

Climate change definition as used in BACC

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(taken from section 1.1 of the BACC book)

In BACC, we address the problem of “climate change”, which is unfortunately differently understood in different quarters (e.g. Barring 1993; Pielke 2004). The problem is that “inconstancy” (Mitchell et al. 1966) is an inherent property of the climate system. Some use the term “climate change” to refer to “all forms of climatic inconstancy, regardless of their statistical nature (or physical causes)” (Mitchell et al. 1966). Also, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change broadly as “any change in climate over time whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity.” In contrast, the United Nation’s Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate that is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere, and that is in addition to natural climate variability over comparable time periods”. Obviously, it is rather important which definition is used, in particular when communicating with the public and the media (Barring 1993; Pielke 2004).

BACC has decided to essentially follow the IPCC-definition, and to add explicitly “anthropogenic” to the term “climate change” when human causes are attributable, and to refer to “climate variability” when referring to variations not related to anthropogenic influences.

Barring L (1993) Climate - change or variation? *Climatic Change* 25:1-13

Pielke R jr (2004) What is climate change? *Issues in Science and Technology* Summer 2004, pp 1-4

Mitchell JM Jr, Dzerdzevskii B, Flohn H, Hofmeyr WL, Lamb HH, Rao KN, Wallén CC (1966) *Climatic Change*. WMO Technical Note No 79, World Meteorological Organization, Geneva, 79 pp