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2010 National Climate Adaptation Summit

Background. Local and regional decision makers in the U.S. are struggling with how to ensure adequate access to reliable and affordable water, food, energy, and acceptable quality of life and health for their communities in the face of a changing climate. Many of these decision makers are partnering with universities in these planning efforts. Many organizations have been encouraging the development of these partnerships and exploring whether these partnerships could be networked together so they learned from each other and avoided duplicating these efforts across the country. At the same time, a working group co-chaired by OSTP, CEQ, and NOAA have been developing a national strategy for U.S. Government response to a changing climate. There are also many recent reports that focus on climate impacts and how federal research programs must adjust to meet the growing need for this research to be more responsive to decision making. In July 2009, the President's Science Advisor, Dr. John Holdren, presented testimony in the Senate that noted that the USGCRP needs to make a strong commitment to providing the information that society is seeking to reduce vulnerabilities and improve resilience to variability and change. He also mentioned the need to boost adaptation research, bolster capacity to monitor change and its impacts (observations and modeling), support adaptation and mitigation decision making (assessment), and make climate data and information accessible to those who need it (climate services).

Summit Charge and Goals. In May 2009, Dr. Holdren, met with the UCAR Board of Trustees and asked UCAR to convene a community "climate adaptation summit" to bring these efforts together by addressing the following five questions:

1. what information and tools are needed by local and regional stakeholders dealing with a changing climate,
2. what short-term and long-term research and infrastructure is needed to support this effort,
3. how can this information and tools be best organized and delivered to stakeholders,
4. how can the needed network partnerships, tools, and data be put in place to help States make the best use of anticipated climate adaptation funds from energy and climate legislation, and
5. how best to train the next generation climate adaptation workforce.

Preliminary Program Ideas. The preliminary idea is to hold a three day Summit in the WDC region on 25-27 May involving ~150 invited participants (50% decision makers and 50% scientists and leaders from the various weather and climate sectors). More information will be posted about the Summit in the near future.