

UN science chief defends work, welcomes review

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In a Jan. 23, 2010 file photo the head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Rajendra Pachauri speaks during a press conference in New Delhi, India. Pachauri Friday May 14, 2010 cautioned the independent scientific committee reviewing the IPCC's work not to undermine scientists' motivation for contributing to reports on global warming. . (AP Photo/Mustafa Quraishi/file)

(AP) -- The head of the U.N. scientific body on climate change defended Friday the work of the thousands of scientists who contribute to its reports, even as he welcomed a review of procedures that produced errors undermining the panel's public credibility.

The chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Rajendra Pachauri, cautioned an independent scientific committee

reviewing the IPCC's work not to undermine scientists' motivation for contributing to reports on global warming.

The voluminous reports of the scientific panel are credited with raising the alarm that human emissions of [greenhouse gases](#) already have led to a gradual warming of the globe, and if unchecked could lead to catastrophic changes in [weather patterns](#), rising sea levels and the extinction of about one-third of the species on Earth. The IPCC shared the 2007 Nobel Peace prize with former Vice President Al Gore.

But its reports have been dismissed by climate skeptics who attribute [global warming](#) to natural cycles. The skeptics were bolstered by a series of errors in the IPCC's 2007 report.

Pachauri told the committee's first review meeting that the panel's conclusions are valid, even in areas where mistakes were discovered.

Pointing to the most glaring error, a claim that the world's glaciers will melt by 2035, Pachauri said glaciers are indeed melting, though not that fast. Nonetheless, glacial melt accounts for 28 percent of [sea level rise](#), and the panel's assessment on [glaciers](#) contains "a lot of facts which we can ignore at our peril."

Pachauri said the panel is comprised of volunteer scientists contributing several years of their own time and who disband after issuing their report. The panel has no mechanism for responding to criticism once the reports are issued, other than the small secretariat.

"We need to develop an ability and a capacity to communicate better with the outside world," he told the 15 top scientists from around the world summoned to sit on the review committee..

Pachauri acknowledged the response to the errors was inadequate, but

said the attack on the panel was unprecedented.

He said the panel's procedures already are robust, but he welcomed any suggestion that would improve accuracy.

The review is expected to take several weeks before it issues recommendations on how to tighten the IPCC procedures.

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