scientists to this Independent Evaluation Group after an intensive vetting process designed to assure their scientific expertise, stature in the scientific community, a balance of scientific perspectives, and absence of personal conflicts of interest.

These scientists will serve *pro bono* – only their travel and meeting expenses will be paid. The Independent Evaluation Group will not serve under obligation to any government, the IPCC, or to the United Nations.

Climate change is one of the most significant scientific and public policy questions of our time. As scientists, we have a responsibility to assure the best scientific practices are in place. The scientific process moves forward with thoughtful review. And we hope our study will contribute to that process.

Again we thank the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the chair of the IPCC Dr. Pachauri for this opportunity to help ensure the quality of future IPCC reports.

And now, I look forward to answering your questions.

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