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Good afternoon. My name is Donna Laframboise. Unlike most of the speakers at this remarkable event, I am not a scientist. I'm an investigative journalist who has spent the past 6 years examining the climate debate.

Three Things Scientists Need to Know About the IPCC



presentation to the World Federation of Scientists
August 2015
Erice, Italy

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BigPicNews.com

When I began my research, reading books and articles, and watching news programs and documentary films, I heard a great deal about an organization called the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - the IPCC.

This is the most important climate body in the world, for the simple reason that governments point to IPCC reports as *the reason* enormous-amounts-of-money should be spent fighting climate change.

The IPCC is typically described as a paragon of scientific virtue, a model of transparency. We're told it is staffed by the world's top scientists & best experts, and that it has been awarded a Nobel Peace Prize. The IPCC, we are advised, is an organization whose conclusions can - and should - be trusted.

At the beginning, I believed all of that. I had no reason not to. But then I started to notice that many of the things I'd heard about the IPCC are not, in fact, true. The title of my talk here today is *Three Things Scientists Need to Know About the IPCC*.

1. This is a political entity.
2. Scientists are not in charge.
3. The IPCC is a template.

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1. This is a *political* entity.
2. Scientists are not in charge.
3. The IPCC is a template that gets duplicated elsewhere. So even if your scientific specialty has nothing to do with climate you may, at some point, be invited to participate in an organization of this kind.

- 1. This is a political entity.**
2. Scientists are not in charge.
3. The IPCC is a template.

So let's start with the first point: Is the IPCC about science or about politics?

The screenshot shows the IPCC website's 'ORGANIZATION' page. The main text states: 'The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. It was established by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts, in the context of the UN General Assembly's request to the WMO and UNEP to jointly establish the IPCC.'

The highlighted callout box contains the following text: 'The IPCC is a scientific body under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). It reviews and assesses the most recent scientific, technical and socio-economic information produced worldwide relevant to the understanding of climate change. It does not conduct any research nor does it monitor climate related data or parameters.'

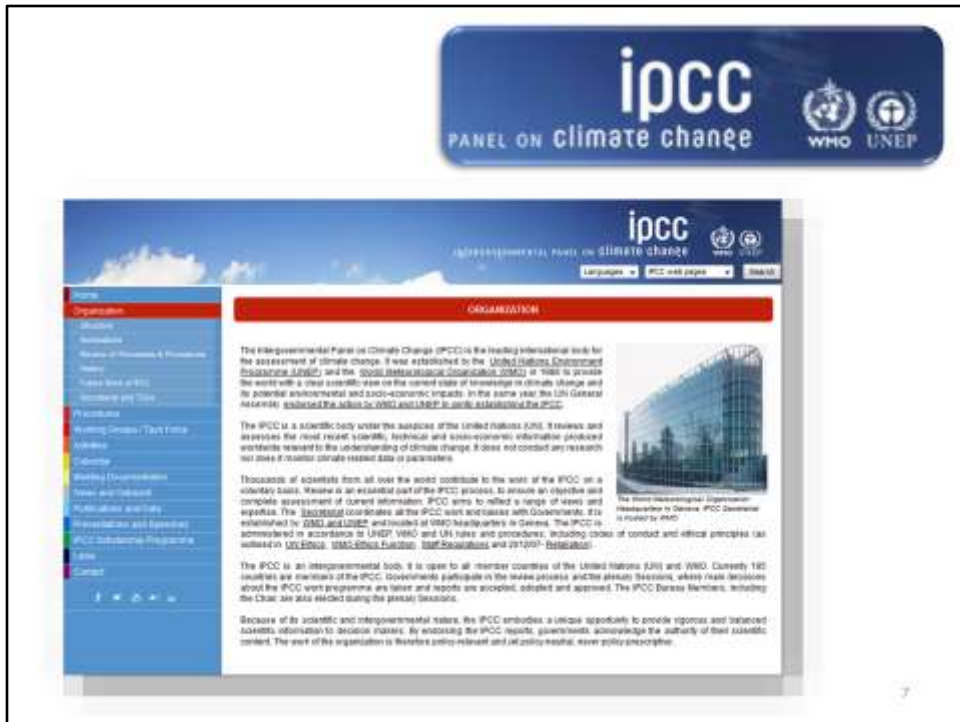
If you go to its website, you'll find the highly misleading claim that the IPCC is "a scientific body."

But let's take another look at its name.



It's called the *Intergovernmental* Panel. The definition of "intergovernmental" is: "between two or more governments." There's only one way to become a member of the IPCC - and that is to be a UN-recognized government. Taiwan, with its 23 million people – four times the population of Norway - isn't recognized by the UN, and therefore cannot participate in the IPCC.

Now when governments work together they are not doing science - they're doing politics. There's nothing wrong with politics, but if a *political* body is trying to convince us that it's a *scientific* body, we should be wondering why.



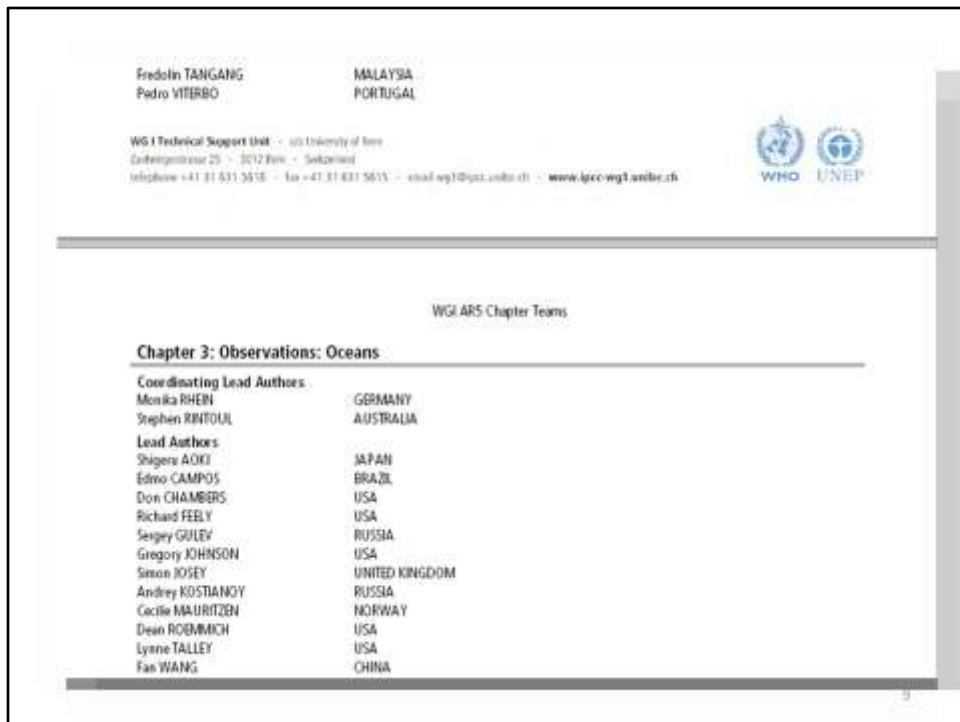
Back at the IPCC website, you'll notice the logos of two UN bodies in the top right corner - the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. Those two UN_logos appear on every IPCC report, press release, and official speech. This is an organization consisting of governments - an organization embedded in the UN structure.

What happens is that *governments* - not science academies - nominate individual scientists to help write IPCC reports. Thousands of individuals are nominated, hundreds are chosen to be lead authors, and the public is then told...



...that these are the world's finest scientific minds and that we should therefore trust these people's findings. Here's a news clipping from 1995. For 20 years, we've been told that the IPCC and the world's top scientists are one and the same.

But here's a curious point. The IPCC seems strangely uninterested in the actual credentials of these individuals. We all know that scientific expertise is rather specific. The website of this wonderful centre here in Erice tells us that "there are at least 10 recognized specialties" in subnuclear physics alone. And yet the IPCC never bothers to identify the expertise of its chosen personnel.



Here's a partial list of IPCC authors involved in its last report. We're informed that those who worked on a chapter about oceans came from Germany, Australia, Japan, Brazil and so forth. Why are we told this? Because the IPCC, being a UN body, cares deeply about *geographical* representation and *geopolitical* appearances.

A journalist such as myself has to Google the names of each one of these authors – and there are hundreds of them – in order to find out what it is that these people are experts in. The IPCC has a copy of all of their CVs. But it doesn't make those CVs public. Instead, it behaves as though the critical piece of information is a scientist's nationality.

1. This is a political entity.
2. **Scientists are not in charge.**
3. The IPCC is a template.

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Now let's take a look at point #2: Scientists are not in charge at the IPCC. Its latest report contains 60 chapters and totals more than 7,000 pages. Many good, sincere scientists toiled away on their own small portion of that enormous report. These people no doubt did their best to be honest and accurate.

But here's the problem: almost no one will ever read that 7,000-page report. Journalists certainly won't. We don't have that kind of time. The same is true of politicians - the people who vote on new laws and determine how trillions of euros will get spent. The few occasions in which I've spoken to a politician about my book-length exposé of the IPCC, it has become clear their lives are way too busy. They don't have time to read 200 pages, never mind 7,000.



Everyone knows this. Which is why the IPCC also produces documents in the 20-30-page range bearing the title: *Summary for Policymakers*. There's a Working Group 1 *Summary for Policymakers*, a Working Group 2 summary, and a Working Group 3 summary – for different sections of that 7,000-page report. These are the documents that matter - the ones that actually get read. These are the docs that influence media coverage and shape new legislation.

Now if scientists were in charge at the IPCC, at the end of the process these summaries would be written up by a small group, released into the world, and we'd all read these scientists' unadorned words. But that's not what happens. In fact, IPCC authors only *draft* these summaries. And then something incredible transpires.



A big IPCC meeting takes place. Attended by governments. Although some people in the room are scientists, the vast majority are diplomats, politicians, foreign affairs specialists, bureaucrats and assorted officials. These people then spend the next week *re-writing* the summary authored by scientists.



Every single paragraph in that draft gets projected onto large screens and discussed. The delegation from country X wants two sentences removed. The delegation from country Y insists that a new phrase be inserted. Graphs get added; tables get subtracted. And they keep talking about that one paragraph until all of the countries present are happy with it. Then it's taken down and the next paragraph is put up on the screen.



Even though there's a hard deadline this process needs to be finished by, these meetings aren't always well managed. So toward the end of the week, discussions often take place around the clock – they're still going on at 11 pm, and at 3 am. People who've been through this process say it becomes a bit of an endurance test. Who can stay awake?



The bottom line is that this is a week of *naked political horse trading* that goes on behind closed doors. Journalists are not allowed to witness what takes place, which is why we've been looking at official IPCC photos here. This is what they permit us to see.

It's only after the diplomats have haggled over this Summary - paragraph by paragraph - that the final version gets officially released at a press conference.

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Science has spoken again on climate change: UN chief

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Science has spoken yet again on climate change and time is not on the world's side, according to the UN Secretary-General.

On Sunday, Ban Ki-moon was speaking in Copenhagen to launch the latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Compiled by hundreds of scientists from around the world, Mr Ban said the assessment is the most comprehensive appraisal of climate change ever undertaken.

"With this new Synthesis Report, science has spoken yet again with much more clarity and greater certainty. Citizens are increasingly restless—but also eager to seize the opportunities of building a sustainable future."

The UN chief added that many tools and technologies are already available, including renewable energy sources which he says have long proven their value.

In December 2015, a UN climate change conference is scheduled to take place in Paris, France.

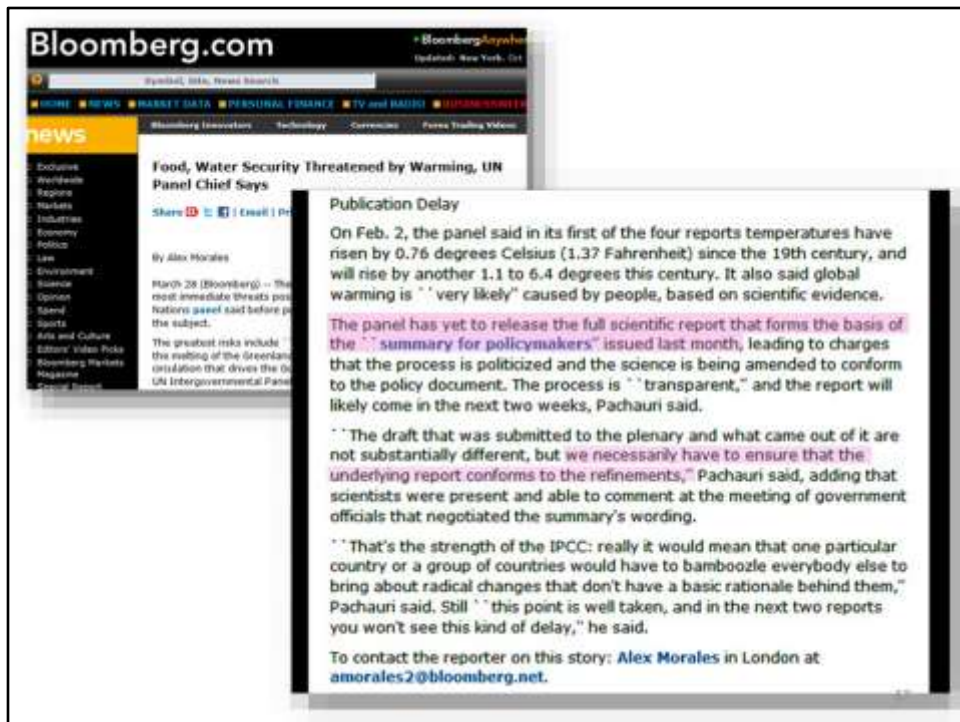
While in the Danish capital, Ban Ki-moon called on leaders to act towards a global agreement to preserve planet earth in a sustainable way.

Stephanie Coutris, United Nations.
 Duration: 1:12"

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The world is then told that *science has spoken*. But what's just happened has nothing to do with science. Scientific truth is not determined in the dead of night by UN-level negotiations. On what planet would such an approach make scientific sense?

But the bad news doesn't stop there. There's actually a step in the IPCC process in which the original, lengthy report gets amended so that it conforms to the politically-negotiated *Summary*. I am not making this up.



Here's a 2007 news clipping in which the IPCC's chairman explains to a reporter that the reason the *Summary* has been released before the full report, is because the IPCC needs to ensure that the report is consistent with the *Summary*. After the political meeting takes place, they go back and change the original report. In 2013, following one of these meetings, 9 out of 14 chapters had to be revisited. In Chapter 11, more than 20 changes needed to be made.

As a journalist, I find this bizarre. If I spend months writing a long, investigative magazine article in which I've worked hard to describe matters accurately, there is no way on Earth it would be OK for the sponsors of the process - the magazine's advertisers - to then sit around and negotiate between themselves what should and should not be included in my magazine article. Absolutely out-of-the-question. But this is normal operating procedure at the IPCC.

So what's going on here? How do we explain this outlandish, perverse process?

Jean-Pascal van Ypersele
IPCC Vice Chair
aspiring IPCC Chairman

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**Conclusion:
IPCC is eager to continue
serving the UNFCCC process...**

ipcc
INTERNATIONAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

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Well Rajendra Pachauri, who chaired the IPCC for 13 years, said that its "main customer" was something called the UNFCCC. Jean-Pascal van Ypersele is an IPCC official who's working very hard to become its new chairman. This is slide #26 from a presentation he gave a few years ago: The IPCC, he says, is "eager to continue serving the UNFCCC process." What does *that* mean?

About UNFCCC

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With 196 Parties, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has near universal membership and is the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol has been ratified by 192 of the UNFCCC Parties.

The ultimate objective of both treaties is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system.

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The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is an international treaty. If you're the UN, and you're trying to persuade nearly 200 different parties to act together, you need to start from somewhere. You need an established body of facts, a master document, a bible that everyone can use as a jumping-off point. IPCC reports, it turns out, serve that purpose.

In other words, the IPCC's primary function is to enable a *political* instrument - a treaty between nation states. This is high octane politics.

Now maybe you're sitting there, thinking to yourself: "What's the big deal? The IPCC's connected to a treaty. So what?"

The screenshot shows the IPCC website's 'ORGANIZATION' page. The header includes the IPCC logo and the text 'INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON climate change'. A search bar and language options are visible. The left sidebar contains a menu with the following items: Home, Organization (highlighted), Website, Home page, Review of Processes & Procedures, Home, Future Work of IPCC, Secretariat and TSNs, Procedures, Working Groups / Task Force, Activities, Calendar, Meeting Documentation, News and Outreach, Publications and Reports, IPCC Collaborative Programme, Links, and Contact. The main content area is titled 'ORGANIZATION' and contains the following text:

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change. It was established by the [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#) and the [World Meteorological Organization \(WMO\)](#) in 1988 to provide the world with a clear scientific view on the current state of knowledge in climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic impacts. In the same year, the UN General Assembly endorsed the action by WMO and UNEP to jointly establish the IPCC.

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Thousands of scientists from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC on a voluntary basis. Review is an essential part of the IPCC process, to ensure an objective and complete assessment of current information. IPCC aims to reflect a range of views and expertise. The [Secretariat](#) coordinates all the IPCC work and liaises with Governments. It is established by [WMO and UNEP](#) and located at WMO headquarters in Geneva. The IPCC is administered in accordance to UNEP, WMO and UN rules and procedures, including codes of conduct and ethical principles (as outlined in [UN Ethics](#), [WMO Ethics Function](#), [Staff Regulations](#) and [2012/07-Regulation](#)).

The IPCC is an intergovernmental body. It is open to all member countries of the United Nations (UN) and WMO. Currently 185 countries are members of the IPCC. Governments participate in the review process and the plenary Sessions, where main decisions about the IPCC work programme are taken and reports are accepted, adopted and approved. The IPCC Bureau Members, including the Chair, are also elected during the plenary Sessions.

Because of its scientific and intergovernmental nature, the IPCC embodies a unique opportunity to provide rigorous and balanced scientific information to decision makers. By endorsing the IPCC reports, governments acknowledge the authority of their scientific content. The work of the organization is therefore policy-relevant and yet policy-neutral, never policy-prescriptive.

On the right side of the text, there is a photograph of the WMO headquarters in Geneva. Below the photograph, the caption reads: 'The World Meteorological Organization headquarters in Geneva. IPCC Secretariat is hosted by WMO.'

Well, why isn't this fact acknowledged when the IPCC spends five paragraphs telling us about itself on its website? Why is a treaty it exists to promote_not even mentioned?


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The World Meteorological Organization Headquarters in Geneva. IPCC Secretariat is hosted by WMO

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Instead we're told about a *scientific view*, a *scientific body*, about thousands of *scientists* and *scientific information*.

What's happening here, ladies and gentlemen, is that science and scientists are being *used*. As window dressing - to obscure what's actually going on.

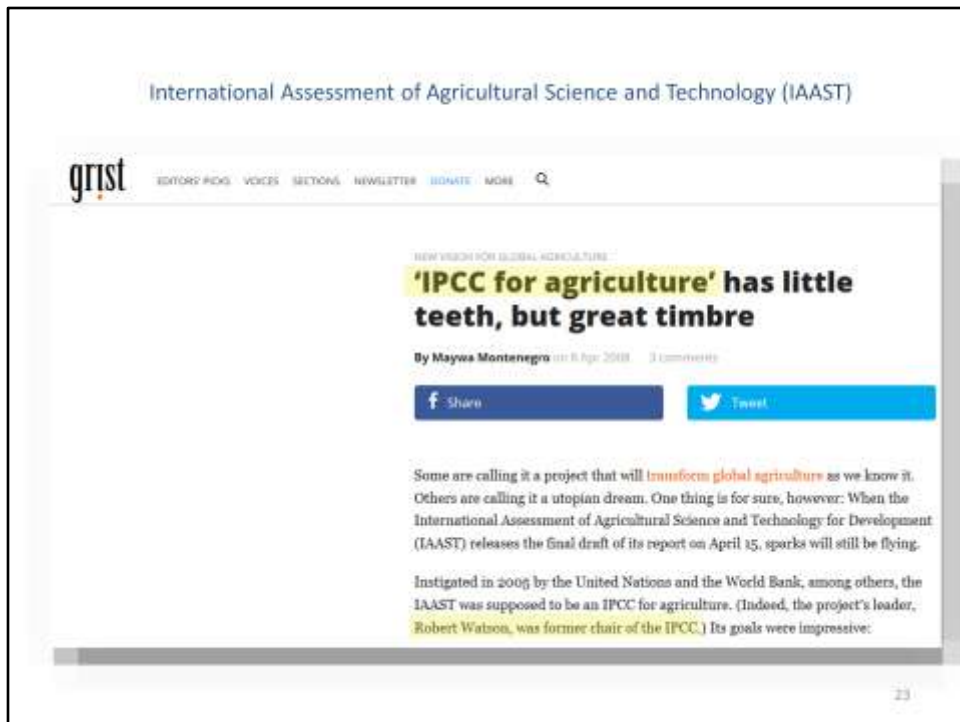
The UN recruits scientists to write a report. The UN then spends days re-writing the summaries - the only documents that really matter. For good measure, it goes back and tampers with the original report, too. And then, *abracadabra*, the UN points to the report and says: Our treaty needs to be strengthened - Science itself says so!

This is politics using the good name of science to accomplish its goals. THIS. IS. NOT. HONEST. And it's my job, as a journalist, to say so.

1. This is a political entity.
2. Scientists are not in charge.
3. **The IPCC is a template.**

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So now we come to my final point: The 27-year-old IPCC is, in fact, a template. It's part of a pattern in which the UN, again and again, exploits the good name of science.



Between 2003 and 2008, the UN sponsored the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology (IAAST). Described as an "IPCC for agriculture," this effort was led by Robert Watson – who had just wrapped up five years as IPCC chairman. In that instance, 400 scientists wrote the UN a big report.

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Published online 13 September 2011 | *Nature* 477, 262 (2011) | doi:10.1038/477262a

News

Science enters desert debate

United Nations considers creating advisory panel on land degradation akin to IPCC

Natalie Gilbert

A desert may need no defining, but desertification is not so easy to pin down. Although the loss of soil nutrients and moisture threatens roughly a third of the world's land area, imperiling farming and biodiversity, scientists lack a clear definition of it or agreed standards to measure its causes and progression. That absence has hampered global efforts to tackle these problems under the **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** — unable to track the impact of their funding, donors are reluctant to invest.

Next week, a meeting of UN member states in New York will begin to set out the steps needed to close that

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LIVING ON DRY EARTH
 Roughly one-third of the world's population lives in dry-land areas, according to the final report (also from the UN) Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

Category	Percentage
Hyper-arid land (desert)	17%
Good and land (potentially)	35.5%
Add land (desert)	4.1%
Dry additional land (desert)	43.4%

[Click for larger image](#)

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In 2011, *Nature* reported that the UN wanted to establish an IPCC-like body on soil degradation. The article was entirely candid about the fact that such a body would assist a treaty known as the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

Climate change

UN's 'IPCC for nature' to fight back against destruction of natural world

International body will organise global response to protect ecosystems 'that underpin all life - including economic life'

Juliette Kweil

Friday 11 June 2020 17:11 BST



2 likes 15 comments



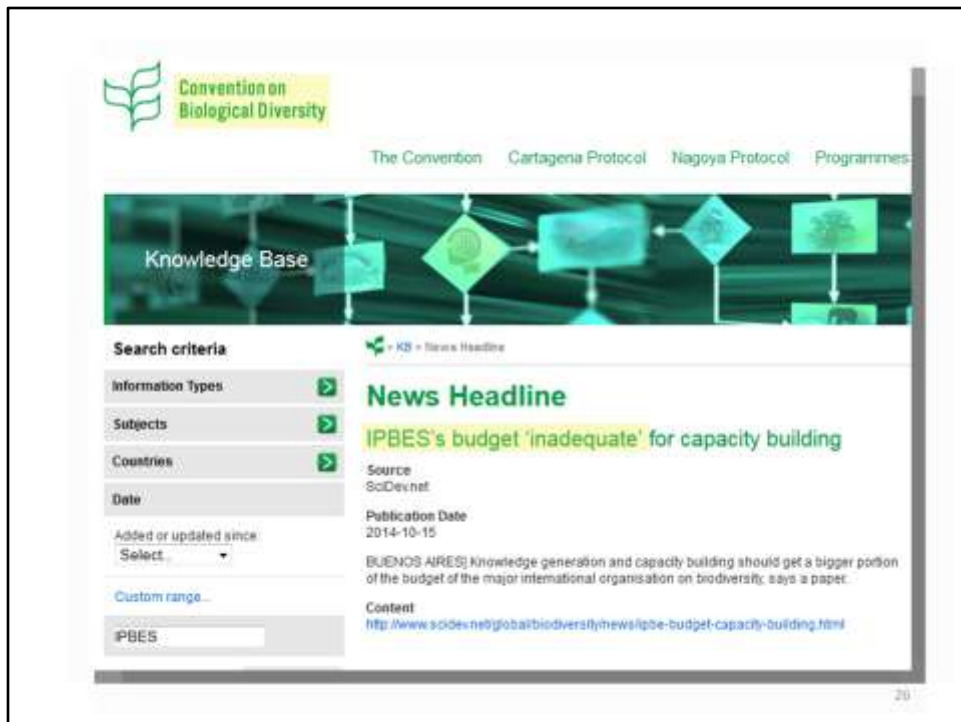
© An endangered Agalyptus genus, commonly known as a tree-toad 'frog', at the National Biodiversity Institute of Costa Rica. Photograph: Scott Little/PAF

World governments voted last night to set up a major new international body to spearhead the battle against the destruction of the natural world.

With growing concerns about the human impacts of destruction of habitats and species from around the world, from riots over food shortages and high prices, to worsening floods, and global climate change, more than 80 governments voted to

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And then there's the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services – *aka* the IPBES. In the words of the *Guardian* newspaper, this is an "IPCC for nature." Robert Watson is involved here, too. At the moment, he's a Vice Chair. And, what do you, know? This IPCC clone is linked to yet another UN treaty called the Convention on Biological Diversity.



That treaty's website recently mentioned that its own IPCC isn't being funded adequately.

Ladies and gentlemen: We live in a world in which people are suspicious of politicians, but still respect scientists. Politicians are therefore eager to borrow the prestige of science, to camouflage their own agenda with a veneer of scientific authority.



Dear Scientists: Be careful out there

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At some point in your career, the UN may try to use you to further its goals. Be careful out there.