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GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH  
(IAI)**

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Joint Position Paper  
by the  
Committee on Rules and Procedures  
and the  
Financial and Administrative Working Group

## **Using IAI Funds to Pay for Delegate Travel to EC and CoP Meetings**

At the thirteenth meeting of the Executive Council (EC) held in Panamá City, Panamá on July 17-18, 2001, the EC charged the Committee on Rules and Procedures and the Financial and Administrative Working Group to “study the possibility of supporting the participation of the EC members, and eventually the [Conference of the Parties] CoP members, in IAI institutional meetings using Core Budget funds (Article XIII – paragraph 1).”

Article XIII, paragraph 1 of the Agreement Establishing the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research states,

*A budget of operational expenses for the Institute, consisting of salaries for the Directorate and basic support for the Directorate, Scientific Advisory Committee, and Executive Council shall be supported by the voluntary contributions pledged annually for a three-year period by the Parties in accordance with the interests of the Parties. Such pledges shall be increments of US\$5,000. The adoption of the annual budget shall be by consensus of the Parties. The Parties recognize regular contributions to the operational budget are essential to the success of the Institute and that such contributions shall take into account the research resources of the contributing parties.*

As further background, both the Executive Council and the Conference of the Parties Standing Rules contain the same provisions for session attendance/participation.

*EC Rule 27*

*Plenary sessions and sessions of the Committees shall convene and carry out their work only in the presence of a quorum consisting of a majority of their respective members. In the event that the quorum is upset, the session shall be suspended.*

*CoP Rule 24*

*Plenary sessions and sessions of the Committees shall be convened and shall conduct their proceedings only in the presence of a quorum or a majority of their respective members. In the event that the quorum is upset, the session shall be suspended.*

It has already been decided that the IAI could use Core Budget funds to support the travel expenses of Committee, Task Force and Working Group members as follows:

- Airfare and per diem could be covered for Committee, Task Force or Working Group member for meetings not held in conjunction with an EC or CoP meeting
- One night of lodgings could be covered for a Committee, Task Force or Working Group member to attend a meeting held before or after an EC or CoP meeting

The issue to be addressed is whether the IAI should use Core Budget funds to support the travel of Party delegations to plenary meetings of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research such as the EC and CoP meetings in order to ensure a quorum (or whether the quorum requirement be changed).

The IAI was initiated to encourage regional cooperation and international coordination in the Americas with equal representation among the members. This sense of democracy and ownership has been fostered throughout the institutional and scientific development of the organization. In evaluating this issue, it may be important to consider the level of a Party's commitment to the IAI when they receive significant scientific and financial benefits from their membership, but are not prepared to accept the relatively small costs associated with their participation in IAI plenary meetings.

The Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties and of the Executive Council are silent on the question of payment of travel costs for those attending IAI plenary meetings on behalf of their Governments. Both sets of Rules refer to such meeting participants as "Representatives" of their Governments as signatories and Parties to the Agreement Establishing the IAI.

Additional observations:

- If travel funds were to be provided, there is no easy way to determine a particular person's eligibility for such funding. The total costs of supporting travel for Representatives to the referenced meetings – the EC and CoP -- at this point in time would probably be relatively small. However, once the availability of funds for such participation is widely known, the demand is likely to increase.
- Countries not contributing to the Core Budget are further straining that budget by requesting travel support.
- Embassy staff at the meeting locations are a possibility for Party representation at EC and CoP meetings.
- Conflict of interest could become an issue if country Representative are (or perceived to be) dependent upon the Directorate (and Core Budget) for travel support.
- No country is required to seek membership in the EC nor is it essential for the IAI to encourage membership by any specific country. Therefore, perhaps the IAI should consider whether a country's preparedness to contribute to the Core Budget and to support the participation of their Representatives in plenary meetings should be a consideration in electing Parties to the EC.

It is the joint recommendation of the Financial and Administrative Working Group and the Committee on Rules and Procedures that

- a. The travel expenses of country Representatives to meetings of the Executive Council and the Conference of the Parties continue to be the responsibility of country members; and
- b. The Conference of the Parties consider at its next meeting in February 2002 re-defining the definition of “quorum” in the Standing Rules of the Executive Council (Rule 27) and Standing Rules of the Conference of the Parties (Rule 24) so that the quorum is defined to be “the majority of Parties having paid their Core Budget contributions in full or part during the previous fiscal year”.

This recommendation is being forwarded to the fourteenth meeting of the Executive Council in Havana in November 2001 for consideration, with action/approval anticipated at the fifteenth meeting of the Executive Council in February 2002.