

RCP (09) 5th Meeting

ROYAL COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Minutes of a meeting held from 30th April to 1st May 2009 at the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining, London

Acting Chair

Dr Ian Graham-Bryce

Members

Professor Gordon MacKerron
Professor Judith Petts
Professor Michael Roberts
Professor Lynda Warren
Professor Nick Cumpsty
Professor Steve Rayner

Professor Michael Depledge
Professor Maria Lee
Professor Peter Matthews
Professor Joanne Scott
Professor Jeffrey Jowell

Secretariat

Tom Eddy
Jon Freeman
Rachael Yokoo-Laurence

Laura Pleasants
Yolanda Rizzi
Noel Nelson

A list of all ACTIONS agreed at this meeting is at **Annex 1**.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Item 1: Preliminary business

1. Apologies were received from *Sir John Lawton* and *Professor Liss* for the duration of the meeting, and from *Professor Matthews* for Thursday afternoon and for Friday morning.
2. *The Chairman* commented on Sir John Lawton's election to the US National Academy of Sciences and said he would draft a letter to Sir John on behalf of the Commission in recognition of this honour.
3. *The Chairman* reminded Members that there would be a Friday afternoon evidence session, and that guests from the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) would be present.

Item 2: RCP(09)4th: Draft minutes of the April 2009 meeting

4. Amendments to the minutes were suggested by Members and incorporated by the Secretariat.

DEMOGRAPHICS STUDY

Item 3: Oral Update on responses to date

Item 4: RCP(09)801 – Report on Forum for the Future roundtable

5. *Yolanda Rizzi* updated Members on information received in support of the demographic change study. She reported that settlement patterns, ageing population and growing population size were the themes most commonly mentioned. She reported that there is to be a Foresight study on International Migration. *Ms Rizzi* had attended a Forum for the Future roundtable event on population growth and sustainability in London in late April – *Professor Depledge* would be invited to a similar event in Bristol. A report on these events will be published in September or October.
6. Members agreed that it was important not to lose sight of the need for the RCEP report to focus on the environmental consequences of demographic change. Members were keen to hear from two individuals who are well-established authorities on demographic change: Sarah Harper and Steven Castles. Action point:
 - Secretariat to contact Sarah Harper and Steven Castles to invite them to speak to Members

ADAPTATION STUDY

Item 5: RCP(09)275: Project status report

7. *Jon Freeman* reported that the revised timescale gave Members an extra month to finalise the report. He reported that the legal review report would be presented at the June meeting and that he was in discussions for a review of the planning system. Members were reminded of the drafting meeting scheduled for 19th May.

Item 6: RCP(09)265: Supplementary materials from OFWAT

8. Members noted that there was awareness in the water industry of the possibility of water licence trading. Members discussed the feasibility of water trading in relation to adaptation to climate change, concluding that it was potentially a useful mechanism but an understanding of rights with respect to water is a prerequisite to any subsequent trading of such rights.

Item 7: RCP(09)266: Supplementary materials from NILGA

9. Members commented that the issue of leadership was apparent, in that leadership from Central Government with regards to adaptation to climate change did not appear to have been adequately provided in some instances. Members discussed the role of the Rivers Agency in Northern Ireland (as opposed to the Environment Agency) concerning responsibility in performing flood management functions. Action point:

- Secretariat provide information at the next meeting on the role of the Rivers Agency in Northern Ireland

Item 8: RCP(09)272: Supplementary Materials from WLGA

10. Members noted that this paper recognised the interaction between climate change and other global and national trends, e.g. energy consumption and population growth. Members agreed it would be necessary for society to get to grips with how key decisions, resources and legal mandates would be affected by climate change. For example, the siting of new nuclear power plant sites on coasts, which would require them to be adequately defended against the rising sea level, or the need to ensure that the elderly are cared for following a flood event, given that we have an aging population in the UK.

Item 9: RCP(09)264: Preparation for June oral evidence – Civil Contingencies Secretariat

11. Members noted this paper.

Item 10: RCP(09)263: Preparation for June oral evidence session – Environment Agency, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Northern Ireland Environment Agency

12. Members noted this paper.

Item 11: RCP(09)259: Preparation for oral evidence session – Natural England and Countryside Council for Wales

13. A transcript of the session will be made publically available (via the RCEP website) following publication of the adaptation report.

Item 12: RCP(09)276: Written responses from SNH and CNCC

14. Members noted this paper.

Item 13: Oral evidence session – Natural England and Countryside Council for Wales

15. A transcript of the session will be made publically available (via the RCEP website) following publication of the adaptation report.

Item 14: RCP(09)260: Preparation for oral evidence session – Audit Commission

16. Members noted this paper.

Item 15: RCP(09)251: Oral evidence session – Audit Commission

17. A transcript of the session will be made publically available (via the RCEP website) following publication of the adaptation report.

Item 16: RCP(09)261: Preparation for Oral Evidence Session – Association of British Insurers

18. Members noted this paper.

Item 17: RCP(09)277: Written response from IRM

19. This paper will be taken at the June meeting.

Item 18: Oral Evidence Session – Association of British Insurers

20. A summary of the session will be made available following publication of the adaptation report.

Item 19: RCP(09)280: Structure of the report – storyline

Item 20: RCP(09)273: Chapter 2 – What might need to adapt

Item 21: RCP(09)274: Chapter 3: Pathways to adaptation: guiding principles, methodologies and management

Item 22: RCP(09)278: How do we deliver adaptation

Item 23: RCP(09)279: Chapter 5 – Reviewing adaptation actions

21. Members had a discussion on the structure of the report and made changes to the draft documents.

Item 24: RCP(09)267: European Commission White Paper on adaptation

22. Members agreed this was an important paper that should be referenced in the adaptation report. Members noted the paper's statement that one can identify climate impacts and adapt with certainty. Members discussed that from the paper it seemed that very little funding would be available from the EU to help facilitate adaptation; they noted that current funding is committed until the end of 2013, and that EU Commission members will be changing at the end of the current year.

Item 25: RCP(09)269: Flexibility of the birds and habitats directive

23. Members agreed that this paper had provided useful information on the directives and regulation. Members noted that any legal challenge with regards to the habitats directive would be more likely on the way it is implemented as opposed to the directive itself. They compared this situation to REACH for nanotechnology – in principle the regulation is able to cope with nanomaterials, but in practice some changes are required in order for it to cope effectively.

Item 26: RCP(09)270: Floodnews

24. Members noted this paper.

Item 27: RCP(09)268: Financing sustainable coastal adaptation

25. Members had a discussion around whether the system proposed in this paper was workable.

SHORT STUDY ON LIGHT

Item 28: RCP(09)509: Draft report

26. Members discussed the draft report and agreed to make changes to specific chapters. Action points:
- *Professor Cumpsty* to make amendments to chapter 5 of the light study
 - *Professors Depledge* and *Warren* to make amendments to chapter 3
 - *Professor Rayner* to make amendments to chapter 1 (introductory paragraph and movement of sections 1.6-1.11 to chapter 2), chapter 2 and chapter 4.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Item 29: RCP(09)107: Green Paper on the content of the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

27. *Professor Jowell* introduced this paper. It was noted that the Government's Green Paper did not mention the references to environmental rights in the Constitutions of some other countries, e.g. South Africa.
28. Members considered whether the Commission should contribute to the discussion on the content of the Bill of Rights and Responsibilities. They concluded that since the Government's proposals were unlikely to be implemented before a general election, it would be preferable not to devote Commission time to this exercise at this stage.

ADAPTATION STUDY

Item 30: RCP(09)281: Preparation for lunch guests – US Government Accountability Office

29. Members noted this paper.

Item 31: RCP(09)262: Preparation for Oral Evidence Session – Severn Estuary Partnership

30. Members noted this paper.

Item 32: Oral Evidence - Severn Estuary Partnership

31. A summary will be made available when the adaptation report is published.

ANNEX 1

List of Actions agreed at the Commission's meeting on 30th April to 1st May 2009

Action Number	Action	By Whom
1	Secretariat provide information at the next meeting on the role of the Rivers Agency in Northern Ireland	Secretariat
2	<i>Professor Cumpsty</i> to make amendments to chapter 5 of the light study	Professor Cumpsty
3	<i>Professors Depledge and Warren</i> to make amendments to chapter 3	Profs. Depledge and Warren
4	<i>Professor Rayner</i> to make amendments to chapter 1 (introductory paragraph and movement of sections 1.6-1.11 to chapter 2), chapter 2 and chapter 4.	Professor Rayner