



Organisation météorologique mondiale
World Meteorological Organization

Statement at the Opening of the Fifteenth session of the WMO Commission for Agricultural Meteorology

M. Jarraud
Secretary-General

(Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 15 July 2010)

EAU
CLIMAT
TEMPS

WEATHER
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**STATEMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE
WMO COMMISSION FOR AGRICULTURAL METEOROLOGY**

by

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Excellency,

Dr James Salinger, president of the WMO Commission for Agricultural Meteorology,

Dr Antonio Divino Moura, Permanent Representative of Brazil with WMO,

Professor Luiz Cláudio Costa, Rector of the Federal University of Viçosa,

Distinguished Representatives of Members and Guests,

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address the fifteenth session of the WMO Commission for Agricultural Meteorology (CAgM). On behalf of WMO, I wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Brazil, through Your Excellency, for hosting this session in Belo Horizonte, as well as the *International Workshop on Addressing the Livelihood Crisis of Farmers: Weather and Climate Services*, which has just concluded. The "garden city" of Belo Horizonte is a fine example of thoroughly planned architecture, as well as a paradigm in sustainable urban agriculture at the service of food security, a green metropolis which has successfully tackled vital key nutrition issues for its population.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Antonio Divino Moura, Director of Brazil's Instituto Nacional de Meteorologia (INMET), WMO's Third Vice-President and Permanent Representative of Brazil with WMO, as well as to Professor Luiz Cláudio Costa, Rector of the Federal University of Viçosa, and to all their staff, for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements.

I also wish to thank Drs James Salinger and Laxman Singh Rathore for their leadership of the Commission over the intersessional period since the fourteenth session of CAgM (New Delhi, 2006), as well as the chairpersons, members and rapporteurs of the Open Programme Area Groups and Expert Teams. Additionally, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all

representatives of WMO Members and partner organizations, and to all participants in this key session.

Excellency, Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) commit the international community to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. The first MDG relates to hunger, a threat clearly linked to agriculture and food production. At the High-level Conference on World Food Security (Rome, June 2008), the United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon called upon world leaders to take "*bold and urgent*" steps to tackle the global food crisis, in particular by boosting food production and revitalizing agriculture.

Global climate change is causing increasing concern today among scientists, agronomists and decision-makers, since crop growth could be severely altered by significant changes in principal climatic variables such as temperature and precipitation, whence agricultural production and food security might be affected globally and locally, especially in the vulnerable developing world, where climate risks include floods, droughts and heatwaves with the potential to limit crop yield.

Your session takes place at a critical time for the farming community, since the global population is projected to grow from the present 6.5 billion to over 8 billion in 2030 and over 9 billion by 2050. Most of this growth would be concentrated in developing countries, so global food production would be expected to increase over 50% by 2030 and to nearly double by 2050. The situation has deteriorated on account of soaring food prices and the widespread financial and economic crisis. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the chronically hungry reached one billion in 2009, while 31 countries are in a state of severe food crisis requiring emergency aid, of which 20 are in Africa.

Accordingly, there is urgent need to increase agricultural productivity through a more efficient use of three fundamental natural resources: soil, crop and climate, especially in developing countries. However, until recently there has been a relative lack of awareness in the farming community on the actual and potential benefits of weather and climate services. Fortunately, climate predictions and services are now being developed as a result of enhanced collaboration between this community and the National Meteorological Services (NMSs) of WMO's 189 Members.

It is also increasingly recognized that enhanced applications of science and technology, including the use of climate and weather information, predictions and early warnings with appropriate lead times about impending weather and climate hazards, are indeed vital to augment agricultural

production. Capacity-building in agricultural meteorology can also make significant contributions to food security, in particular through workshops like the one held in Belo Horizonte just prior to this session, which has contributed to facilitate the exchange of experience among all stakeholders.

Excellency, Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the approval by the WMO co-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of its Fourth Assessment Report, which at the end of 2007 received the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, there has been much higher awareness of climate change and the associated risks and vulnerabilities. In 2009 the third World Climate Conference-3 (WCC-3), held in Geneva, unanimously approved the establishment of a Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), in particular to strengthen science-based climate predictions and services, and a High-level Taskforce (HLT) is actively developing proposals to be submitted to the Sixteenth World Meteorological Congress next year.

WCC-3 brought together 13 Heads of State and Government, and more than 100 Ministers and agency heads, as well as 2,500 scientists, sectoral experts and decision-makers. In the context of a technical session on climate and food security, participating experts noted that the GFCS would facilitate the provision of climate information to agriculture and food security, based on risk evaluation and information delivery, cooperation and partnerships, adaptation strategies for resilient agricultural systems and climate change mitigation. One of WMO's key goals is to ensure that its Agricultural Meteorology Programme will provide an essential contribution to GFCS development.

A number of ongoing agrometeorological activities are especially relevant in this context; for example, Spain's State Agency for Meteorology (AEMET) and WMO have developed the METAGRI Project, consisting of roving seminars for farmers in the countries of West Africa, to reinforce the interaction between NMHSs and rural farmers and the sustainable use of natural resources for agricultural production. Over 100 seminars have been held so far in eleven countries and more are scheduled to take place this year in five additional WMO Member countries. Moreover, roving seminars were held in Ethiopia, India and Sri Lanka, while other agrometeorological projects are about to be launched with similar objectives in the Caribbean, in Ethiopia and the Lake Victoria region of East Africa.

In partnership with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), WMO has contributed to the establishment in Slovenia of the Drought Management Centre for South-Eastern Europe (DMCSEE), to counter some of most damaging hazards to agriculture. Based on the

success of this key effort, WMO, UNCCD and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are now exploring the possibility of establishing another Regional Drought Management Centre in Central Asia. In addition, WMO recently organized workshops on drought indices and early warning systems in the USA and Spain, while another expert meeting is scheduled to be held in India this year.

Moreover, WMO continues to sponsor its World AgroMeteorological Information Service (WAMIS), which makes it possible to disseminate the agrometeorological products of its Members.

Excellency, Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like to stress the importance of including appropriate experts from developing countries in the working groups which are about to be established by your Commission.

It will not be possible for me to be with you throughout the entire session, so I have designated the Director of WMO's Climate Prediction and Adaptation Branch, Dr Mannava Sivakumar to represent me, and other senior staff will be assisting him.

Finally, I would like to reiterate WMO's gratitude to Brazil and to wish all the delegates an enjoyable stay in Belo Horizonte and a most successful and productive session.

Thank you.
