



WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

RCOF REVIEW 2008: AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERT REVIEW MEETING ON REGIONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUMS

Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania
3 – 7 November, 2008



Hosted by
Tanzanian Meteorological Agency

SPEECH BY MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

HON. DR. SHUKURU J. KAWAMBWA (MP),

AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL
EXPERT REVIEW MEETING ON REGIONAL CLIMATE
OUTLOOK FORUMS AT THE IMPALA HOTEL,
ARUSHA ON 3 NOVEMBER, 2008

Mr. Chairman,
Dr. Buruhani S. Nyenzi – Representative of the Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO),
Dr. Lamine Bah – President of WMO Africa Regional,
Mr. Philbert F. Tibaijuka – Acting Director General and Permanent Representative of United Republic of Tanzania with WMO,
Heads of Institutions,
Distinguished Scientists and delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, it is my great privilege and honour to welcome you all to this **INTERNATIONAL EXPERT REVIEW MEETING ON REGIONAL CLIMATE OUTLOOK FORUMS**, which is being held in this beautiful City of Arusha. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is grateful to the organizers of this meeting for having chosen Tanzania and Arusha in particular, as your venue for this important Meeting. I'm told there are more than 50 scientists coming from different countries globally. For those of you coming from outside the East African Community, the city of Arusha hosts the Headquarters of the East African Community which currently comprises of five Partner States of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania. In addition, Arusha lies at the centre of Tanzania's famous tourist attractions including Mount Kilimanjaro, Ngorongoro and Serengeti while Zanzibar is only a short distance away. Therefore, it is my sincere hope that you will find the environment in Arusha conducive for your work programme and conclude your business as scheduled.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me also to take this opportunity to register my Government's appreciation for the continued generosity and support rendered by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and other national, regional and international partners including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), UK Met Office, Meteo France and the World Bank; support which has assisted the growth of Regional Climate Outlook Forums (RCOF) in Africa and elsewhere. The support rendered by these institutions is a testimony of the priority they give to sustainability of good global climate. May I, on

behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and on behalf of Africa and the world as a whole, express my sincere appreciation and thanks to these institutions for continued support and assistance to Regional Climate Outlook Forums (RCOF).

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

This workshop is convened at a time when **concerns for impacts of climate change and climate variability have** reached high levels at national and international levels. Impacts of Climate Variability have strong implications on seasonal forecasts. We are observing an increasing trend in frequency, intensity and severity of tropical cyclones such as those of Katrina and Nargis in places including Myanmar (Burma) causing loss of thousands of lives and property. Floods and drought occurrences are also on an increase. The sectors affected by the Climate Variability include agriculture and food security, water resources, disaster management, energy, tourism and health. Impacts of Climate Variability and Climate Change in the form of extreme events might also aggravate ethnic conflicts linked to competition over natural resources that are increasingly becoming scarce as a result of and compounded by many other contributing causes. This workshop is therefore, an excellent opportunity for you experts to address world concerns regarding the impacts of Climate change and Climate Variability.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

The first RCOF process was pioneered in Africa in October, 1996 at a workshop on Reducing Climate-Related Vulnerability at the Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe, and the process later spread worldwide. We applaud the great success stories that have been realized ever since. They include processes that facilitated a better understanding of the links between climate systems and socio-economic activities in the region including Tanzania. I believe that this was possible through fostered interactions and exchange of information between “climate scientists” and users. I am also impressed by the enhanced awareness made by the RCOF through interaction between Climate Scientists and the media. Efforts you have undertaken to create awareness among the different societies are huge step towards global climate stability because; climate information is an essential ingredient in mitigating impacts of extreme weather and climate. The results of these efforts is an increased demand for climate services nationally and worldwide. We need to further strengthen these efforts which definitely will lead to positive climate impacts.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

Let me now turn to capacity that is required to adequately carry out the intended RCOF goals. We appreciate and value RCOF's goals of improving the scientific capacity of producers and users of weather and climate information to enhance the inputs to, and use of climate monitoring and forecasting products. I also recognize the RCOF aspirations of developing an improved, proactive, timely, broad-based system of information and product dissemination and product dissemination and feedback, at national and regional scales. Likewise, I do appreciate the need to expand the knowledge base a national and regional level to facilitate informed decision making. For this to happen, there is therefore need for enhanced production of weather and climate information to end users and of course to have a well managed reference archive of data and information products.

In addition to these aforementioned goals, I acknowledge the challenges that are ahead of National Meteorological Services and RCOFs in general.

Challenges that include availability of reliable climate products that is timely and available in simple and understandable languages to the end-users. This is important as it translates easily into supporting decisions and thereafter processes. There is also need for stronger linkages to wider sector specific users and respective development of new forecast products tailored to their specific requirements and mechanisms for the provision of seasonal updates. Besides, we expect RCOFs to invest in through research on how it could produce information for mitigation and adaptation measures.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me now to outline some challenges that this workshop will need to address. Challenges that this Expert Meeting will need to address it to include:

- (i) The need to enhance awareness and capacity to ensure climate information and predictions is used more effectively in the development of socio-economic policies.
- (ii) The need to enhance International Partnership between National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and their national partners to better understand user needs and tailor climate information products to meet societal requirements.
- (iii) The need to establish and adequately maintain climate observing networks especially among the developing countries including Tanzania.
- (iv) The need to enhance capacity building needed for the understanding of global and regional climate systems where monitoring requires partnership across geographical and political boundaries.
- (v) Finally, the challenge of how to sustain RCOFs. You will need to recommend the best way forward towards future sustainability of the RCOFs to ensure achievements made so far are not lost.

I strongly urge you experts, ladies and gentlemen to develop in this workshop methodologies and tools that will assist you to address these challenges.

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Delegates,

My coming to officiate this important gathering is not simply ceremonial. The Government is seriously considering how to improve National Meteorological Services for adaptation and mitigation of impacts caused by climate change/availability and extreme weather event in the country. In view of this, I wish to assure you that the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is keenly interested in all the endeavours of this meeting and is committed to the sustainability of the strategies adopted by the Tanzania meteorological Agency in support of RCOFs. Some of the commitments include support for improved spatial network of observing surface and upper air platforms, reliable communication linkages and trained climate prediction and services specialists.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Without taking much more of your time, allow me now to take this opportunity to wish you successful deliberations while reviewing lessons learnt from 12 years of RCOFs, opportunities and new approaches for RCOFs in the future and development of strategies for effective application of RCOFs in the adaptation to climate change for enhanced sustainable development.

Let me also remind you once again to find time and visit some of the attractive features in Arusha and Manyara regions before you depart for you various destinations.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations and a pleasant stay in Arusha.

With these remarks Mr. Chairman, it is now my pleasure and honour to declare: the **Regional Climate Outlook Forum Review workshop officially opened**

I thank you all for your kind attention!