

**THE FIRST CONFERENCE
OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE
FOR METEOROLOGY
IN AFRICA**

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STATEMENT OF THE EXPERT SEGMENT

Preamble

1. The participants (which included Permanent Representatives of countries with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Development Agencies, UN and International Agencies, African regional and sub regional institutions and Development Banks), International Organizations and Institutions) in the Expert Segment of the First Conference of Ministers Responsible for Meteorology in Africa held in Nairobi, Kenya on 12 to 14 April 2010 preceding the Ministerial Segment of 15 and 16 April, 2010, having discussed in the following Themes:

1. Meeting Development Needs;
2. Benefits of meteorological, hydrological and climate services;
3. Disaster Risk Reduction;
4. Filling Information Gaps;
5. Capacity Building;
6. User Perspectives; and
7. Enhancing Partnerships.

Reiterated:

2. That increasing risks and threats to sustainable development associated with disasters are predominantly due to, or are aggravated by meteorological or hydrological extreme events. The impact of these extreme events increases with increasing population, particularly in coastal zones and is most pronounced in the Least Developed Countries. This situation presents African countries with an array of challenges arising from climate variability and exacerbated by climate change.

3. The ability of African countries to monitor and predict these events is severely constrained by the gaps in operational observation networks, data communication and limitations in human capacity, poor model performance and financial constraints in many parts of the continent.

4. NMHS in the African Region have different legal status i.e. units in institutions, departments, agencies. The absence of a quasi uniform status constitutes a major impediment for the visibility and consequent provision of resources to NMHS.

5. Furthermore, the experts highlighted that weather and climate services are of key importance for supporting weather and climate sensitive social and economic development sectors, including disaster risk reduction: health; water resource management: agriculture and food security; transport and infrastructure: natural resource management and environmental protection; and development; energy generation and distribution and so encouraged the strengthening of meteorological and hydrological services.

6. That as weather and climate patterns transcend geographical boundaries there is a clear and urgent need to work jointly to contribute effectively and efficiently to the development of all African countries, by exploiting the full potential of meteorology (climatology), hydrology and related sciences. In this regard the support provided to National Meteorological and Hydrological Services by the sub-regional, regional and international institutions is a critical pillar.

7. Many positive initiatives aimed at advancing the NMHS have been implemented or are ongoing in the region. As a result of improved meteorological services concrete results have been achieved in several socio-economic sectors such as improved food security through improved agricultural yields, predicting locale and timing of malaria outbreaks, safe and economical airline operations and improved preparedness for disasters.

Concluded:

8. NMHS can significantly contribute to sustainable development by providing information services across a range of economic sectors but are

not achieving their full potential at the current time due to several challenges as outlined above.

9. The National Meteorological Services are the sole official voice in issuing weather warnings for public safety and should be properly resourced to provide this vital public good.

10. NMHSs have a much stronger role as a contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation and particularly in Early Warning and production of future climate scenarios, providing information to a broad range of decision makers across the community so that sound development decisions can be made.

11. The existing Pan African and Regional institutions play a role in supporting NMHS and also in integrating programmes and information products and models at regional and Pan African levels. These institutions should benefit from strengthened high level support to achieve their mandate.

12. Aeronautical meteorological services are a critical activity for many NMSs in Africa and that these NMSs face a substantial challenge in implementing Quality Management System (QMS) that are ISO 9000 compliant in time to meet the ICAO November 2012 deadline. Furthermore, without a compliant QMS in place aeronautical meteorological services face failure of ICAO safety oversight audits.

13. Both South-South and North-South cooperation have a major role to play in supporting improvement of weather water and climate services in Africa.

Recommended:

14. Observation (upper air, surface, continental and marine) and communication networks in Africa to be strengthened to meet user needs and to be sustainable in the long term.

15. All NMSs that provide aeronautical meteorological services should, as a matter of urgency, implement a QMS and recover from the aeronautical industry the costs associated with aeronautical meteorological services.

16. Encouragement for the development and establishment of a series of Climate Working Group to address the range of climate sensitive economic sectors such as Climate and Health, Climate and Energy, Climate and Transport etc to engage with key stakeholders.
17. Long term commitment to, and strategically planned investment in, human capacity development in the weather, climate and hydrological service provider community.
18. Encourage the establishment within each NMHS, of a National Committee for climate related matters, in synergy with the National Committee on Climate Change.
19. NMHS in the African Region adopt the status of Agency where required.
20. NMHS should proactively seek partnerships with National Disaster Management Agencies and Development Sectors e.g. agriculture and health as these will increase their relevance and potential for allocation of resources.
21. Cooperation between NMHS and Universities needs to be strengthened to improve focus and scope of meteorological and climatological research and improved infrastructure to support research activities in NMHS.
22. Build the user community understanding of, and capacity to use and benefit from the full range of actual and potential weather and climate information products and services.
23. Encourage the use of indigenous and traditional knowledge and methods for adaptation to climate variability and climate change.
24. Strengthen the existing operational framework for enhancing cooperation between African countries and strengthen the capabilities of their National Meteorological Services and existing Regional and Sub-regional Climate Centers in Africa so as to effectively meet government and societal needs and requirements for weather and climate information and services.

25. Modern telecommunication technologies have significant potential for the dissemination of weather and climate information and warnings to the heart of local communities and should make every effort to take advantage of the rapid uptake of mobile phone technology across the African continent to expand their reach into local communities.