



PRESS RELEASE

NEW INITIATIVE LAUNCHED TO PROVIDE VITAL CLIMATE INFORMATION FOR DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN AFRICA

GENEVA 19 DECEMBER 2006: The Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) and its partners have launched an important new initiative for Africa with the release of the report and implementation strategy: *Climate Information for Development Needs: An Action Plan for Africa (ClimDev Africa)*.

The African continent is one of the most vulnerable in the world to climate change and most natural disasters that occur there are related to weather, climate and water.

Climate information is critical for managing the impacts (such as severe drought, flooding and disease) of climate variability and change on agriculture, water resources, health and natural disaster reduction.

But climate monitoring networks in Africa that generate this information are weak and deteriorating – desperately in need of funding.

To help reverse this trend, GCOS organized a meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in April 2006 in partnership with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI).

As a result of this meeting, participants agreed to develop a comprehensive overall strategy to address the problem of financing for climate observing networks. This strategy is contained in the ClimDev Africa report.

Principally driven by agriculture, health and water resources, the 10-year programme will address climate observing needs as well as development of improved climate services, climate risk management and decision-making.

Phase I of the programme will focus on demonstrating the value of climate risk information and how it can be used effectively to help protect lives, livelihoods and property.

Formally endorsed by the African Union Commission and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the new report and strategy has been provided with start-up funding by the UK's Department for International Development.

In addition, the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change has urged Parties to contribute towards the programme's implementation.

African regional institutions, such as the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development, will be invited to help implement the programme.

The World Meteorological Organization and its members, the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, will also play an important role.

Implementation of ClimDev Africa will support the longer-term objectives of programme partners by contributing to sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa.

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

The combined report and implementation strategy may be downloaded from the GCOS web site, indicated below.

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