

World Meteorological Organization

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

SIXTY-FIRST SESSION
Geneva, 3 to 12 June 2009

EC-LXI/G/WP 8(3)

Submitted by: Dr A.I. Bedritsky
President

Date: 9.VI.2009

Original Language: English

Agenda Item: 8

Expected Result: 11

FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Strategic Thrust: Efficient Management and Good Governance

FUTURE STRUCTURE OF WMO

Draft report of Plenary G on item 8

REFERENCE:

EC-LXI/Doc. 8(3)

APPENDIX:

Draft text for inclusion in the general summary on item 8

ACTION PROPOSED:

It is recommended that the draft text given in the Appendix be included in the general summary of the work of the session.

DRAFT TEXT FOR INCLUSION IN THE GENERAL SUMMARY OF EC-LXI

8. FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES (*agenda item 8*)

.....

Future Structure of WMO

Background

8.x.1 The Council referred to the decision taken at its sixtieth session (2008) to work towards creating a flexible and effective working mechanism for studying and developing recommendations for aligning the structure of WMO with the result-based Strategic Plan (Final report of EC-LX, paragraph 7.2.7). It appreciated that the Working Group on WMO Strategic and Operational Planning and the PTC-2009 meeting had considered a number of options on aligning programmes and working mechanisms of constituent bodies to the WMO Strategic Plan.

A proposal for joint meetings of technical commissions

8.x.2 The Council noted that the PTC-2009 had discussed some of the issues that limit the effectiveness of technical commissions including; the non-alignment of technical commission meetings with the decision making processes of the Organization, at times poor communications between technical commissions and between technical commissions and the regional associations, and the large percentage of the budget of the smaller technical commissions that is spent on their quadrennial Commission meeting which in turn limits the resources available to the volunteers who carry out the implementation work of the Commissions.

8.x.3 The PTC-2009 considered a proposal that would see the technical commissions meet together at an eight-day, joint technical conference/intergovernmental meeting held every second (even) year. This joint technical commission meeting would have two components: (1) an intergovernmental component of two days where the work of the technical commissions is organized and elections for officers confirmed; and, (2) up to six days of a scientific/technical component where academia, operations and industry could meet and work together, and the management groups of the various technical commissions could meet to coordinate their work.

8.x.4 Two Commissions would meet in parallel, in an ‘intergovernmental mode’ to discuss their work plans, each with the team of interpreters supporting them, so that for the joint technical commission meeting there would be two teams of interpreters supporting eight Commissions over eight days on a rotation basis. The scientific/technical component of the joint meeting would be composed of parallel sessions focusing on the range of issues faced by the WMO’s technical programmes with NMHS, academic and industry contributions, and, where necessary, Plenary sessions to deal with key cross-cutting or high profile issues. The technical/science component would be held over the eight days of the joint meeting.

8.x.5 The Council noted that implementation of an arrangement whereby the current eight technical commissions met jointly every two years could be done by decision of the Executive Council as a part of the evolution of the working methods of the technical commissions in much the same way as a number of the technical commissions moved from the working group structure to Open Programme Area Groups (OPAGs) through internal decision.

8.x.6 The Council, having heard the opinions of presidents of technical commissions, reached a number of preliminary conclusions in its discussion of this particular proposal:

- Members may have great difficulty in releasing enough technical experts to service the needs of all technical commissions at the one time;
- Those attending the joint technical commission meetings would have to be sufficiently expert to make good technical decisions;
- The proposal appeared to offer the opportunity to make more resources available for technical work;
- The technical commissions do need to meet every two years as many experts do not stay in their positions for four years and so continuity is lost in key projects;
- The proposal offered the technical commissions the opportunity to better align their development of work programs with the decision making activities of the Organization; and
- At least for some technical commissions (JCOMM and CAeM) there was a view that the time available to work in 'intergovernmental' mode would be adequate to complete those parts of their work that led to decision making that would affect Members (for WMO) and member states (in the case of UNESCO-IOC).

A proposal for a changed number of technical commissions

8.x.7 The Council noted that the EC Working Group on Strategic and Operational Planning at its March 2009 meeting had considered as a major reform the possibility of a changed number of technical commissions. One option considered was to have a smaller number of technical commissions with one focused on research, another on systems, another on services, and possibly one on capacity building. Such a major reform would need to be considered and agreed by Congress. The Council reached a number of preliminary conclusions in its discussion of this particular proposal:

- A detailed analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats should be carried out for all the Organizations working mechanisms, not just the technical commissions, before major reform of any single element;
- Major Organizational reform should be holistic in scope;
- Some delegates considered that the WMO has too many technical commissions while others considered that to move away from thematically focused technical commissions to a smaller number of technical commissions focused on particular functions (services, systems or research) would lower the technical effectiveness of the Organization;
- Many Council members considered that capacity building is integral to all the work of all technical commissions and that in creating a separate technical commission for capacity building the outcome could well be an overall reduction in the amount of capacity building supported by the other technical commissions and ultimately by the Organization as a whole; and
- In any re-structuring care must be given to not disenfranchise small but key technical groups such as those in the instruments, oceanography and hydrology areas of specialty.

8.x.8 The Council noted that there is a strong desire to review the working mechanisms of the Organization and carefully plan for change that would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the WMO at a time when improved integration between its technical groups is imperative and when

the pace of change in the external environment is very high. Any change would have to assist the Organization in being able to respond flexibly and quickly to new challenges as they arise.

8.x.9 For major reform to take place a well thought through proposal, possibly containing around three options including the analysis of advantages and disadvantages, needs to be prepared for the consideration of Congress in 2011. The proposal would have to be developed through wide consultation and have the support of Members beyond those represented in EC.

8.x.10 The Council decided that the Secretariat should work with Members, presidents of regional associations and presidents of technical commissions in developing the proposal for Cg-XVI. The proposal should articulate the roles and responsibilities of the WMO's constituent bodies in terms of their concrete contributions to the implementation of the WMO Strategic Plan and to Members' services, and should be in draft form for consideration by EC-LXII.