



PRESS INFORMATION NOTE

GCOS Satellite Recommendations Can Aid Monitoring, Response and Adaptation to Climate Change

GENEVA 19 OCTOBER 2006: The Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) Programme has issued a detailed set of requirements for more systematic and coordinated observation of climate from space.

Satellites in space offer a huge source of information for monitoring the climate system, but the full potential of this source has yet to be tapped.

Meeting the requirements will provide a vastly improved information basis from which nations can make more informed decisions on how to respond and adapt to climate change.

Requirements include information products, such as rainfall estimates, sea-ice concentrations and changes in land cover, as well as detailed specifications on accuracy, stability and spatial/temporal resolution of satellite data.

These requirements were developed in collaboration with the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and the climate community at large.

Opportunities and gaps in past, existing and future satellite data records have been highlighted and specific needs for additional research have been identified.

The indispensable role of ground-based data (such as from weather stations and balloon sondes) needed to complement and ensure quality of the satellite-based information has been addressed throughout.

If the recommendations were implemented, data relevant for many societal sectors including agriculture, water resource management, forestry and marine applications would be made more readily available to decision-makers and scientists across the globe.

Through the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), space agencies throughout the world have already begun responding to the GCOS requirements – a significant first step towards coordinated action.

The WMO, for its part, is incorporating the GCOS needs in the re-design of its Global Observing System (GOS) over the next two decades.

GCOS is co-sponsored by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the International Council for Science (ICSU), the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Established in 1992, GCOS aims to ensure that observations needed to address climate-related issues are obtained and made available to all potential users.

(GCOS PRESS RELEASE No. 1)

For more information please contact:

Dr Stephan Bojinski, Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) Secretariat,
World Meteorological Organization. Tel: +41 (0)22 730 81 50, E-mail: gcospo@wmo.int
Internet website: www.wmo.int/web/gcos/gcoshome.html