Regional Workshop on Climate Monitoring Including the Implementation of Climate Watch Systems for Arab Countries in West Asia

27-29 May 2013, Amman, Kingdom of Jordan

Rationale

In recent decades, climate variability and climate extremes have resulted in increasingly noticeable impacts on societies in countries throughout the world. The IPCC 4th Assessment report states: ''Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level. At continental, regional, and ocean basin scales, numerous long-term changes in climate have been observed. These include changes in Arctic temperatures and ice, widespread changes in precipitation amounts, ocean salinity, wind patterns and aspects of extreme weather including droughts, heavy precipitation, heat waves and the intensity of tropical cyclones.''

With regard to climate and weather related extremes, WMO through its various programs works with its Members to help countries to make the transition from "crisis management" policies to "risk assessment/ risk management" policies and considers that it is important that information on the state of the climate be provided to relevant decision-making organizations, such as governments, agricultural agencies, emergency management services, and water resource management agencies.

A Climate Watch is delivered as an alert/advisory on foreseen and/or evolving climate anomalies with possible negative impacts on societies. Its preparation is based on one hand on climate observations, climate monitoring products and long range forecasts, and on the other hand on the existing information on the socio-economic impacts of various global and regional climate patterns and extremes. Such patterns include ENSO, MJO, NAO, Indian Ocean dipole, etc. Therefore, a "Climate Watch" can serve as a mechanism to heighten awareness in the user community that a significant climate anomaly exists or might develop and that preparedness measures should be initiated.

Given the advances in climate monitoring and long range forecasting during the last two decades, it is now feasible for NMHSs to issue Climate Watches to help reduce socio-economic vulnerability by improving preparedness procedures for adverse climatic conditions.

In collaboration with WMO Commission for Basic Systems (CBS) and Commission for Climatology (CCl) experts, WMO developed in 2005 a technical document on ''Climate Watches'', referenced as WCDMP-No. 58, WMO/TD-No.1269, which is available in electronic format at the WMO website: http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/wcp/wcdmp/documents/GuidelinesonClimateWatches.pdf
The document describes the concept of Climate Watch, and guidelines for establishing, operating and evaluating Climate Watches.

Climate Watch systems are considered to be a key element of the Climate Services Information System (CSIS) pillar of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS). Based on relevant national and regional capabilities and infrastructure, Climate Watch systems enable NMHSs to deliver valuable climate services to policy makers, authorities, economic sectors as well as the public.

The WMO series of regional workshops on Climate Watches constitute a leverage in achieving this new type of products and services and aim at building capacity of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) as well as of the regional climate institutions in the regions in need and hence enabling them to better contribute to the Implementation of the Global Framework for climate Services (GFCS)

Objectives of the Workshop

The workshop is sponsored by WMO. It will address the implementation of Climate Watches in the Arab countries of West Asia. The implementation of a Climate Watch system in the region should be based on the existing infrastructure and expertise at national and regional level. The ultimate goal is to ensure that NMHSs and regional climate institutions make use of best practices in delivery, provision and evaluation of Climate Watches, and implement best practices in managing efficiently and seamlessly the interaction among the three involved parties: Regional institutions, NMHSs and end users. All presentations and summaries of working groups and recommendations will be included in the proceedings of the workshop which will be published some months after its completion.

A dedicated session on analyzing annual and decadal climate data will be used to help countries provide their input to the WMO Climate System Monitoring, including annual statements on the global climate and the decadal global climate summary for 2001-2010.

Accordingly, the objectives of the workshop are to:

- Address the need for early warning/Climate Watches in the region,
- Review the status of climate monitoring and long range forecasting capabilities at regional and national level,
- Review and discuss Climate Watch showcases from the region and from abroad,
- Work on tailoring the WMO guidelines on Climate Watches to the region's needs,
- Provide guidance and hands-on practical session for contributing the WMO Climate System Monitoring CSM (annual and decadal scale)
- Recommend best practices for the region in issuing Climate Watches,
- Recommend best strategies towards users of Climate Watches,
- Develop an action plan to implement Climate Watches at national and regional level,
- Consider liaison opportunities with relevant ongoing or planned initiatives in the region
- Recommend a follow-up mechanism on the implementation of Climate Watches.

Linkage with WMO projects and activities

- Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS)
- World Climate Research Programme (WCRP)
- Climate extremes and Climate Change Indices (CCl/CLIVAR/JCOMM Expert Team on Climate Change Detection and Indices- ETCCDI)
- Disaster Risk Reduction Program (DRR)

Participants

- Experts from NMHSs
- International experts
- Invited participants from the user community from Jordan

Invited countries

Bahrain	State of Palestine
Egypt	Qatar
Iraq	Saudi Arabia
Jordan	Syria
Kuwait	United Arab Emirates
Lebanon	Yemen
Oman	