

## History no longer a good indicator for weather forecasts, says top UN official



26 August 2009 – With the onset of climate change, relying on history is no longer an accurate way of predicting weather patterns, the head of the United Nations World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said today.

In the past, forecasts were made by taking statistics of past decades into account, but “now with climate change, these statistics are changing,” **WMO** Secretary-General Michel Jarraud told **UN Radio**.

In some areas, global warming will make rainfall less frequent, making the past an unreliable predictor for future precipitation levels, he said, while heat waves, on the scale of the massive and deadly one which engulfed Western Europe in 2003, “might occur more frequently.”

But Mr. Jarraud stressed that “there are many lessons to be learned from the past,” highlighting the value of climate statistics.

The WMO is organizing a week-long conference in Geneva, Switzerland, kicking off on 31 August, on how to best use climate predictions to adapt to climate change.

When socio-economic decisions – such as those involving health, food security and transport – are made by governments, the private sector and others, it is essential that they are based on “the best possible scientific information,” the WMO chief said.

Next week’s meeting, he said, seeks to “bridge the gap” between those who possess this kind of information with decision-makers around the world.

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