

Scripps Scientist Urges Action to Better Communicate Climate Change

Richard Somerville among several researchers calling for better communication of climate change science

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As climate change takes center stage in two upcoming international events, Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego Distinguished Professor Emeritus Richard Somerville and colleagues argue that scientists have a duty to communicate their findings in a way that facilitates informed policy decisions.

In an open letter published in the Nov. 19 issue of the journal *Science*, Somerville and nine colleagues said that further delay on controlling greenhouse gas emissions could have serious consequences for society.

"We call for the science community to develop, implement, and sustain an independent initiative with a singular mandate: to actively and effectively share information about climate change risks and potential solutions with the public," the authors wrote.

Beginning Nov. 29, negotiators from countries around the world gather in Cancun, Mexico for the 16th Conference of the Parties convened by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. There national representatives will attempt to come to agreement on global actions to address climate change consequences.

Somerville will appear at a workshop on communicating climate change being held during the 2010 American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fall meeting, which begins Dec. 13 in San Francisco. Somerville will discuss the need for the science community to play a greater role in the dissemination of information on climate change risks and potential solutions. He will also present a talk at the AGU Fall meeting on the history of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and its future role. The IPCC has been criticized despite the valuable role it has played to date in summarizing knowledge about changing climate and even as predicted consequences of global warming begin to take place.

Having served a prominent role in the 2007 IPCC report that garnered criticism, Somerville brings special insight to a discussion of the world's leading authority on climate change. During his talk, Somerville will draw on examples from his recent online essay published in *Climatic Change*, titled "How much should the public know about climate science?"

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