

**STATEMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE EXPERT SEGMENT OF THE  
WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE-3 (WCC-3)**

by

**M. Jarraud**

**Secretary-General**

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**(Geneva, 31 August 2009)**

**Mr Hans-Rudolf Merz, President of the Swiss Confederation,**

**Mr Alexander Bedritsky, President of WMO**

**Ms Gro Harlem Brundtland, UN Secretary-general's Special Envoy for Climate Change,**

**Mr Kofi Annan, President of the Global Humanitarian Forum,**

**Excellencies,**

**Dear Colleagues,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Geneva at the opening of the World Climate Conference-3 (WCC-3) Expert Segment. I am delighted to note the unfaltering response of the international scientific community to this call to action by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Swiss Confederation and the UN System delivering "as One".

I wish to thank the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Climate Change, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, for representing Mr Ban Ki-moon at this session. I am extremely grateful for the support of Mr Ban who, at the 13<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Bali (Indonesia), so fittingly identified the climate change crisis as the "*defining challenge of our time*".

Thirty years ago, in February 1979, WMO convened with partners the First World Climate Conference. Participants in this multidisciplinary conference of experts adopted a historic Appeal to Nations, noting that climate would continue to vary due to natural causes and that it could be said, with some confidence, that the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and changes of land use had increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by about 15 percent during the last century. The declaration ended by stressing that long-term survival of mankind depended on achieving a harmony between society and nature.

This declaration led to the subsequent establishment of the World Climate Programme, the World Climate Research Programme and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which WMO

and UNEP have co-sponsored successfully for over 20 years and which at the end of 2007 received the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize.

Convened in 1990, the Second World Climate Conference provided additional momentum to international efforts focussing on climate change and resulted in the 1992 adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on the Climate Change as well as establishing of the Global Climate Observing System.

Today every government, society or institution appreciates the urgent need to mitigate climate change. Over the ensuing period there has been significant progress in climate prediction and in our of the climate system knowledge. However, these achievements would not have been possible without your sustained research commitment. Other factors also played a key role, such as the development of suitable climate models, appropriate linkages with various socio-economic stakeholders and a commitment to sustained authoritative observations programmes.

The Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), as a proposed outcome of the WCC-3, will contribute to address the challenges of climate variability and change being experienced by societies today and those expected for the future. A successful GFCS implementation will facilitate the improvement of climate services; the development of sector and user-targeted services; capacity building and a more effective dialogue among climate service providers and users. It will also contribute to disaster risk reduction; adaptation to climate variability and change; and socioeconomic development, thereby offering both near-term and long-term benefits to society.

Your deliberations over the next three days will undoubtedly contribute significantly to further GFCS development and implementation. In this respect, through your Conference Statement, you have the collective opportunity to make a historic contribution of the same magnitude as the First and Second World Climate Conference. It will also be a change for you to encourage the strengthening of partnerships across all sectors, as well as to foster the development of sector-targeted climate services to appropriately facilitate decision-making,

The outcomes of this third World Climate Conference will also contribute in a major way to disaster risk reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In addition, WCC-3 outcomes will support the UNFCCC COP-15 session, to be held in Copenhagen (Denmark) during December 2009, especially in the area of climate services for climate risk management and adaptation.

Before concluding, I would like to underscore that, in conference preparations, WMO has kept foremost in mind its traditional policy to facilitate the active participation of scientists from developing countries, and I am very pleased to see so many present today.

I therefore wish to once more thank the international scientific community for its commitment, as well as all governments and institutions which have sponsored this historic event. I am confident that in 20 years, we shall be proud to say "*I was part of it*".

Thank you.