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SCIENCE FICTIONS: UK'S ROYAL SOCIETY TO ISSUE MAJOR REPORT ON GEOENGINEERING SEPTEMBER 1; BAN REAL-WORLD EXPERIMENTS, SAYS ETC GROUP

The oldest scientific academy in the world, the UK's Royal Society, will release its long-awaited report on geoengineering September 1st 2009 in London. The report, drafted by a panel dominated by geoengineering enthusiasts, is widely expected to recommend that the government support more research and perhaps even real-world experimentation of these controversial new technologies that intentionally manipulate the earth's climate on a large scale with the aim of lessening the effects of climate change.

"Geoengineering is a bad idea, and, unfortunately, it may transform Lord Rees's book from musings to memoir," says Diana Bronson, researcher for the international technology watchdog ETC Group, referring to the Royal Society President's 2004 book, *Our Final Century*, which suggested that humans may not live to see the end of the 21st century.

Geoengineering can refer to sulphate-injections in the stratosphere and cloud-whitening to reflect sunlight away from the earth, fertilization of the oceans with iron nano-particles to try to increase their carbon-carrying capacity, intentionally modifying global weather patterns, among other techniques.

"The Royal Society may be cautious in their report but, in fact, when it comes to geoengineering, a yellow light can quickly turn green. For the climate to take notice, any geoengineering scheme would have to be massive – sulphate particles or whitened clouds would have to deflect a lot of sunlight and ocean fertilization would have to cover great swathes of sea. Even the most careful computer models won't be able to predict what will happen if an experiment is scaled-up and moved out of doors," argues Bronson. "If governments believe there is a techno-fix to the climate change conundrum that will let them off the hook at the climate change treaty negotiations in Copenhagen, they will throw precious time and dollars at sci-fi fantasies, overlook potentially devastating side effects and divert their attention from the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions at source."

ETC Group's new special report, "The Emperor's New Climate: Geoengineering as 21st century fairytale," questions the narratives commonly used by the geoengineering lobby to advance their agenda. "Contrary to what geoengineers are saying, this is a costly time-waster," says Bronson. The report calls for a broader international discussion and concludes that "any effort to experiment these technologies in the real world is nothing short of geopyracy and should be banned."

ETC Group's special report, "The Emperor's New Climate: Geoengineering as 21st century fairytale," is available on the Internet at http://www.etcgroup.org/en/materials/publications.html?pub_id=762

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