

Report on World Climate Conference 3

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Background

World Climate Conference 3 (WCC 3) was held in Geneva Switzerland from 31.08.09 to 04.09.09. This was a follow-up to the previous WCC 1 & 2 held in 1979 and 1990 respectively that laid the foundation for research and climate observation. Based on these, the theme of WCC 3 was; better climate information for a better future. The conference attended by 2000 experts from different climate related fields highlighted current critical aspects of climate information for adaptation and mitigation. My participation in this conference as a young scientist was supported by the European Meteorological Society and the discussion below gives a summary of the vital ideas and the experience from the conference.

Key Results and Discussions

There was recognition that better climate prediction and data is necessary but not sufficient for mitigation and adaptation to climate change. Packaging and delivering the right climate information to target users was supported to enhance effective climate risk management. The big gap between climate prediction and usability of the data was noted to have increased vulnerability to climate change effects mainly in Africa and low lying Asian mega deltas. Based on better climate information, adaptation and mitigation of climate change was underscored as a shared challenge. Different sectoral efforts including meteorology, energy, water and transport must embrace synergy of strategies to face this challenge. Complementary sectoral plans should be enhanced in utilizing climate change information for a better future. The increasing attention on Insurance as an adaptation strategy was evident and most experts agreed that insurance planning for the vulnerable groups require better climate information. The debate to have the developed countries pay the insurance costs of the vulnerable people in the developing world was interesting and is likely to receive more attention.

Climate services can be optimised through better knowledge of future climate scenarios. Interestingly, regional and national examples of climate services showed increasing economic and social benefits of climate change to users (farmers, local communities) whenever their capacities were enhanced to understand the future changes. This brings in the concept of capacity building as a vital prerequisite for the local information users to enable them interpret climate variability and make informed choices. In this view, an improvement in the communication of climate information to the public was a general concern. Local and easily

accessible media should be engaged to create more awareness and disseminate basic climate information to the public.

Ultimately, the declaration of the conference which is to establish a Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) was a significant milestone. This will not only be useful in enhancing better climate information and service for adaptation and mitigation, but also a basis for the post Kyoto deal to be sealed in Copenhagen in December this year.

Notably the high level segment on the 3rd and 4th September, 2009 showed increasing political goodwill to tackle climate change challenges. Statements of commitment to GFCS were delivered by the government from all over the continents during this high level segment. Therefore, based on the ideas generated during WCC 3, the key recommendation for the Copenhagen process is to keep the strategies into simple options adoptable by vulnerable communities. Special provisions for women, youths and the general community should be made taking into consideration the existing resources and indigenous knowledge systems that have been in play in the past. It must be noted that to the poor communities, climate change adaptation only make sense when linked to their livelihood.

Finally, my participation in WCC 3 did not only generate new academic and professional ideas, but was also an opportunity for personal and cultural development. Listening to the inspiring speeches of the world leaders, icons and renowned climate experts is something that triggered new personality strength in me to face the climate challenge at an early age. For all these reasons I wish to sincerely thank the European Meteorological Society and specifically Dr. Martina Junge for the Young Scientist Travel Award that supported my participation in this timely conference.