

**G** GLOBAL  
**C** CLIMATE  
**O** OBSERVING  
**S** SYSTEM



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GENEVA, 2 January 2008

Ms. Pontsho Maruping  
Chair, Committee on Earth Observing Satellites  
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research  
Private Bag X894  
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South Africa

Dear Ms. Maruping:

The outcome of the recent UN Climate Change Conference in Bali underlines the commitment of all nations to address the greenhouse warming issue. It highlights the need for both adaptation to and mitigation of climate change and thus for comprehensive and reliable climate observations, research and assessments to provide information to decision makers about how climate and its forcings are changing. Satellite records can provide data on a number of essential climate variables that will underpin urgently-needed information for countries about changing conditions at regional scales. However, homogeneity of the records is always a concern, and reprocessing and reanalysis of the records is fundamental in order to transform the data into true climate data and information records.

The importance of climate quality data records should help CEOS activities achieve greater recognition of the value of climate observations from space and hence help establish the required long-term support for satellite-based climate measurements.

We appreciate the progress by CEOS in establishing strategies for ensuring that the needs of the climate community and stakeholders could be met by future satellite missions. In particular, the CEOS Response to the "Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC" provides many clear actions aimed at coordinating international activities to ensure that high-quality temporally-homogeneous satellite climate measurements will be taken and archived in the future and that past measurements will be reprocessed as required. At the same time we recognize the enormous implementation issues related to funding shortfalls and setting priorities that may limit the accomplishment of the proposed actions. This has become especially evident with the de-manifesting of several climate instruments from the NPOESS mission in the United States, where climate priorities were not adequately recognised in the planning and budgeting process.

The proposed actions of the CEOS Plan are very encouraging, and the GCOS (Global Climate Observing System) Steering Committee and the Joint Scientific Committee for the WCRP (World Climate Research Programme) look forward to working closely with CEOS in the assessment of progress in bringing all the actions in the Plan to fruition. The fulfilment of the CEOS Plan depends

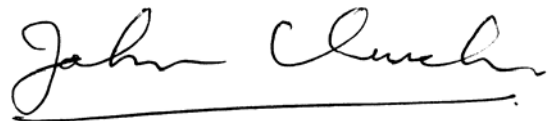
upon the maintenance of climate-quality earth-observation capability in all nations with satellite programs related to climate.

We appreciate the sound plans that the CEOS community has developed for the satellite-based climate data records and climate information records, and we congratulate the CEOS community on this progress. We note that these plans cannot succeed without the full commitment of all nations with climate-related satellite programs. We continue to emphasize the need for continuity and quality of observations to meet climate needs and we would be pleased to work with CEOS to help establish priorities, if necessary, and to ensure that all of the plans are fulfilled in good time.

Yours sincerely,



John W. Zillman, Chair  
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