Opening Remarks
on the occasion of the opening of the 22nd session of the Data Buoy Cooperation Panel (DBCP)

by

Representative Secretary-General
World Meteorological Organization
(La Jolla, 16 October 2006)

Mr Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Secretary General of WMO, Michel Jarraud, and the Executive Secretary of IOC, Patricio Bernal, on the occasion of the opening session of the 22nd session of the Data Buoy Cooperation Panel (DBCP).

First of all, I would like to thank Scripps Institution of Oceanography for the nice facilities offered for this workshop and NOAA for hosting and organizing the main DBCP and JTA sessions.

The Joint WMO-IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) has a long-term, far-reaching and innovative vision to benefit the global community in the coordination, regulation and management of a fully integrated global marine system that uses state-of-the-art technologies and capabilities. It is responsive to the evolving needs of users of marine data and products and enhances the national capacity of all maritime countries. The strategy for making this vision a reality will be through continuing and enhancing collaboration between IOC and WMO.

I have noted that your meeting will address key issues that are relevant in the preparatory phase of the next WMO Strategic and Operational Plan (2008-2011).

For example the Cooperation that is foreseen between the DBCP and the Tsunameter consortium is of direct importance to the WMO Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Programme (DPM). Organization of training workshops will assist in the development of capacities in developing countries while at the same time helping in achieving global coverage for the marine observing systems. Establishment of Pilot Projects in support of data management, satellite data telecommunication and other activities will help in enhancing the observing system.

Since the establishment of JCOMM, several events with important implications for the Commission, have taken place. The last several years have been marked by natural disasters with considerable loss of life and socio-economic impacts. Particularly in 2004 and 2005, such disasters ranged from the most intense tropical cyclone seasons in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, to severe flooding in several parts of the Caribbean, Central America and Asia. The tragic tsunami in the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004 effected many countries, leading to more than two hundred thousand casualties, economic loss and a set back in economic development in the region. WMO, through its Global Operating network (GOS/GDPFS/GTS), has facilitated significant capacity in support of the Early Warning Systems of its Members. WMO is actively joining forces with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, to ensure effective development of the Tsunami Warning System (TWS) in different regions of risk.

Improving our observations, understanding, modeling and prediction of climate variability and change is no less important or challenging now than it was a decade ago. An important point of collaboration between WMO and IOC could be seen in the context of the interaction between WCRP and JCOMM, especially the JCOMMOPS that provides technical and status monitoring of Argo, the Ships-of-Opportunity Panel (SOOP) and the Data Buoy Cooperation Panel (DBCP) programmes. All of which are very important to WCRP and, in particular, the CLIVAR project.

The last JCOMM Management Committee strongly supported the development of the in situ and satellite based observing systems. It noted the excellent progress of the DBCP implementation with completing of the drifter network. Following the recommendations by the DBCP data users and technology workshop, it recommended to install barometers on all drifting buoys. The Management committee also strongly supported the META-T initiative for the collection and exchange of instrumental metadata. The last JCOMM Data Management Coordination Group (DMCG) which met last week at the WMO headquarter has defined a strategy to facilitate the move towards better interoperability of the different data management systems being developed in the oceanographic and meteorological communities, including the WMO Information System (WIS).

A new composite observing system is fundamental to meteorology, and necessary in order to meet the demands of sustainable development in the 21st century. The Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) will be an opportunity to provide additional benefits to many societal and economic areas worldwide; and with its unique operational system, WMO and IOC have both been very active participants in this process, and are well placed to play leading roles therein.

As we look ahead, the WMO Information System (WIS) offers much promise. In this respect, the Intercommission Coordination Group on WIS would serve as a strong, high-level coordination and collaboration mechanism spanning across the technical commissions for achieving the challenging task of developing WIS. WMO is very supportive of the efforts of JCOMM to integrate data management activities of the oceanographic and meteorological communities. A good example is

the successful development and implementation of the JCOMM prototype in Obninsk, which is part of both the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) and the WMO Information System (WIS) and will deliver ocean data to both communities in support of many applications, including marine services and operational oceanography. WMO is following with interest the proposal to develop JCOMMOPS further and to include implementation support for additional programmes such as the OceanSITES, GLOSS, IOCCP, and POGO.

The joint WMO Bureau / IOC officers meeting held in Buenos Aires in January 2006, highlighted the challenges that lie ahead and the needs for establish a strategy for future collaboration between IOC and WMO.

Having said that I would like to thank you for being here and to thank you in advance for your contribution that will help WMO and IOC provide even better service to their Member/Member States in order to face the challenges of improving weather forecasting, climate change detection, disaster prevention and mitigation, and the many weather and marine oceanography related application areas, or “societal benefit areas”.

I wish you a success in our meetings, and a pleasant stay in La Jolla.