

COMMISSION FOR HYDROLOGY

Submitted by: President CHy

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REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION

SUMMARY

REFERENCES:

1. *Abridged Final Report with Resolutions of the Fifty-seventh Session of the Executive Council (Geneva, 2005)* (WMO-No. 988)
2. *Abridged Final Report with Resolutions of the Fifty-eighth Session of the Executive Council (Geneva, 2006)* (WMO-No. 1007)
3. *Abridged Final Report with Resolutions of the Fifty-ninth Session of the Executive Council (Geneva, 2007)* (WMO-No. 1027)
4. *Abridged Final Report with Resolutions of the Sixtieth Session of the Executive Council (Geneva, 2008)* (WMO-No. 1032)
5. *Abridged Final Report with Resolutions of the Fifteenth World Meteorological Congress (Geneva, 2008)* (WMO-No. 1026)
6. *Abridged Final Report with Resolutions and Recommendations of the Twelfth Session of the Commission for Hydrology (Geneva, 2004)* (WMO-No. 979)

IN-DEPTH REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF CHy

Introduction

1. It gives me great pleasure as the president of the Commission for Hydrology to present to you the results of the work we have undertaken in the past four years, especially as this meeting represents the 50th year of the Commission since it was established in 1958.
2. My report will be in two parts. Firstly, I would like to focus on the key strategic issues that I believe have guided our activities in the past few years and will further guide them into the future. Secondly, I will report on some of the key issues that have arisen from the various more formal discussion and decision making mechanisms within the WMO, namely the Congress, the Executive Council and the Presidents of Technical Commissions meetings. The more detailed analysis of the work activities of the Commission in association with the WMO Secretariat will be addressed in the report of the Secretariat.

Strategic Background

3. Freshwater resources and aquatic ecosystems of the world are increasingly coming under stress due to increases in population and the development process. These resources are also coming under greater pressure due to the potential impacts of climate change.
4. However, it is encouraging to note that people are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of, and threats to, water resources. Integrated use and management of freshwater resources is slowly being recognized as essential to sustainable development. This calls for assessment of the availability, both temporally and spatially and in quantity and quality, of water resources. This is a fundamental role of WMO. WMO assists NMHSs in discharging their responsibility to provide data and information for policy makers and operators to make appropriate decisions to manage the resource in times of excess and scarcity in order to minimize any adverse impacts on society.
5. Climate variability and change appear to be making extreme events more frequent and intensive. The development process and the intensive urbanization are also making floods appear more frequent and damaging. NHSs, with flood forecasting and flood management as their area of responsibilities have an important role to play in making their country's development more sustainable. In view of the above, the weather, climate and water programmes of WMO have to collaborate closely in order to address these key components of water resources management.
6. These developments call for a re-orientation of the future role and contribution of the HWRP in WMO. In this regard, there is a need to look carefully into the HWRP and find ways by which it could be made to better perform/serve its national and regional counterparts and to ensure that WMO can fulfill its role at an international level.
7. The continuation of the emergence of the importance of water resources as a key national, regional and international issue means that even more so, WMO and its Member countries must strive to find better and improved ways in which to attract and secure the resources necessary to undertake its activities. There are requirements for both human and financial resources, both of which can be sourced through the WMO's regular budget or from extrabudgetary sources. In parallel with these considerations, there is a question as to whether or not WMO should launch any major new initiatives in support of NHSs and/or freshwater issues in general.

WMO Congress

8. Possibly the most significant outcome from Fifteenth Congress was its expression of satisfaction with the direction given by the Commission to the HWRP. However, Congress

stressed the need for the work plan of CHy to flow from and support the WMO Strategic Plan. In this regard, Congress urged the Commission to adopt a strategic approach in dealing with the future developments in the field of hydrology, including new and emerging technologies, the need for education and training of hydrological personnel and the needs of the Regions/Members.

9. Some of the major activities during Congress were:

- The Guidelines on the Role, Operation and Management of NHSs have been published as a WMO Operational Hydrology Report (WMO-No. 1003)
<http://www.wmo.ch/pages/catalogue/New%20HTML/frame/engfil/1003.html>;
- A project to assess the performance of flow measurement instruments and techniques has been further scoped and a proposal will come forward to CHy-XIII
<http://www.wmo.ch/pages/prog/hwrp/FlowMeasurement.html>;
- A concept document on the WMO Quality Management Framework (QMF) and how it applies to National Hydrological Services is being prepared for discussion and adoption at CHy-XIII;
- A request for the identification of Pristine River Basins has been distributed;
- WHYCOS guidelines on the development, implementation and governance have been prepared and a special web page for the WHYCOS had been developed and launched
http://www.whycos.org/IMG/pdf/WHYCOSGuidelines_E.pdf;
- Financial resources of approximately 15 million Euros have been made available by various donors for Niger-HYCOS, Volta-HYCOS, SADC-HYCOS, Mekong-HYCOS and Pacific-HYCOS components, which are now under implementation. Through the implementation of these HYCOS components 42 Members (among them 20 LDCs) will have their capacities in hydrological observations and information generation enhanced;
- The Associated Programme on Flood Management (APFM) has helped achieve the objective of disaster risk reduction and provided technical support to countries in flood management policy formulation;
- The WMO Flood Forecasting Initiative (involving eight regional workshops and a synthesis conference) has resulted in the compilation of a Strategy and Action Plan for improved collaboration and cooperation between National Meteorological Services and National Hydrological Services for flood forecasting;
- The implementation of a Flash Flood Guidance System with global coverage as a demonstration project is being planned in association with the Commission for Basic Systems and WMO Disaster Risk Reduction Programme; and
- The above activities related to floods will add to WMO's contribution to the International Flood Initiative developed jointly with UNESCO, UNU, ISDR, IAHS, IAHR and other interested organizations.

WMO Executive Councils

10. EC-LVII, held in Geneva in June 2005, provided an opportunity for me as president of CHy to report on the outcomes and recommendations of the twelfth session of the WMO Commission for Hydrology (Geneva, October 2004) and their adoption through the Resolutions of EC-LVII. A number of other issues of direct relevance to CHy were also discussed, including:

- Support for the proposal to have WMO Regional Training Centres (RTCs) in a range of disciplines in lieu of WMO Regional Meteorological Training Centres;
- Concerns expressed over a multi-hazard approach that does not enable access to critical specialist skills and knowledge, i.e. over generalization of professional expertise;
- The role the technical commissions can play and the contribution they can make to the activities of WMO; and
- The inclusion of representation from the Commission for Hydrology on a number of key planning groups of the EC which were to provide significant input to Congress, including the Strategic Plan and budgets.

11. EC-LVIII agreed to the following actions which are of relevance to the activities of CHy, namely:

- A review and updating of the Terms of Reference for the Presidents of Technical Commissions. As president of CHy, I was asked by the PTC to undertake this review and report back to the PTC at its next meeting;
- Agreement that the generic title of the training centres will be WMO Regional Training Centres (WMO-RTCs). The process of establishing new Centres will include endorsement by the regional association, the technical commission concerned and by the WMO Secretariat; approval by the Executive Council; and the signing of an Agreement between the host country and WMO;
- Identification of the need for the WMO DPM Programme vision to enhance contributions of NMHSs, in a more cost-effective, systematic and sustainable manner, towards improvement of safety and security of communities. The Council noted that there is a need to identify WMO DPM Programme strategic priorities that would be implemented through crosscutting projects that are measurable with respect to their benefits and outcomes;
- Recognition of the need to focus WMO long-term planning on strategies to achieve the desired outcomes of the Organization. It agreed that hereafter the Seventh Long-term Plan should be referred to as the WMO Strategic Plan 2008-2011, which would be a statement of strategic intent for the Organization for the period 2008-2011, corresponding with the fifteenth financial period;
- Agreement that an Operating Plan for the WMO Programmes and Major Activities should be prepared with a clear link between the Strategic Plan and the Operating Plan.

EC-LIX was a short meeting following Cg-XV and no matters of significance were raised.

At EC-LX the matters of relevance to CHy raised included:

- The need to describe and promote the Future Work Programme for CHy under the Expected Results framework;
- The need to develop a possible mechanism for greater involvement of developing countries in the work programmes of the Commissions. I believe that the introduction of electronic documentation will greatly assist in this. We can make it possible for any country to be involved without having to actually be at the meeting;
- Agreement to some actions that will improve coordination and cooperation between WMO and UNESCO in hydrology and water resources; and
- The review of the role and functioning of the technical commissions.

Presidents of technical commissions

Over this intersessional period, the work of the presidents of technical commissions has focused on a range of cross-commission activities including:

- **Inter-commission Coordination Group on the WMO Information System**
The PTC emphasised that, as the WIS was developing as a major component of all WMO Programmes, there was an emerging need for appropriate regulatory documentation (e.g. a Manual on WIS) as well as guidance material for implementation. The PTC stressed the need for WIS to support and aid the communication of information in all developing countries. The PTC agreed that the participation of the WMO Information System as a critical component of the GEOSS, which was a unique opportunity as well as a challenge, should be actively promoted.

- **Inter-Commission Task Team on Quality Management Framework**
Discussions on Quality Management focused on the need to ensure compatibility between the various internal WMO documents and the ISO standards. The development of a relationship between ISO and WMO on standards setting has evolved from this point in time.
- **Inter-Commission Task Group on International Polar Year 2007-2008**
The PTC agreed that: (1) the technical commissions should play an important role at the IPY implementation stage, when existing elements of the global observing systems which are at present in their areas of responsibility would be in use; and (2) beyond IPY, the major role of WMO technical commissions should be to take responsibility to ensure the legacy of observing systems improved or established in the IPY era.
- **Marine Impacts on Lowland Agriculture and Coastal Resources**
The PTC strongly supported the MILAC concept and to its application to marine multi-hazard warning systems in general, and agreed that it also constituted an important contribution to GEOSS and to at least two of the nine GEOSS societal benefits areas. It urged JCOMM, CAgM, and other concerned Commissions, to continue its implementation and extension as and where appropriate.
- **Volunteerism in WMO**
The PTC developed up a proposition for consideration by EC that included proposals for rewarding the work of volunteers.

Relationship with UNESCO and other water-related UN bodies

After examining and evaluating the current communication mechanisms between the various UN agencies with a high profile in water at the international level, it was considered that the current level of communication and cooperation is essential and appropriate. However, noting that some Members had concerns with respect to the potential for duplication of effort and inefficient use of resources at the international level, rather than establishing any new mechanisms it was recommended that:

- Member countries assist in improving the cooperation and coordination through strengthening the communications at the national and regional levels; and
- The WMO Secretary-General, through UN Water, strongly urged UNESCO, IAHS, IAHR and ISDR to continue to support the existing coordination mechanisms.

Performance of the AWG and OPACHes during this intersessional period

Overall, I have been very pleased with the functioning of the AWG and the OPACHes during this intersessional period. The positive elements have been:

- The members of the AWG have interacted well together, supported each other and provided excellent guidance and support to the president and vice-president;
- The AWG has achieved the majority of its activities and successfully defined a pathway forward for the Commission; and
- Involvement of a wide range of new and long-term Experts in the work of the Commission.

The negatives of the current arrangements have been:

- The inability of two members of the AWG to maintain their commitment to the activities of the Commission. This has meant that the load from these members had to be spread while we looked for new members to take their place and this was a difficult and time consuming

- exercise. Perhaps, we could consider identifying some back-up members as part of the AWG process to address this in the future;
- The difficulties in obtaining good quality Experts to participate in the work of the Commission. Many of the activities of the Commission require a significant time commitment and there is little incentive for those not on the AWG to find the time to put to the activities. We will continue to investigate, along with other groups in WMO, how to address this volunteerism issue;
 - The difficulties in obtaining a global coverage of people from the OPACHEs to enable a full representation of practices and approaches from all regions of the world.

The above said, the positive outcomes so far outweigh the negative ones that I recommend the continuation of the single AWG and the OPACHEs as the working framework for the next intersessional period.
