In 2003, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) continued to facilitate worldwide cooperation in the generation and exchange of meteorological and hydrological information and the application of meteorology to aviation, shipping, water problems, agriculture and other activities. It also promoted operational hydrology and encouraged research and training in meteorology.

During the year, anniversaries of two initiatives that ultimately led to the establishment of WMO were observed: the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Brussels Maritime Conference (1853), which initiated formal global cooperation in meteorology; and the one hundred and thirtieth anniversary of the first (1873) Congress of the International Meteorological Organization.

The Fourteenth World Meteorological Congress (Geneva, 5-24 May), WMO’s governing body, reviewed programme implementation and activities, and adopted the Sixth Long-term Plan (2004-2011) and three new programmes on natural disaster reduction and mitigation, space and the least developed countries. The Congress also established the Consultative Meetings on High-level Policy on Satellite Matters.


WMO’s membership increased to 181 States and six Territories in 2003.

World Weather Watch Programme

In 2003, the World Weather Watch Programme marked its fortieth anniversary. Its scientific and technical programme provided meteorological data and products to member States, offering worldwide weather information, analysis and forecasts through its Global Observing System, Global Telecommunications System, Global Data-processing System and data management and system support activities, collectively known as the basic system. It also included the Tropical Cyclone Programme; the Instruments and Methods of Observation Programme and WMO satellite and environmental emergency response activities.

The ITU World Radiocommunication Conference (Geneva, June/July) safeguarded and consolidated several frequency band allocations for meteorological operations. The Commission for Instruments and Methods of Observation (CIMO), at its first session (Los Angeles, United States, 13-15 February), finalized the structure of CIMO Open Programme Area Groups and terms of reference of each expert team. A joint meeting of the CIMO Expert Team on Surface-based Instrument Intercomparisons and Calibration Methods and the International Organizing Committee on Surface-based Instrument Intercomparisons (Trappes, France, 24-28 November) marked the first step in organizing a series of intercomparisons. Substantive work was completed on the Guide to Meteorological Instruments and Methods of Observation (seventh edition); five instrument and observing methods reports were published in CD-ROM format and on the CIMO/Instruments and Methods of Observation Programme web site.

The Second International Conference on Women in Meteorology and Hydrology (Geneva, 24-27 March), organized by WMO, reviewed progress made in women’s participation in those areas and developed strategies to increase their involvement.

World Climate Programme

In 2003, the World Climate Application and Service Programme, including Climate Information and Prediction Services, focused on food and agriculture, water resources, health and urban climate, and continued to support regional climate outlook forums, particularly in Africa, where it established a regional climate network for journalists.

In January, the International Research Center on El Niño was established in Guayaquil, Ecuador, to focus on the El Niño/Southern Oscillation and its impacts, and climate applications.

Publications issued in 2003 included the seventh Global Climate System Review covering the period from June 1996 to December 2001 and the Statement on the Status of the Global Climate.

Atmospheric Research and Environment Programme

During 2003, significant progress was made in the implementation of component programmes

The World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) in 2003 successfully concluded the WCRP Arctic Climate System Study (ACSYS). The aim of the new WCRP core project, Climate and Cryosphere, a sequel to ACSYS, was to enhance systematically monitoring, understanding and modelling of complex processes through which the cryosphere interfaced with the global climate system.

Applications of meteorology

The Applications of Meteorology Programme continued to support member States in a wide range of socio-economic activities, including the protection of life and property and safeguarding the environment. The Agricultural Meteorology Programme held joint activities with the Climate Information and Prediction Services (CLIPS) Programme through the organization of the Regional Technical Meeting on CLIPS and Agrometeorological Applications for the Andean Countries (Guayaquil, 8-12 December). The aeronautical meteorology activities were devoted to putting in place guidance and regulatory material and conducting training events in preparation for the final (2005) phase of the World Area Forecast System.

At its first meeting in February, a task team on resources, established to assist in identifying and securing resources to implement the capacity-building programme of the Joint WMO/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology, decided on the development of a database of key funding agencies to link capacity-building projects to potential funding sources and to advise on the project evaluation and selection process.

Hydrology and water resources

The Hydrology and Water Resources Programme continued to provide assistance to national hydrological services, particularly in their water resources assessment activities, through conferences, seminars, training courses and field projects. A meeting on improved meteorological and hydrological forecasting for flood situations (Geneva, 1-2 April) highlighted the need for an action programme to focus on the ability of national meteorological services and hydrological services to cooperate in an effective manner to provide improved flood forecasting services.

Technical cooperation

In 2003, WMO technical assistance, valued at $23.58 million, was financed by the WMO Voluntary Cooperation Programme ($7.7 million), the United Nations Development Programme ($2.19 million), trust funds ($12.76 million) and the WMO regular budget ($0.99 million).

Secretariat

As at 31 December 2003, WMO staff totalled 258, including 116 in the Professional and higher categories and 142 in the General Service category.

Budget

A regular budget of 127,169,800 Swiss francs (SwF) for the 2004-2005 biennium was approved by the WMO Executive Council in 2003. The Fourteenth World Meteorological Congress, also in 2003, approved a maximum expenditure of SwF 253,800,000 for the fourteenth financial period (2004-2007).

NOTE: For further details regarding WMO activities, see World Meteorological Organization Annual Report 2003, published by WMO.

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