

# **Meeting of Directors of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services of North and West African countries**

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain  
17 -19 October 2007

## **THE CONTEXT**

1. A meeting of Directors of NMHSs of North and West African Countries was held at Casa Africa of the Spanish Cooperation in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain from 17 to 19 October 2007. The meeting was organized by the National Meteorological Institute of Spain and co-sponsored by WMO.
2. The meeting was attended by the Directors of the NMHSs of the North and West African countries, ECOWAS and the African Union. The Secretary-General of WMO, Mr. M. Jarraud, the Secretary-General for Pollution, Prevention and Climate Change, Ministry of Environment of Spain, Mr. Arturo Gonzalo, and the President of the Canary Islands Government, Mr. Paulino Rivero opened the meeting.
3. The meeting was organized as a follow up of the side meeting held during the Madrid Conference on Secure and Sustainable Living Conditions: Socio-economic benefits of weather climate and water services and the side meeting at the WMO 15th Congress.
4. The meeting discussed the problems in meteorology in the North and Western Africa region, presenting case studies of selected NMHSs. The Ibero-American Programme of Cooperation in meteorology and hydrology was presented and discussed as a possible cooperation model (with some adjustments) for the North and Western Africa region.
5. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the INM of Spain for the excellent organization of the event and for the hospitality to all participants and also to the Government of Spain and WMO for their commitment to support the development of the NMHSs of the North and West African countries to contribute to the sustainable development of their respective countries.
6. The meeting was closed the afternoon of 19 October 2007 at 13h15 and it was agreed that the next meeting of Directors of NMHSs of North and West African countries will be hosted by Mauritania at the kind offer made by Mr. Ould M. Bechir, Director of the NMS of that country. The date will be defined in due course.

## **THE STATEMENT**

We, the Directors of North and Western Africa NMHSs, including Spain as Member of WMO RA I, meeting in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain from 17 to 19 October 2007,

Recognizing the new challenges produced by climate change especially for developing countries and the role that the NMHSs should play in support to adaptation policies,

Recognizing also that most countries in North and Western Africa region are Least Developed Countries and that five are recently emerged from conflicts situations,

Welcoming the presence in the meeting of representatives of regional organizations such as AGRHYMET and ACMAD, and recognizing the key role they play in the development of meteorology and hydrology in the region,

Welcoming the presence in the meeting of representatives of regional integration organizations such as African Union and ECOWAS and recognizing the relevance and need of their political support for the development of the NMHSs in the region,

Also welcoming the presence of observers representing development partners such as the IM of Portugal, MétéoFrance and NOAA,

Considering the Madrid Declaration and Action Plan emphasizing in particular the need to develop case studies on the socioeconomic benefits of the infrastructure and services provided by the NMHSs, and the need to enhance the capacity of these institutions,

Being aware of the opportunities for capacity building offered by the Africa Plan of the Government of Spain and the Trust Fund created in the WMO Secretariat by Spain as well as by other initiatives,

Recognizing the importance and advantages of mutual cooperation to accomplish the mission of NMHSs,

**Decided:**

1. To establish a Forum of Directors of NMHSs of North and West African countries including the organization of an annual meeting in the initial phase.
2. To develop and implement both Annual Plans and a long term Action Plan.
3. To use as a main source of seed funding for the projects and activities in the Action Plan the Trust Fund created in the WMO Secretariat by Spain as well as the Africa Plan of the Government of Spain, and also to identify other possible sources of funding.
4. To facilitate the horizontal cooperation in meteorology and hydrology within the region with the purpose of increasing multilateral cooperation.
5. To submit these conclusions to Ministries in charge of meteorology in each participating country, to CILSS, ECOWAS and UMA, as well as to WMO aimed at obtaining support at national and at international levels to these initiatives of cooperation in meteorology and hydrology in the West and North Africa region.
6. To support the organization of the Conference of Ministers responsible of meteorology.
7. To approve an Action Plan for 2008, considering the discussions held during the side meeting at the WMO 15th Congress, the needs submitted to the WMO Secretariat by several NMHSs and the discussions held during the meeting of Directors of NMHSs of North and West African countries held in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain from 17 to 19 October 2007.

The Proposed Action Plan is as follows:

### **ACTION PLAN AND PROGRAMME FOR 2008**

Recognizing the weakness of the NMHSs of North and West African Countries to provide meteorological, climatological and hydrological services to the various socio-economic sectors, and the growing demand for these services, there is an urgent need to enhance their operational capacity through human resource development and establishment of, and improvement of surface observational networks and systems for product development and delivery.

The overall objective of this Action Plan is therefore to enhance the capacity of the NMHSs of North and West African countries and provide them with the relevant tools that will allow them to contribute to the sustainable development of their respective countries and enhance the delivery of products and services to the various socioeconomic sectors that are essential for them.

Considering the urgent need to take some immediate actions in order to launch this Programme of Cooperation, and taking into account the priorities agreed during the meeting, the proposed Action Plan comprises the following elements:

1. Assistance to NMHSs on short term needs:
  - a) Improvement of Marine Meteorology Services for maritime safety and fisheries management by implementation of a harmonized project, incorporating the existing WMO initiative with Senegal, Morocco and others and the project concerning marine meteorology and remote sensing presented by Spain during the meeting;

To this purpose, WMO and INM are requested to assist in the definition of the terms of reference of this harmonized project, including a feasibility study to expand its geographical scope to the Gulf of Guinea, no later than April 2008 and also consider the establishment of a Marine Meteorological Centre in the Region in the process.

In the meantime, urgent actions will include organizing workshops for training of the coastal states and / or initiating the provision of essential telecom and computer equipment and marine observation stations for the reception and utilization of meteorological products, taking into account the existing capacity of each country.

- b) Improvement of agricultural meteorology services for food security and reduction of poverty by implementing a sub regional project based on the strengthening of surface observation networks and on the use of simplified rain gauges to elaborate and disseminate information to farmers and decision makers.

In this regard, WMO and INM are requested to assist in formulating the development activities of the project not later than February 2008. For this project WMO will be the Executing Agency, Spanish relevant institutions and African regional organizations (ACMAD, AGRHYMET) will provide technical support and NMHSs will implement the project in their respective countries.

- c) Amongst the Least Developed Countries in North and West Africa are countries recently emerging from war with their NMHSs in extreme transition.

Action will focus on supporting the development of capacities of these countries in the short term through training, instruments and equipment, for adequate meteorological and hydrological, services for the socio-economic development of affected countries.

- d) Planning and execution of a workshop on Meteorological Services Management for Directors of NMHSs of North and West African countries, open to all countries, during the first half of 2008.
- e) Planning and execution of training activities in Satellite Meteorology and Numerical Weather Products use (NWP), open to all countries, to be held during the first half of 2008 in one of the centres of the Spanish Cooperation Agency based in North West Africa.
- f) Preparation during the first half of 2008 of a feasibility study for the provision of computer-aided and on-line training modules and for the provision communications equipment as required to support this activity and, eventually, initiate a pilot experience during the second half of 2008.
- g) Development of a website for the North West African NMHS Directors Forum, by January 2008.
2. Development and execution of a feasibility study covering the West and North African countries aimed to set up a **long term development plan for the region**, emphasizing e.g. agrometeorology and adaptation to climate change, as well as taking into consideration the specific proposals made by countries during this and the prior meetings mentioned above, framed with a view to meeting the requirements of the main potential donors. The results of this study will be submitted to the next meeting of the Forum of Directors. Cost of this study should not exceed 15% of the Trust Fund.
3. Development of a plan to engage additional development partners (MétéoFrance, IM Portugal, NOAA and others such as the World Bank and the European Commission in support of the Long Term Programme of Action.
4. Organization of a meeting of the Forum of Directors of NMHS to review progress and identify actions for the following year.
5. The implementation of the approved work plan and programme of activities for 2008 will be undertaken by the Directors of NMHSs with the assistance of WMO, INM of Spain, and regional and sub-regional organizations such as ACMAD and AGRHYMET providing technical support and by ECOWAS and the African Union for necessary political support.