

Mr Graham Stringer MP  
Select Committee on Science and Technology  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

21 September 2017

Dear Mr Stringer,

I am writing to draw your attention to some serious inaccuracies in your letter to 'The Times' and article in the 'Daily Mail' which were published on 20 September.

Your letter states: "We now know that the computer models that climate scientists have used for predicting imminent and catastrophic climate change are wrong". Similarly, your article in the 'Daily Mail' states: "In a study just published by the respected journal Nature Geoscience, a group of British academics reveals that the immediate threat from global warming is lower than previously thought, because the computer models used by climate change experts are flawed. According to these models, temperatures across the world should now be at least 1.3 degrees above the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century average, which is taken as a base level in such calculations, But the British report demonstrates that the rise is only between 0.9 and 1 degree." Further on in the article you refer to "broken computer models".

These statements misrepresent the findings of the paper on 'Emission budgets and pathways consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C' by Richard Millar and co-authors, which was published in 'Nature Geoscience' on 18 September. The paper is clear in the text and in Figure 1a that the estimates of warming and cumulative emissions at the end of 2015 lie within the 5-95 per cent range of the output from the ensemble of the Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 5 (CMIP5). The discrepancy to which you refer is between the estimate of warming and the mean value from the model ensemble. The text of the paper is explicit on this point. It states: "Although both quantities are individually consistent with the CMIP5 ensemble, in the mean CMIP5 response (coloured lines) cumulative emissions do not reach 545 GtC until after 2020, by which time the CMIP5 ensemble-mean human-induced warming is over 0.3°C warmer than the central estimate for human-induced warming to 2015." Hence your statements about climate models are factually inaccurate.

Your letter also makes the self-evidently false claim that "leading climate scientists have had an unjustified and unshakeable belief in these models". The authors of the paper, and indeed other climate scientists, have been very careful to explain the uncertainties around model forecasts of future warming. It is simply untrue to claim, as your letter does, that "they have also convinced the BBC and other parts of the scientifically illiterate establishment that these computer predictions are so accurate that it takes them beyond further debate and

**LSE**  
**Houghton Street**  
**London WC2A 2AE**

**+44 (0)20 7107 5027**  
**+44 (0)20 7107 5440**

**[gri@lse.ac.uk](mailto:gri@lse.ac.uk)**

**[lse.ac.uk/  
granthaminstitute](http://lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute)**

**Chair:**  
**Professor Lord Stern  
of Brentford**

scientific enquiry". If that were true, why would Dr Miller and his co-authors have bothered to produce their paper?

Professor Myles Allen, one of Dr Millar's co-authors, has made explicitly clear that your article in the 'Daily Mail' was inaccurate. His letter to the newspaper, which was published today, (21 September) states: "Graham Stringer MP misrepresents our study to claim global temperatures are not rising as fast as predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and suggests that action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is therefore no longer urgent".

Your 'Daily Mail' article contains many other serious inaccuracies. Throughout the article you refer to climate scientists in disparaging terms, such as "environmental warriors". You also state "I was therefore disappointed when my colleagues on the Committee, having conducted an inquiry into the 'Climategate' scandal, did not come to a more robust conclusion about the scale of the scientific manipulation at the unit". This is clearly a continuation of your campaign against scientists at the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, and is based on a serious and significantly inaccurate assertion about them. As you know, there have been several investigations, including by the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology of which you are a member, into the emails that were illegally hacked from the Unit in 2009. None of these investigations concluded that there had been "scientific manipulation" at the Unit, so your claim is, in essence, an unfounded smear against the scientists. The false claims made against the scientists at the Unit have placed them under great strain, and it is unfortunate that you have chosen to contribute again to the smear campaign against them.

Your article also claimed: "The International [sic] Panel on Climate Change warned that the Himalayan glaciers were melting away, a claim that it later admitted was false". That is not true. Chapter 10 of the contribution of working group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), published in 2007, stated on page 493: "Glaciers in the Himalaya are receding faster than in any other part of the world and, if the present rate continues, the likelihood of them disappearing by the year 2035 and perhaps sooner is very high if the Earth keeps warming at the current rate". However, in January 2010, the IPCC announced that this statement constituted "poorly substantiated estimates of rate of recession and date for the disappearance of Himalayan glaciers", and that "in drafting the paragraph in question, the clear and well-established standards of evidence, required by the IPCC procedures were not applied properly". But in its contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report, published in 2014, working group II covered on page 242 of Chapter 3 updated projections for the melting of glaciers, stating: "Results for the Himalaya range between 2% gain and 29% loss to 2035; to 2100, the range of losses is 15 to 78% under RCP4.5. The model-mean loss to 2100 is 45% under RCP4.5 and 68% under RCP8.5 (medium confidence). It is virtually certain that these projections are more reliable than an earlier erroneous assessment of complete disappearance by 2035." Hence your claim that the IPCC no longer warns that the Himalayan glaciers are melting is entirely false.

In addition, your article stated, following your false claim about Himalayan glaciers, that "Similarly, it was argued that global warming would bring a new wave of malaria sweeping across the world". You did not provide any explicit reference for this assertion but it was misleading to imply that the IPCC had made such a projection. In fact, the contribution of working group II to the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report in 2007 stated on page 393: "Projected trends in climate-change-related exposures of importance to human health will...have mixed effects on malaria; in some places the geographical range will contract, elsewhere the geographical range will expand and the transmission season may be changed (very high confidence)".

As you know, your position as a Member of Parliament means that you have more influence on these issues than many other individuals. Your membership of the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology means that there is an expectation that you place particular value on evidence and accuracy. Hence your inaccurate statements about climate change, while they may please your fellow Trustees at the Global Warming Policy Foundation, are a disappointment to the research community. Your inaccurate and misleading claims about climate change risk undermining confidence in the Select Committee at a time when its credibility is already being questioned because of its lack of female members. I note that in both your letter to 'The Times' and your article in the 'Daily Mail' you explicitly mention your membership of the Select Committee, but fail to disclose your affiliation to the Global Warming Policy Foundation.

I urge you to withdraw the inaccurate and misleading claims about climate change that you included in your letter and article and issue a public apology to the scientists at the Climatic Research Unit at the University of East Anglia.

I am copying this letter to the Chair and Clerk of the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R.E.J. Ward". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first letters being larger and more prominent.

Bob Ward  
Policy and Communications Director

Tel: 07811-320346

Email: [r.e.ward@lse.ac.uk](mailto:r.e.ward@lse.ac.uk)