REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Report to Plenary on item 6.4

REFERENCE:
Cg-XVI/B/WP 6.4

APPENDICES:
A. Draft text for inclusion in the general summary on item 6.4
B. Draft Resolution 6.4/1 (Cg-XVI) – The WMO Regional Programme

ACTION PROPOSED:
It is recommended that the draft text given in Appendix A be included in the general summary of the work of the session and that the draft resolution in Appendix B be adopted.
6.4  **REGIONAL PROGRAMME** *(agenda item 6.4)*

6.4.1  **General Overview**

6.4.1.1 Congress reviewed the progress of the Regional Programme (RP), during the fifteenth financial period, as well as the actions taken by the Secretary-General as follow-up to its decisions and those of the Executive Council and regional associations (RAs) related to the Programme. It noted that the Regional Programme (see Annex to this paragraph), implemented by the six RAs and supported by the WMO Regional Offices and WMO Offices in the Regions (formerly called Sub-regional Offices), continued to implement relevant Congress and Executive Council resolutions and coordinate Member’s activities in their respective Regions. Promoting the implementation of the various WMO Programmes, strengthening the NMHSs and improving their capacity to provide better products and services, continuous assistance in resolving identified technical and institutional issues, have been pursued through cooperation and partnership with Members, international organizations and financial institutions. Members have benefited from the organization of a number of regional technical conferences, seminars, workshops and other fora involving experts, Directors of NMHSs and high-level decision-makers.

6.4.1.2 Relevant information on the attained results and identified priorities and challenges by the regional associations is provided in Cg-XVI/Doc. 2.4 - Reports of the presidents of regional associations.

6.4.2  **Regional activities and regional offices**

6.4.2.1 Congress welcomed various measures taken by the Secretary-General to strengthen the Secretariat support to the Regional Programme. With the new structure implemented in January 2008, the Development and Regional Activities (DRA) Department was tasked to implement programme activities towards Expected Results 7 and 9 (2008-2011), which included the implementation of the Regional Programme. Within the DRA Department, the regional activities are being closely coordinated with principle capacity building programmes (ETRP, VCP, TCOP, LDCP) and with the Resource Mobilization Office (RMO).

6.4.2.2 Congress was pleased to note the increasing role of the Regional Offices (RO) as a focal point for information on regional activities and for assisting Members develop their NMHSs. Congress commended the continued efforts by the ROs and WMO Offices in the Regions in supporting the work of the RAs, their presidents and subsidiary bodies, as well as in providing assistance to Members in implementing the various technical and scientific programmes in the Regions. Congress stressed the need to strengthen project management within the ROs and urged the Secretary-General to ensure that project management skills of the ROs are enhanced. Congress noted further that the focus on capacity building in the DRA Department allowed the ROs to enhance their role in supporting resource mobilization and implementation of projects with various partners. In this regard, Congress agreed that the Secretary-General should sustain and further optimize the internal capacity building structure with a strong participation of the ROs and the WMO Offices in the Regions.

6.4.2.3 Congress recognized that ROs have been playing successfully their role as point-of-contact between Members, and WMO Programmes/Secretariat. ROs monitor the needs of the sub-regions and individual Members and facilitate the provision of appropriate advice and assistance through relevant technical departments in the Secretariat. Congress noted further that ROs, in close collaboration with the RMO and utilizing all available possibilities for technical assistance (e.g., VCP and technical cooperation mechanisms), have assisted in a number of cases to resolve
critical deficiencies which could have compromised the ability of some NMHSs to provide essential data and services as per their mandate.

6.4.2.4 Congress noted that a major focus for all ROs has been the need for promoting the role of NMHSs to increase their visibility as crucial stakeholders in the national and regional development agenda. ROs have conducted their advocacy role through missions to Member States and representation at relevant regional events. Congress agreed that the Secretary-General should strengthen this assistance to Members, in particular, in promoting the socio-economic benefits from weather-, climate- and water-related services to governments, economic sectors and societies.

6.4.2.5 Congress noted that the Regional Offices for Africa, for Asia and the South-West Pacific, and for Europe were located in Geneva, and that the WMO Offices in the Regions continued to fulfil their functions and responsibilities as an integral part of the Secretariat. Congress noted further that the relocation of the Regional Director for the Americas to Paraguay in January 2010 has brought some benefits for Regions III and IV by fostering closer collaboration with Members and between the two Regions.

6.4.2.6 Congress noted further that the fifteenth session of RA I expressed concern with regard to the capacity challenges faced by the Regional Offices and WMO Offices in the Regions, and identified the following key priorities and responsibilities for these Offices: (a) carry out gap analysis of NMHSs; (b) assist in the processes of strengthening the NMHSs; (c) effective support to the implementation of WMO Programmes in the Region; (d) enhance WMO and NMHSs visibility in the Region; (e) prepare and assist Members update information in the planned Country Profile Data Base; and (f) maintain liaison with regional economic groupings and international organizations. Congress also noted that RA I urged the Secretary-General to explore relocation of the Regional Office for Africa to the Region in order to improve the communication with Members and partner organizations, and enhance its effectiveness in the governance and coordination of the regional activities.

6.4.2.7 Considering the concerns of RA I and the benefits for Regions III and IV achieved through the relocation of the Regional Director to the Region, as well as opinions that the location of the Regional Directors and Offices in Geneva has advantages in terms of coordination with the WMO Secretariat and Programmes, Congress recommended that the Secretary-General consider, in consultation with the presidents of RAs concerned, conducting a comprehensive review of the regional offices resources and location and propose measures to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness. Congress also supported the call by several regional associations to their Members to consider strengthening the respective ROs and WMO Offices in the Regions through national secondments and other appropriate means.

6.4.2.8 Congress noted the important role of the WMO Offices in the Regions in bringing the WMO Secretariat close to Members, especially in strategic and operational planning and assessment of societal benefits, thereby raising the profile of NMHSs. Congress noted further the concern of many Members that these Offices have been understaffed and requested the Secretary-General to strengthen them. Congress also recommended other options for strengthening the regional presence of WMO, such as establishment of project offices and appointing staff through various projects implemented in the Regions.

6.4.2.9 Congress was pleased to note the success of various forms of sub-regional cooperation and collaboration between Members, such as the Interstate Council on Hydrometeorology of the Commonwealth of Independent States (ICH/CIS), which has been very instrumental in developing common strategy and implementation approaches by the Members in the sub-region. Congress supported such sub-regional frameworks, in particular for areas with similar climate characteristics
and disaster regimes, in order to harmonize the cross-border exchange and cooperation. Congress noted that South-East Asia is one of those sub-regions which would require stronger inter-regional cooperation between RA II and RA V.

6.4.2.10 Congress stressed that, along with the other capacity building programmes of the WMO, the Regional Programme should put strong emphasis on the assistance to the developing and least developed countries. In this regard, Congress was pleased to note the successful implementation of regional pilot projects in RA II, including those proposed and championed by Hong Kong, China. Congress encouraged the promotion of similar pilot projects in other regional associations to build the capacity of Members and that collaboration between regional associations and relevant technical commissions should be further developed.

6.4.3 WMO Country Profile Data Base

6.4.3.1 Congress reviewed the process towards the development of an integrated Country Profile Data Base (CDB) requested by Cg-XV and EC-LX and noted the progress made, including the purchase of needed survey and collaboration software. Congress also expressed its appreciation to the Government of Spain for the secondment from the Agencia Estatal de Meteorología (AEMET), who worked on the CDB among other duties.

6.4.3.2 Recognizing the potential for such a capability to improve coordination, as well as the efficiencies for surveys and knowledge management across programmes and regions, Congress agreed with the importance of continuing the development of the CDB with the involvement of the EC Working Group on Capacity Building or its successor, and the assistance of those Members willing to do so. Congress anticipated that the CDB would be an important tool to track the needs for assistance and development of the NMHSs to better target development resources and in applying for additional resources. A holistic CDB would help in monitoring and evaluation of regional strategic/operating plans, in minimizing the number of WMO surveys and to get information on the needs and status of the Members. In this connection, Congress noted progress towards the development of a version of WMO Publication No. 5 using the CDB collaboration software, which will provide the core for future development of the CDB.

6.4.3.3 Congress stressed that the usefulness of the database depends on regular updates of the information provided by the Members. It is important that Members have access to the information contained in the database, especially with regard to their own country and NMHS and that the mechanism for reviewing and updating the CDB information and requirements would require regular feedback from Members. In this regard, Congress recommended that the Secretary-General evaluate Members’ experiences with the WMO Publication No. 5 module and the survey tool with a view to improving their usefulness and determining any future development of the CDB.

6.4.4 Regional Programme in the sixteenth financial period

6.4.4.1 Noting the description of the Regional Programme (see Annex to this paragraph) Congress adopted Resolution 6.4/1 (Cg-XVI) – The WMO Regional Programme.
Annex to paragraph 6.4.4.1 of the general summary

Programme Description

REGIONAL PROGRAMME

Background

1. The WMO First Congress (1951) established six WMO Regions with related Regional Associations (RAs). The Regional Programme (RP) aimed at facilitating a regional approach to the implementation of WMO Programmes and activities, was first introduced by Seventh Congress (1975). As a cross-cutting programme, the RP contributes to all Expected Results of the WMO Strategic Plan, with its main focus on ER 6 of the WMO Strategic Plan 2012-2015.

Overall Objective

2. The overall objective of the RPis to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of the six RAs of the Organization in coordinating meteorological, hydrological, climatological and related activities of their Members. The RP provides a framework for regional cooperation in the implementation of the WMO strategies, policies and programmes taking into account regional requirements, capacities and priorities.

Purpose and scope

3. The RP provides support to the six RAs. The regional associations play a key role in planning and coordinating the regional activities, aligning them with the WMO Strategic Plan and the other WMO technical and scientific programmes, ensuring a harmonized and synchronous implementation effort by Members. RAs should play an important role in monitoring and evaluation of the implementation activities of their Members, establishing suitable baselines and measuring performance.

4. The RP ensures that in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the scientific and technical programmes of the Organization, the particular needs and capabilities of Regions are recognized and considered, taking into account the best interests of the Organization as a whole. The activities under the RP provide significant assistance in addressing regional aspects and integrating them within the entire scope of the work of WMO, particularly in strengthening the role and operation of NMHSs at the national and regional levels to enable them to fulfill their mandates and provide adequate response to emerging challenges.

5. The RP is a cross-cutting programme involving all Members, RAs and TCs. It provides a two-way interface between the Members and the WMO Secretariat to allow for streamlined expert assistance to Members, particularly developing and Least Developed Countries, and for feedback on best practices and lessons learned. The RP identifies the need for and fosters the establishment of Regional Centres to serve Members in different fields, such as, numerical weather prediction, climate, instruments, education and training. The regional basic observing networks (RBSN/RBCN) are also coordinated through the RP mechanisms in coordination with CBS and the WMO Secretariat, taking into account the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS).

6. Through the RP, WMO establishes and maintains links and partnerships with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations, inter-governmental and economic groupings in the Regions. In this way it promotes WMO activities, contributes to the implementation of the WMO
strategic objectives, and provides tools needed to effectively address regional, sub-regional and national issues of importance to society.

7. The RP accounts for the wide range in development levels of the countries in the various WMO Regions resulting in large differences in the capacities of the respective NMHSs. In this regard, RP, as part of the WMO capacity development effort, focuses on the assistance given at regional level that is needed to bridge gaps in the capabilities of all Members, especially LDCs, SIDS and countries in transition to produce, utilize and benefit from hydrometeorological information, products and services, as called for by WMO strategies, standards and recommended practices.

**Governance**

8. The overall guidance and direction of the RP is provided by the regional associations and, during the intersessional periods, the oversight of the regional activities is carried out by the presidents of the regional associations, assisted by their respective management groups. The regular meetings of the presidents of RAs allow for the inter-regional coordination of the Programme.

**Programme structure**

9. The RP consists of two interdependent functional areas, as follows:

   (a) Regional associations activities:
   - Institutional support to RAs;
   - Regional events;

   (b) Regional cooperation and partnership:
   - Coordination of capacity development activities in the Regions;
   - Cooperation with regional partners.

10. The RP supports the organization and conduct of the RA sessions which decide on ways of coordinated implementation of the WMO Programmes and strategies in the respective Regions and develop regional operating/action plans to address priority tasks through coordinated implementation efforts of its Members. The RAs have emphasized the need for capacity development of its Members, including activities taken by individual or groups of Members on behalf of the Region, coordinated through the RP. In order to pursue the tasks during their intersessional periods, RAs develop appropriate work structures for its subsidiary bodies such as working groups, task teams, networks and forums, engaging the available expertise of its Members based on the principle of volunteerism. The RP supports the activities of RA’s subsidiary bodies and plays an important role in ensuring consistency between the WMO Strategic Plan, technical programmes and respective regional activities. The RP provides technical and logistics support to the related RA activities in order to ensure achievement of planned key outcomes.

11. In each WMO Region there are a number of international organizations, inter-governmental agreements, regional economic groupings, development agencies, and NGOs, whose objectives and activities are related to those of WMO. The RP works towards establishment of close cooperation and partnership with those organizations in order to find synergies, possibilities for financing projects and provision of technical assistance to Members in the Region. The RP accounts for the representation of WMO in different inter-agency and inter-governmental meetings at regional and sub-regional level, thus, contributing to a better visibility of WMO and the NMHSs and emphasizing their role an in the development agenda.
12. WMO Regional Offices support the RP and other Programmes as appropriate. The Regional Offices include a number of offices located in Sub-Regions for closer coordination of regional activities with Members and development partners. The RP contributes to capacity development efforts, through the Regional Offices and WMO Offices in the Regions, by maintaining close relations with all Members, by acting as point-of-contact between Members and the WMO Secretariat. One of the main tasks of these Offices is to advocate the role of the NMHSs and the need for support from the governments to sustain and enhance their operations. A major task in the advocacy effort is to demonstrate the socio-economic benefits of the weather, climate and water services and promote the need to invest in necessary infrastructure, as well as in related research and development. The RP puts emphasis on strengthening the national and regional institutional frameworks, legislation and regulations, in order to ensure sustainability of NMHSs and their continuous improvement.
DRAFT RESOLUTION

Res. 6.4/1 (Cg-XVI) – THE WMO REGIONAL PROGRAMME

THE CONGRESS,

Noting the achievements and challenges of the Regions reported in the Abridged Final Reports of the sessions of the six WMO Regional Associations held during the fifteenth financial period,

Considering:

(1) The need for collective and coordinated activities of the regional associations in the implementation of the WMO Strategic and Operating Plan throughout the sixteenth Financial Period (2012–2015),

(2) The role of the regional associations and the WMO Regional Offices in identifying regional requirements and mainstreaming the capacity building activities,

(3) The need for maintaining and broadening of the liaison and cooperation with regional partner organizations in developing and implementing weather-, climate- and water-related programmes and projects for the benefit of Members,

(4) The need for WMO to be strongly and efficiently represented at regional and sub-regional level among other international organizations as a world leader in weather, climate and water matters,

(5) The need for on-going support and advice to Members, particularly developing and least developed countries, aimed at enhancing the role, operations and visibility of the NMHSs based on comprehensive understanding of their contribution to regional and sub-regional cooperation scenarios and to national development agendas,

Decides that:

(1) The WMO Regional Programme shall be continued in the sixteenth financial period;

(2) The major thrust of Regional Programme will be:

(a) To continue providing support to the six Regional Associations of the Organization;

(b) To plan and coordinate regional activities, aligning them with the WMO Strategic and Operating Plan and the WMO technical and scientific programmes to ensure a harmonized and synchronous implementation effort by Members;

(c) To ensure that in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the regional and national strategic/operating plans, the scientific and technical programmes of the Organization, the particular needs, capabilities and priorities of the various Regions are recognized and considered;

(d) To foster strengthening the role and operation of NMHSs at the national and regional levels to enable them to fulfill their mandates and provide adequate response to emerging challenges;

(e) As a cross-cutting programme to facilitate expert assistance to Members;

(f) To identify Member’s needs for the provision of regional facilities and services through continuation and monitoring of existing Regional Centres and establishment of new Centres, as appropriate;
(g) To promote establishing and maintaining links and partnerships with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations, inter-governmental and economic groupings in the Regions, thus, promoting WMO activities and identifying synergies bringing efficiency and effectiveness to the implementation efforts;

(h) To contribute to the resource mobilization, establishment and implementation of regional and sub-regional capacity development projects in partnership with Members, international organizations and financial institutions;

(i) To facilitate broad use of the expertise available at national and regional level through transfer of knowledge and know-how from the developed to the developing parts of the Regions;

(j) To promote and establish pilot projects in the Regions aimed at building the capacity of developing countries as a collaborative effort between regional associations and technical commissions;

(3) The Regional Programme shall contribute to all Expected Results of the WMO Strategic Plan and Operating Plan (2012-2015) adopted under Resolution 8.1/1(Cg-XVI), with particular focus on Strategic Thrust 3: “Strengthening capacity-building”, and Expected Result 6: “Enhanced capabilities of NMHSs, in particular in developing countries and least developed countries, to fulfil their mandates”;

Urges Members to contribute to the maximum extent possible to the Programme during the sixteenth financial period including support to Regional Offices and WMO Offices in the Regions through secondments and other appropriate means;

Urges Members to continue their support to the subsidiary bodies of the regional associations based on the principle of volunteerism;

Requests the presidents of regional associations to maintain strong liaison and ensure inter-regional cooperation and consistency on regional priorities, programmes and projects which cross regional borders;

Requests the presidents of the regional associations and the presidents of the technical commissions to maintain strong liaison and undertake joint coordinated actions aimed at harmonized and synchronous implementation of various programmes and projects;

Requests the presidents of the technical commissions to provide advice relating to the needs of regional associations and consider the priorities stated by the regional associations in the development of the programmes and projects of the respective technical commissions;

Requests the Secretary-General to:

(1) Continue to administer the Regional Programme during the sixteenth financial period and to support resources for its activities within the approved budget;

(2) To review, in consultation with the presidents of the regional associations concerned, the current set-up of the WMO Regional Offices and WMO Offices in the Regions and propose measures for improving their effectiveness and efficiency, including appropriate relocations, within available resources.