

## Scientists to review climate body

By Richard Black  
Environment correspondent, BBC News website

**UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has asked the world's science academies to review work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).**

Work will be co-ordinated by the Inter-Academy Council, which brings together bodies such as the UK's Royal Society.

The IPCC has been under pressure over errors in its last major assessment of climate science in 2007.

Mr Ban said the overall concept of man-made climate change was robust, and action to curb emissions badly needed.

The Inter-Academy Council will convene a panel of experts to conduct the review, and will be run independently of UN agencies.

**" One issue that was raised at the UN news conference was how independent the scientists on the Inter-Academy Council's review panel will be from the scientists who contributed work to the IPCC in the first place "**

Richard Black

"Let me be clear - the threat posed by climate change is real," said Mr Ban, speaking at UN headquarters in New York.

"I have seen no credible evidence that challenges the main conclusions of [the IPCC's 2007] report."

Nevertheless, he said, there had been "a few errors" in the 3,000-page report (known as AR4), and there was a need "to ensure full transparency, accuracy and objectivity".

### Inside and out

Robbert Dijkgraaf, the council's co-chair, said the review panel will be chosen so that it includes both inside knowledge of the IPCC and outside perspectives.

"The panel will look forward and will definitely not go over all the vast amount of data in climate science," he said.

#### REVIEW'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Analyse the IPCC process, including links with other UN agencies
- Review the use of non-peer reviewed sources, and quality control on data
- Assess how procedures handle "the full range of scientific views"
- Review how the IPCC communicates with the public and the media

"It will see what are the [IPCC's] procedures, and how can they be improved, so we can avoid certain types of errors."

But Roger Pielke Jr, a professor of environmental studies at the University of Colorado who has recently criticised the IPCC over its assessment of the costs of climate-related disasters, said the terms of reference appeared to have some significant omissions.

"How will it deal with allegations of breakdowns in procedures in the AR4?", he asked.

"The terms of reference say nothing about looking at the AR4 procedures, but it would be difficult to do a serious evaluation without actually evaluating experience," he told BBC News.

"Should it ignore the AR4 issues, then it will risk being called a whitewash."

Prof Pielke also suggested the panel might look at apparent conflicts of interest within the IPCC's staff.

### **Lessons learned**

The conflict of interest charge has been levelled against the IPCC's chair, Rajendra Pachauri, over his business interests.

But standing alongside Mr Ban, he welcomed the review.

"The IPCC stands firmly behind the rigour and reliability of its Fourth Assessment Report from 2007, but we recognise that we can improve," he said.

"We have listened and learned from our critics, and we intend to take every action we can to ensure that our reports are as robust as possible."

The review was demanded by world governments at last month's meeting of the United Nations Environment Programme (Unep) Governing Council.

The Inter-Academy Council has been asked to finalise its conclusions by August, in time that its recommendations can be discussed and adopted at October's IPCC meeting.

[Richard.Black-INTERNET@bbc.co.uk](mailto:Richard.Black-INTERNET@bbc.co.uk)

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/science/nature/8561004.stm>

Published: 2010/03/10 22:06:03 GMT

© BBC 2012