

SPINNING THE CLIMATE

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The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was jointly set up by the World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Environmental Programme in 1988. It was set up in order to :

- Assess available scientific information on climate change: Working Group I
- Assess the environmental and socio-economic impacts of climate change : Working Group II
- Formulate response strategies: Working Group III

The second and third objectives depend heavily on the first, which will be discussed here.

The three Working Groups are made up of nominees of the two sponsors, but are dominated by Government employees, or recipients of Government finance. As Governments throughout the world have come to adopt policies dependent on the belief that greenhouse gas emissions are causing harmful effects on the climate, all of the Working Group members tend to be supporters of this view. as are the "Lead Authors" of the Reports who are nominated by them.

Drafts of all the main Reports of the IPCC are circulated for comment. Initially this was only to Government Environment Departments, who then consulted with local experts and interested parties before forwarding comments received. Nowadays, almost anyone can comment, provided they tell the right story. There are three drafts of each Report, the third being circulated only to Governments. There is evidence that some of the most extravagant claims only appear in the Final Draft.

The first report "Climate Change: The IPCC Scientific Assessment" was published in 1990 by the Cambridge University Press. It was edited by J T Houghton, G J Jenkins and J J Ephraums. It had 305 pages, a Foreword, a Policymakers Summary, an Introduction, 11 Chapters and 8 Appendices.

The report was used as a background to the 1992 "Earth Summit" at Rio de Janeiro which launched the campaign to reduce greenhouse gases, in the belief that they are responsible for "global warming".

The "Earth Summit" resulted in the setting up of the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) which initiated a system for reducing greenhouse gases by "Annex I" Governments.

The FCCC defined "Climate Change" in Article 1 as follows:

“a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods”

The whole exercise was set up in order to accumulate "evidence" that the "globe" is undergoing "global warming" as a result of increases in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. From the beginning there have been scientists who disagreed with this proposition but their views have not been included in the IPCC Reports. This was made clear in Appendix 4, of "Climate Change 1990" in an introduction to a list of Reviewers, with the statement:

"While every attempt was made by the Lead Authors to incorporate their comments, in some cases these formed a minority opinion which could not be reconciled with the larger consensus"

The Governments who signed the FCCC (which included New Zealand) have accepted the FCCC definition of "Climate Change" as legally binding. This means that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has the function of seeking to provide evidence to support this definition. The 1995 and subsequent reports however, had, as a footnote on the first page a disclaimer, as follows

"Climate change in IPCC usage refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as the result of human activity"

Even in this disclaimer, only greenhouse gases are allowed to "change" the climate. "Natural " climate phenomena are only "variable"

The IPCC still retain the term "Climate Change" in their title, to make their real objective plain and throughout the report "natural" climate influences are only considered in order to rule them out, marginalize their importance, or even recruit them as greenhouse effects.

The "Summary for Policymakers" arises because the Governments that have sponsored the Report wish to authorize it and ensure that it corresponds with their "Climate Change" policies. It is agreed line-by-line by representatives of the Governments. It is drafted mainly by selected scientists from the main Report, but it is sometimes not understood that they are acting on orders, not as independent scientists. The "Summary for Policymakers" is actually a "Summary BY Policymakers" as it is not just advice to other policymakers, it is a summary approved by the policymakers themselves. It is also a genuine consensus of their views, agreed by all of them, and it does not necessarily coincide with the views of any of the scientists who participate in the Report.

The Chapters of each Report are arranged in such a way as to promote the idea of climate change caused by greenhouse gas increases. Actual climate observations are either obscured, or "smoothed", "filtered", "linearized", "interpolated", with "outliers" eliminated, in order to try and find "trends" which can be fitted into the mould decided for them.

The First Report set the pattern for all of them. The Chapter Headings were

1. Greenhouse Gases and Aerosols.
2. Radiative Forcing of the Climate
3. Processes and Modelling
4. Validation of Climate Models
5. Equilibrium Climate Change
6. Time-Dependent Greenhouse-Gas-Induced Climate Change
7. Observed Climate Variations and Change
8. Detection of the Greenhouse Effect in the Observations
- 9 Sea Level Rise
19. Effects on Ecosystems
- 10.Narrowing the Uncertainties

Note that the Observations only appear towards the end (Chapter 8) and then only to illustrate the selected theory. As with all the Reports, much emphasis was placed on the Mean Annual Global Surface Temperature Anomaly Record, which is based on scientifically unacceptable basic data (unrepresentative samples), unacceptable average daily temperatures (based on a varying mean of maximum and minimum) from sites almost never monitored for suitability..

The first Report summarized the obvious fact that their models did not fit even this biased record by the statement

"The size of the warming is broadly consistent with predictions of climate models"

They thereby established the pattern they have followed throughout of qualitative, ambiguous statements without scientific support which are invariably regarded as certain proof by their sponsors.

This first Report gave a graph of past global temperatures that included the "medieval warm period" and the "little Ice Age", and they blamed the latter for the temperature rise shown in their record from 1910 to 1940. These opinions were denied in subsequent Reports.

The first Report also launched the "scenarios" of the future which are exaggerated beliefs of changes in human activity for the forthcoming century. This was the birth of the "Business as Usual" scenario. Two other sets of "scenarios" have been added since then

The details of the scenarios were kept away from the scientists by confining the work to a sub-committee of WGIII where they could even ignore the views of reputable economists, The scientists have found themselves lumbered with scenarios they are unable to question in the WGI Science Reports.

In "Climate Change 1992" (A supplementary Report to "Climate Change 1990") appears the statement *"Scenarios are not predictions of the future and should not be used as such"*.

In a Report entitled "Climate Change 1994", there was the statement *"Since scenarios deal with the future they cannot be compared with observations"*

This means they do not need to check whether any of them actually happen, so they tend to prefer "projections" so far ahead nobody can check.

In my comments on the first report I complained that the observations should be at the beginning, not the end. In the 1995 (Second) Report, they changed the Chapter headings, possibly to meet my comment, as follows

1. The Climate System: An Overview
2. Radiative Forcing of Climate Change
3. Observed Climate Variability and Change
4. Climate Processes
5. Climate Models : Evaluation
6. Climate Models – Projections of Future Climate
7. Changes in Sea Level
- 8 Detection of Climate Change and Attribution of Causes
9. Terrestrial Biotic Responses to Environmental Change and Feedbacks to Climate
10. Marine Biota Responses to Environmental Change and Feedbacks to Climate
- 11 Advancing our Understanding

The "Observations" had been moved up to number 3, and they no longer claim that they are only interested in their greenhouse properties. However, Chapter 1 "The Climate System" and Chapter 2. "Radiative Forcing" are still there to sell the greenhouse effect first.

I could claim a major improvement. The first draft of the 1995 Report had a Chapter 5 "Validation of Climate Models" as in the First Report. I pointed out that it was wrong since no climate model has ever

been "validated", and they did not even try to do so. They thereupon changed the word "Validation" to "Evaluation" no less than fifty times.

Perhaps I should explain what is meant by "validation". It is a term used by computer engineers to describe the rigorous testing process that is necessary before a computer-based model can be put to use. It must include successful prediction over the entire range of circumstances for which it is required. Without this process it is impossible to find out whether the model is suitable for use or what levels of accuracy can be expected from it.

The IPCC has never even attempted this process, and they do not even discuss ways in which it may be carried out. As a result the models are worthless, and their possible inaccuracy is completely unknown. The IPCC has developed an elaborate procedure for covering up this deficiency which is well described in the IPCC document on "Guidance Notes for Lead Authors on Addressing Uncertainties". It includes attempts to "simulate" those past climate sequences where suitable adjustment of the uncertain parameters and equations in their models can be made to give an approximate "fit", but they rely largely on the elaborate procedure for mobilizing the opinions of those who originate the models. Most of them depend financially on acceptance of the models, so their opinions are handicapped by their conflict of interest..

The outcomes of the models are classified in the following levels of confidence;

Very High Confidence; At least 9 out of 10 chance of being correct

High confidence. About 8 out of 10 chance

Medium confidence About 5 out of 10 chance

Low confidence About 2 out of 10 chance

Very low confidence. Less than 1 out of 10 chance

These figures do not possess statistical significance as they are pure guesswork. As might be expected Low confidence and Very low confidence are extremely rare.

In addition there are levels of Likelihood which take the place of predictions.

Virtually certain >99% probability of occurrence

Very likely >90% probability

Likely > 66% probability

About as likely as not 33 to 66% probability

Unlikely <33% probability

Very Unlikely <10% probability

Exceptionally Unlikely <1% probability

As before, you search very hard to find anything at all that is below "Likely"; and as before, the probability figures are pure guesswork and have no relationship to mathematical statistics.

These procedures are merely an orchestrated litany of guesswork.

From the 1995 Report on, the IPCC always makes "projections", never "predictions". They thus admit that their models are not suitable for "prediction" at all.

Also as everything is "evaluated" but not "validated". There can never be never preferred models or scenarios, as they have no way of choosing between them.

Almost all the "opinions" expressed are based on assuming that a correlation implies a cause and effect relationship. This defies a fundamental logical principle, but it is evaded by calling the process "attribution". They agree that this is unfair, but cover it up as follows

“unequivocal attribution would require controlled experimentation with the climate system. Since that is not possible, in practice attribution of anthropogenic climate change is understood to mean demonstration that a detected change is ‘consistent with the estimated responses to the given combination of anthropogenic and natural forcing’ and ‘not consistent with alternative, physically plausible explanations of recent climate change that exclude important elements of the given combination of forcings”.

Since the alternative explanations are always marginalized or distorted, “attribution” to “anthropogenic change” always wins. It is strange, though, that Very little credence is given to “anthropogenic” changes that do not involve greenhouse gas emissions, such as land use and urban changes.

The 1995 Report suffered from the problem which arises by agreeing the "Summary for Policymakers" after the Final Version of the Main Report has been produced. Since the conclusions of the "Summary" did not agree with the Government Approved "Summary", one of the scientists (B Santer) had the thankless task of altering statements in the full report to coincide with the "Summary". This problem has been reduced by the use of elaborate “guidelines” which are imposed on all contributors.

The 1995 Report had acquired an additional "Technical Summary. It had a strange halfway house status, being considered as "accepted by the IPCC but not approved in detail"

The 1995 Report let in some disagreement in the Chapter entitled "Climate Processes" , which included R S Lindzen, who is a prominent critic of the whole process, and it did develop the general theme that the models were far more inaccurate than is generally assumed. This happened also in the 2001 Report, but it has been eliminated from the 2007 Report.

The 2001 Report is the one I discussed in some detail in my book "The Greenhouse Delusion: A Critique of Climate Change 2001"

In this Report the "Observations" Chapter moved up to No 2 and "Radiative Forcing" moved down to No 6, but the rest are otherwise unchanged. However, the authors of Chapter 1 "The Climate System: An Overview" signed their own death warrant when they wrote:

“ The fact that the global mean temperature has increased since the late 19th century and that other trends have been observed does not necessarily mean that an anthropogenic effect on the climate has been identified. Climate has always varied on all time-scales, so the observed change may be natural”

This true statement has led to the replacement in "Climate Change 2007" of this introductory Chapter with a completely different Chapter entitled "Historical Overview of Climate Change Science" which is a highly selective history boosting the activities of the IPCC.. One of its features is to conceal the very existence of measurements of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration before 1958 which show a variability which would interfere with the IPCC calculations of “radiative forcing”

The Chapters in "Climate Change 2007" are only slightly rearranged and they all push the same message, enforced by an increase in gloomy "opinions" derived from the "spin" process described herein. The key claim of "Climate Change 2007" is

"Most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperature since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations'

This is a typical example of the technique they have used throughout. There is enough for enthusiasts to persuade themselves that the "science is settled" plus sufficient qualifications for the IPCC to claim they never said they were certain, when they are eventually proved wrong. Since there has been no

"global warming" for the past 8 years, and we are currently shivering from the cold in New Zealand, and elsewhere, perhaps that day will come soon.

It is all a magnificent example of what public relations can achieve, but the consequences for most of us, and for the scientific community before it is eventually exposed for the deception that it is do not bear contemplation.