

UN talks seek to boost global access to climate data



31 August 2009 – United Nations talks aimed at boosting access to climate information to help the world’s poor and promote development kicked off today in Geneva, with a top official from the world body voicing hope that such increasing the availability of such data will also contribute to the fight against climate change.

“Today, every government, society or institution appreciates the urgent need to mitigate climate change,” Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) **said** at the start of the **World Climate Conference**, noting that strides have been made in climate prediction and knowledge of the climate system has increased.

The creation of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) – an expected outcome of the Geneva gathering – “will contribute to address the challenges of climate variability and change being experienced by societies today and those expected for the future,” he stressed.

Such a system will also play a role in disaster risk reduction and speed up progress in reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), eight anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline, he added.

According to the WMO, which is organizing the Conference, climate predictions show the timing and quantity of rain in a given area, giving advance warnings of potential malaria epidemics. Climate data can also help to predict possible droughts, allowing farmers to adjust their planting schedules, crop varieties and irrigation strategies.

Last week, Mr. Jarraud said that those attending the event will attempt to “bridge the gap” between those who possess this kind of climate information and decision-makers around the world.

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 told UN Radio.

More than 2,000 people from over 150 countries are expected to take part in the event, which will be addressed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon later this week.