Dear Colleagues,

This year, 2008, is significant year for the Commission for Hydrology (CHy). Not only will we hold the thirteenth session of CHy in Geneva from 4-12 November this year, but this is also the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Commission.

Throughout the week from 11 to 15 February 2008, the CHy Advisory Working Group (AWG) held its third and final meeting of the current intersessional period at the WMO Headquarters, Geneva. Ms Zs. Buzás (Hungary), a new AWG member, has agreed to take on the responsibilities of the AWG member leading activities associated with capacity-building and technology transfer, left vacant with the resignation of E. Udoeka (Nigeria). The position of the member leading activities associated with disaster mitigation - floods and droughts (hydrological aspects) following with the resignation of S. Demuth (Germany), remained vacant.

UNESCO, the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS), and the International Association of Hydraulic Engineering and Research (IAHR) participated in the meeting as observers. Close cooperation with these agencies is essential for the future work of the Commission.

This was an AWG meeting with a difference. For the first time, the Working Groups on Hydrology from various regional associations were formally invited to provide inputs into the planning process for the next session of the CHy. Accordingly, for the first three days of the meeting five of the six regional hydrological advisers participated in the deliberations.

The primary areas of focus for this meeting included:

• Review of progress since the last AWG meeting in March 2006;
• Identification of the key actions required to be undertaken prior to CHy-XIII; and
• Development of the draft Programme of Work for the Commission for 2009-2012 in preparations for CHy-XIII (to be presented to CHy-XIII).

Progress in the activities since 2006 and the actions required to be undertaken during the remaining part of the current inter-session period are briefly outlined in the Annex (English only).

To: Members of the Commission for Hydrology (CHy-187)
Preparations for CHy-XIII and Draft Programme of Work for the Commission for 2009-2012

Preparations are now well underway for the CHy-XIII session to be held in Geneva from 4 to 12 November 2008.

Based on the inputs from the regional hydrological advisors and the members of the AWG, a draft Programme of Work for the Commission for 2009-2012 has been prepared for consideration by CHy-XIII.

In addition, specific topics on which the Commission will be invited to make decisions include:

- Quality Management Framework – Hydrology – The draft paper outlining a Quality Management Framework for NHSs will be presented to CHy-XIII;

- Flood Forecasting Initiative/International Flood Initiative – CHy-XIII will be requested to endorse the thrust of these initiatives and include the suite of activities planned under these initiatives in the future work programme;

- Capacity Building – CHy-XIII will be requested to re-affirm its position on capacity building and in particular the key role played by HOMS and WHYCOS in this regard. Despite some impressive statistics on the use of HOMS in the last two years and keeping in view the fact that recent efforts to obtain new HOMS components had not been successful, it was agreed that perhaps the time had come to review the effectiveness of HOMS. Accordingly, a paper on HOMS (or an alternative approach) will be prepared for consideration by CHy-XIII;

- Publications – The introduction of the QMF-Hydrology and recent changes in the publication processes in WMO have to the AWG proposing changes to the production of CHy publications. A paper will be prepared for consideration by CHy-XIII;

- WMO statement on the scientific basis for, and limitations of, hydrological modeling – The current draft of the statement will be modified to make it suitable for policy makers and the general public and a draft will be made available for discussions at CHy-XIII;

- Climate and Water Issues - CHy-XIII will be requested to discuss the importance of the Climate-Water interface and include a suite of activities planned within this theme in the future Work Programme. In particular, potential contributions from the water sector for the Third World Climate Conference will be discussed;

- Definition of uncertainty – CHy-XIII will be requested to endorse a definition of uncertainty for use in hydrological studies and analyses;

- Draft Programme of Work for 2009-2012 – CHy-XIII will be asked to adopt its Programme of Work and Structure for 2009-2012.

Meeting of Presidents of Technical Commissions

Probably the most significant outcome from the PTC meeting held from 18 to 20 February 2008 was the realization of the enhanced role of the Commission and the amount of work the Commission will need to contribute in order to fulfill its responsibilities under the new results-based management regime under which the WMO now works. This topic will be discussed in detail at CHy-XIII.
Conclusion

As we approach CHy-XIII, the Secretariat will attempt to keep you informed as draft papers and other documents become available on the WMO website. However, I would urge you all to make regular visits to the CHy Web site and provide your contributions for the session.

I look forward to your contribution in the ongoing process and seeing you in Geneva in November.

Yours sincerely,

(Bruce Stewart)
President
Commission for Hydrology

P.S. Please visit the following Web site for additional information:

http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/hwrp/index_en.html
PROGRESS OF ACTIVITIES SINCE MARCH 2006

The following points summarize the key activities undertaken since the AWG meeting held in March 2006:

- **Guide to hydrological practices** – The peer review process for the English version of the sixth edition of the Guide to Hydrological Practices has been completed and preparations are being made for its publication. CHy members will be informed as soon as the English version is published. Expressions of interest in translating the guide or financial contributions for further translations will be sought;

- **Manual on stream gauging** – The peer review process for the Manual on Stream Gauging has been completed and the author is preparing the document for final publication;

- **Quality management framework – hydrology** – A draft paper has been prepared for consideration at CHy-XIII;

- **Automated stream-gauging procedures** – Progress in this project has been delayed and work will be held over to the next inter-session period;

- **Inter-Comparison of hydrological information systems (HIS)** - The team working on this initiative has developed a list of required HIS functionalities that have been used in the selection process of HIS for WHYCOS projects;

- **Lake Evaporation** – A draft report on lake evaporation has been compiled;

- **Hydrological data rescue** – The survey of data rescue needs of countries has resulted in responses from 55 countries from different regions. A draft report on the status of data rescue and protection is being compiled;

- **Flood forecasting manual** – The Flood Forecasting Manual is in an advanced draft stage, but unlikely to be completed prior to CHy-XIII;

- **Manual on low flows** – the peer review process has been completed and comments are to be sent to the author for the final draft to be compiled;

- **Manual on the estimation of probable maximum precipitation** – a range of peer review processes are reaching conclusion and a decision on the publication of the manual is pending;

- **Climate-sensitive basins** – The identification of a network of stream flow gauging stations on climate-sensitive basins has progressed with a total of 2 207 stations in 24 countries, on five continents, identified;

- **Water manager needs for climate information in water resources planning** – an Expert meeting on water manager’s needs for climate information in water resources planning was held under the auspices of WCP-Water at WMO headquarters from 18 to 20 December 2006 wherein a set of concepts, findings and recommendations were enumerated that would guide future interactions between the water managers and climate scientists. In accordance with these concepts and recommendations,
two pilot projects aimed at facilitating emerging NHS needs associated with climate change adaptations and awareness have been initiated in Mexico and Egypt;

- **WHYCOS** - The Programme has continued with the implementation of various components, mainly in Africa and Asia. France is funding the implementation of Volta-HYCOS, Niger-HYCOS, Mekong-HYCOS and Carib-HYCOS components. European Union and the Government of the Netherlands are funding the second phase of SADC-HYCOS while the European Union is also funding the Pacific-HYCOS;

- **INFOHYDRO** – After a test run conducted in English, the INFOHYDRO questionnaire was translated into French, Russian and Spanish and circulated to all Members in July 2007. Responses were received from 31 countries. They are available on the WMO Web site.

**Actions to be undertaken prior to CHy-XIII session**

The following are the actions that need to be undertaken prior to CHy-XIII session:

- **Inter-comparison of hydrological information systems** – The Task Team will now prepare a final report summarizing the functionalities of the HISs reviewed. A teleconference will be held to establish the next steps;

- **Lake evaporation** – The draft report on lake evaporation will undergo peer review;

- **Hydrological data rescue** – the team will complete the analysis of the survey and produce a report by summer 2008;

- **Flood forecasting manual** – every effort will be made to complete the draft prior to CHy-XIII;

- **Climate-sensitive basins** – The AWG member will follow-up with selected NHSs that did not respond to the initial request, but that are thought to have climate-sensitive stream gauging stations and acquire the data for the stations identified by the NHSs not already held at GRDC;

- **Publications** – Concerned at the delays between the preparation of guidance material, peer review and publication, the AWG decided to implement a process by which draft publications could be made available over the web once they have entered the peer review stage. The Web site would be password protected and warnings that the peer review process had yet to be completed would be incorporated in all material.