



UN NEWS CENTRE

Top UN green official defends conclusions of landmark climate change report



6 February 2010 – The great weight of science still supports the findings in a landmark 2007 report from a United Nations-backed panel of experts that global warming is man-made, the head of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said today following recent attacks from climate change sceptics over a mistake in the assessment.

Defending the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) against criticism for a mistake made in its 2007 report over the rate at which the Himalayan glaciers would melt, UNEP Executive

Director Achim Steiner said that the panel has drawn upon the expertise of thousands of the best scientific minds for some 22 years.

“It is quite right to pinpoint errors, make corrections, and check and re-check sources for accuracy and credibility,” Mr. Steiner wrote in an [opinion piece](#) published in Turkey’s English-language Today’s Zaman.

However, the “time has really come for a reality check,” said Mr. Steiner, noting that the IPCC has acknowledged the need for stringent and transparent quality-control procedures to minimize any such risks in future reports.

“The overwhelming evidence now indicates that greenhouse-gas emissions need to peak within the next decade if we are to have any reasonable chance of keeping the global rise in temperature down to manageable levels,” he said.

“Any delay may generate environmental and economic risks of a magnitude that proves impossible to handle.”

Mr. Steiner warned that even without climate change the fact remains that a global transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient future is necessary, given the world’s population is rise from 6 billion to 9 billion in the next 50 years.

“We need to improve management of our atmosphere, air, lands, soils, and oceans anyway,” he said. “What is needed is an urgent international response to the multiple challenges of energy security, air pollution, natural-resource management, and climate change.”

He concluded that rather than undermining the IPCC’s work, efforts should be re-doubled to support its task in assembling the science and knowledge for the fifth assessment report in 2014.

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