

Outcome from World Climate Broadcasters Forum, 2 September 2009

For most people their knowledge of the weather comes from those who present forecasts in the media; on radio, on television and, increasingly, on the Web. Because of the significant improvement in the predictability of weather over the past few decades, weather presenters, the “faces and voices” of weather, have developed a high degree of credibility with the public; they are trusted, and very popular with the media audience.

The community of weather broadcasters are among those best placed to help educate and inform the world’s population about climate change and its effects. Their scientific understanding and deep interest in the atmosphere position them perfectly for this role. Weather broadcasters have a professional responsibility to keep themselves up-to-date with development in climate science, in particular through the reports of the IPCC.

The World Climate Broadcasters Forum, held on 2 September during the third World Climate Conference – 3 (WCC-3), is a unique opportunity to gather the disparate experiences of weather broadcasters from around the world, and in turn to articulate how, drawing on these experiences, weather presenters can best communicate climate information to the public. By bringing together weather broadcasters from all round the world, from countries both wealthy and poor, the Forum has an important perspective that can advise WCC-3 on how the public can better receive critical information to guide climate adaptation.

Recommendations of the Forum are as follows:

Commitments of weather broadcasters:

- That weather broadcasters commit themselves professionally to use their talents as communicators to educate the public about climate change and its impacts, both globally and regionally;
- That reporting on climate change be based on current, accurate science and that broadcasters keep up-to-date with relevant scientific and social developments;

Interactions with others

- That weather broadcasters should interact regularly with climate scientists and climate information providers to strengthen communication of the science by all concerned;
- Weather broadcasters should take a lead in reaching out to other scientific communities, in particular the education and the health communities, in promoting discourse about climate change;
- The Forum exhorts weather broadcasters to publicly support the research infrastructure that will help us to know more;

Supports for weather broadcasters

- The Forum recognises the particular challenge in reaching and supporting weather broadcasters in the developing world, who frequently speak to very vulnerable communities;

The Forum reminds all weather broadcasters that time for society to take effective action is short, that our window of opportunity is closing rapidly.