REPORT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL TASKFORCE ON THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE SERVICES

SUMMARY

ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED:

1. Vision of the GFCS
2. The report of the High-level Taskforce as strategic guidance for the implementation of the GFCS
3. Response to the recommendations of the High-level Taskforce

DECISIONS/ACTIONS REQUIRED:

Consider and decide on the recommendations of the High-level Taskforce

REFERENCES:


CONTENT OF DOCUMENT:

Appendices for inclusion in the final report:

A. Draft text for inclusion in the general summary of Cg-XVI
B. Draft Resolution 11.1/1 (Cg-XVI) – Response to the Report of the High-level Taskforce on the Global Framework for Climate Services
11.1 Report of the High-Level Taskforce on the Global Framework for Climate Services (agenda item 11.1)

Relevant outcomes from the World Climate Conference-3

11.1.1 Congress recalled the outcomes of the World Climate Conference–3 (WCC-3) (Geneva, Switzerland 31 August–4 September, 2009) and its decision to establish a Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS). It was noted that the overarching theme of the Conference was; "Climate prediction and information for decision-making: focusing on scientific advances in seasonal to inter-annual time-scales, taking into account multi-decadal prediction" (http://www.wmo.int/wcc3/theme_en.php), and that it addressed issues relating to the application of climate prediction and information including assisting adaptation to climate variability and change in a wide variety of sectors including agriculture and food security, forestry, energy, water, health, urban and rural settlements, infrastructure, tourism, wildlife, trade and transport that contribute to sustainable socio-economic development.

11.1.2 Congress further recalled that the focus of the Conference included the integration of climate prediction and information in decision-making in relation to user needs, with parallel Conference sessions for sectors that contribute to sustainable socio-economic development such as agriculture and food security, energy, water, health, tourism, disaster management and transport. Congress noted that the technical component of the Conference was attended by around 2500 experts and produced, inter alia, 12 “white papers” which were captured in the Conference statement which was subsequently used to inform the work of the High-level Taskforce.

11.1.3 Congress noted that the three-day technical component of WCC-3 was followed by a two-day high level segment attended by, inter alia, 13 Heads of State/Government, 57 Ministers (or equivalent) and 14 Heads of UN agencies or programmes which decided to establish a Global Framework for Climate Services to strengthen production, availability, delivery and application of science-based climate prediction and services and requested the Secretary-General of WMO to convene, within four months of the adoption of the Conference Declaration, an intergovernmental meeting of Member States of the WMO to approve the terms of reference and to endorse the composition of a task force of high-level, independent advisors to be appointed by the Secretary-General of WMO with due consideration to expertise, geographical and gender balance.

Relevant outcomes from the Intergovernmental Meeting

11.1.4 Congress noted that the WMO convened an Intergovernmental Meeting for the High-level Taskforce on the Global Framework for Climate Services at the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG) from 11 to 12 January 2010, under the chairpersonship of its President, Dr A.I. Bedritskiy.

11.1.5 Congress recalled that the Intergovernmental Meeting provided terms of reference which, inter alia, asked the High-level Taskforce to:

(a) Develop the components of GFCS and define the roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of the elements within the GFCS and clearly illustrate how it will assist the integration of climate information and services into national planning, policy and programmes for, among others, water resource management and development, health and public safety, energy generation and distribution, agriculture and food security, land and forestry management, desertification, eco-system protection, sustainable development and poverty reduction, taking into account the special needs of Africa,
Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs), and Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs);

(b) Develop options for governance of the GFCS, ensuring its intergovernmental nature, and provide a reasoning for the preferred option(s);

(c) Outline a plan for the implementation of the GFCS, which includes:

(i) Ensuring a central role of national governments;
(ii) Proposing a range of options for immediate and longer-term actions to realize the GFCS;
(iii) Specifying measurable indicators, with timelines, for the actions necessary to implement the elements of the GFCS;
(iv) Estimates of costs of implementation of these options, with clear indications of the financial resources and enhanced technological capabilities required, and their likely sources, to ensure effective global implementation; and,
(v) A strategy for capacity building in developing countries, particularly those of the African countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Countries (SIDS) and Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs);

(d) Make findings and propose next steps in relation to:

(i) The role of the UN system and other relevant stakeholders, as well as the mechanisms for their contributions;
(ii) Approaches to global data policy (addressing data gaps, ownership, data protection, confidentiality, exchange, applications, and usage), that would lead to enhanced capability of the GFCS, taking into account Resolution 40 (Cg-XII) and Resolution 25 (Cg-XIII);
(iii) Improving systematic in-situ observations and monitoring of climate especially in data-sparse areas, in order to increase data availability, including for research and prediction;
(iv) Approaches for reviewing the implementation of the GFCS;
(v) Strategies for building capacity in developing countries in accordance with their needs and priorities, including their access to global and regional climate models output and the underlying technology embedded in the models, and their ability to independently develop/improve in-country climate services capacity; and,
(vi) A strategy for promoting a common global understanding of the GFCS and for coherent and coordinated messaging and information sharing.

11.1.6 Congress further recalled that the Intergovernmental Meeting endorsed the following composition of the Taskforce:

1. Joaquim CHISSANO (Mozambique)
2. Jan EGELAND (Norway)
3. Angus FRIDAY (Grenada)
4. Eugenia KALNAY (Ms) (Argentina/USA)
5. Ricardo LAGOS (Chile)
6. Julia MARTON-LEFEVRE (Ms) (Hungary/France/USA)
7. Khotso MOKHELE (South Africa)
8. Chiaki MUKAI (Ms) (Japan)
9. Cristina NARBONA RUIZ (Ms) (Spain)
10. Rajendra Singh PARODA (India)
11. QIN Dahe (China)
12. Emil SALIM (Indonesia)
13. Mahmoud ABU-ZEID (Egypt)
14. High-level representative of indigenous peoples
15. High-level member from Pacific SIDS
16. High-level economist

11.1.7 Congress noted that the Intergovernmental Meeting charged the Secretary-General of WMO with the responsibility of recruiting the individuals to fill the last three positions (numbered 14, 15 and 16 in the previous paragraph). As a result, Ms Fiame Naomi Mata ‘Afa from Samoa agreed to join the Taskforce, thus providing the competence called for by positions 14 and 15 while Dr Emil Salim from Indonesia supplied expertise in economics to the Taskforce, resulting in a Taskforce of 14 members.

The Report of the HLT

11.1.8 The co-chair of the High-level Task Force on the Global Framework for Climate Services, Dr Jan Egeland/Dr Mahmoud Abu-Zeid briefed the Congress on the Taskforce’s Report, noting that the findings of the Taskforce included:

(a) Present capabilities to provide climate services fall short of meeting present and future needs and are not delivering their full and potential benefits. This is particularly the case in developing and least developed countries;

(b) Existing climate services are not focused well enough on user needs and the level of interaction between providers and users of climate services is inadequate. Climate services often do not reach “the last mile”, to the people who need them most, particularly at the community level in developing and least developed countries;

(c) To support climate services, high quality observations are required across the entire climate system and of relevant socio-economic variables and further commitment to sustaining high quality observations is inadequate and enhancements to existing networks are required, particularly in developing countries;

(d) Effective climate services will depend on maximizing the potential of existing knowledge, new research developments and strong support from and strengthened collaboration between all relevant research communities;

(e) Efforts to provide effective climate services globally will only be successful if capacity is systematically built to enable all countries to manage climate risk effectively. Current capacity building activities to support climate services need to be scaled up and better coordinated.

11.1.9 Congress was advised that the Taskforce approached its task through a consultative process along with the outputs from WCC-3. Furthermore, they developed an early outline of their report based around a three-part strategy: Part I to benchmark existing climate services from a provider perspective; Part II to identify gaps in the existing provision, particularly from a user perspective; and, Part III to provide governance options, an implementation plan and next steps as called for in their terms of reference.

11.1.10 It was noted that from the outset that, with one year to report, the Taskforce faced a very tight timetable and so it developed its consultation process based around already scheduled climate-related meetings. As a result the following consultation sessions were conducted:
• Nairobi, Kenya 12–16 April First Conference of Ministers responsible for Meteorology in Africa
• Bali, Indonesia 30 April-6 May Fifteenth session of WMO Regional Association V
• Geneva, Switzerland 18 May UN Interagency Consultation Meeting
• Geneva, Switzerland 25 May Diplomatic Club of Geneva
• Geneva, Switzerland 2 June Briefing to Permanent Missions in Geneva
• Oslo, Norway 8–12 June Conference on the International Polar Year
• Geneva, Switzerland 9 June WMO Executive Council
• Beijing, China 17–18 June Consultation Meeting with Government officials
• Delhi, India 21 June Consultation Meeting with Government officials
• Belo Horizonte, Brazil 1–4 July Fifteenth session of the Commission for Agricultural Meteorology
• Mexico City, Mexico 5–7 July Meeting of Heads of NMHSs on GFCS
• Beijing, China 2–4 August Consultation Meeting with Government officials
• Bogota, Colombia 22–29 September Fifteenth session of WMO Regional Association III
• Bonn, Germany 26 September Consultation Meeting with German climate experts
• Washington, USA 1 October Consultation Meeting with NOAA and the World Bank
• Geneva, Switzerland 26 October Briefing to Permanent Missions in Geneva
• Marrakech, Morocco 28 October- 4 November Fifteenth session of WMO Regional Association I
• Windhoek, Namibia 15–21 November 2010 Extraordinary session of the Commission for Basic Systems
• Santiago, Chile 17–19 November Conference of Directors of the Ibero-American NMHSs
• Cayman Is, Caribbean 9–10 November Meeting of Heads of NMSs and Ministers
• Cancun, Mexico 29 November- 10 December UNFCCC 16th Edition of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16)
• Geneva, Switzerland 17 December Briefing to Permanent Missions in Geneva

11.1.11 Congress was advised that the Taskforce also made extensive use of the Internet and Web, carrying out a great deal of work via e-mail as well as providing regular updates and reports on the Website: http://www.wmo.int/hlt-gfcs/index_en.html. The Taskforce met formally on five occasions to coordinate and advance its work: 25–26 February; 24–26 May; 2–4 August; 25–27 October; and 13–15 December.

11.1.12 Congress noted that the Taskforce had released a draft copy of its report on 1 November 2010 for comment by governments and experts. Around 1700 comments were received over the three-week review period and each of these was considered in the subsequent preparation of the final report. The Taskforce’s final report can now be accessed through its Website (see previous paragraph for Web address) and is available in hard-copy format.

The vision of the GFCS developed by the HLT

11.1.13 The Taskforce proposes that the structure of the Framework be as proposed by the WCC-3, but with the addition of a capacity building component. The proposed components of the Framework are then as follows:

(a) The User Interface Platform that will provide a means for users, user representatives, the climate research and development community, and climate service providers to interact, thereby maximizing the usefulness of climate services and helping develop new and improved applications of climate information;
(b) The Climate Services Information System to produce and distribute climate data and information according to the needs of users and according to the procedures agreed by governments and other data providers;

(c) The Observations and Monitoring component that will ensure that the climate observations necessary to meet the needs of climate services are generated;

(d) The Research, Modelling and Prediction component that will assess and promote the needs of climate services within research agendas;

(e) The Capacity Building component that will support systematic development of the necessary institutions, infrastructure and human resources to provide effective climate services.

11.1.14 The Taskforce noted that many of the foundational capabilities and infrastructure that make up these components already exist or are being established, but they require coordination and strengthened focus on user needs and that the role of the Framework should be to facilitate and strengthen, not to duplicate.

11.1.15 Congress was further advised that the Taskforce proposes universal access to reliable, scientifically sound climate services should be the focus of the Framework. To meet this objective the Taskforce further proposes that the Framework should operate at global, regional and national levels, in support of, and in collaboration with global, regional and national stakeholders and efforts:

(a) At the global level, it should focus on producing global climate prediction products, coordinating and supporting data exchange, major capacity building initiatives, and establishing and maintaining standards and protocols;

(b) At the regional level, it should support multilateral efforts to address regional needs, for example through regional policy development, knowledge and data exchange, infrastructure development, research, training and the provision of services regionally to meet agreed regional requirements;

(c) At the national level, it should focus on ensuring access to data and knowledge products, tailoring information to user requirements, ensuring effective routine use of information in planning and management along with developing sustainable capacities in these respects.

The Recommendations of the HLT

11.1.16 Congress noted that the Taskforce had made five Recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** We, the High-level Taskforce, unanimously recommend that the international community make the commitment to invest on the order of USD 75 M per year to put in place and sustain a Global Framework for Climate Services. This investment will build upon existing investments by governments in climate observation systems, research, and information management systems to return to the community benefits across all societal sectors but most importantly, and most immediately, in disaster risk reduction, improved water management, more productive and sustainable agriculture and better health outcomes in the most vulnerable communities in the developing world.
Recommendation 2: To ensure that the Global Framework for Climate Services provides the greatest benefit to those who need climate services the most, we recommend that the following eight principles be adhered to in its implementation:

**Principle 1:** All countries will benefit, but priority shall go to building the capacity of climate-vulnerable developing countries

**Principle 2:** The primary goal of the Framework will be to ensure greater availability of, access to, and use of climate services for all countries

**Principle 3:** Framework activities will address three geographic domains: global, regional and national

**Principle 4:** Operational climate services will be the core element of the Framework

**Principle 5:** Climate information is primarily an international public good provided by governments, which will have a central role in its management through the Framework

**Principle 6:** The Framework will promote the free and open exchange of climate-relevant observational data while respecting national and international data policies

**Principle 7:** The role of the Framework will be to facilitate and strengthen, not to duplicate

**Principle 8:** The Framework will be built through user – provider partnerships that include all stakeholders

Recommendation 3: We recommend that the UN-system establish, as a matter of urgency, an ad-hoc technical group to develop a detailed implementation plan for the Global Framework for Climate Services based upon the broad strategy outlined in this report, this plan to be endorsed by governments through an intergovernmental process prior to its implementation.

The detailed implementation plan should identify high priority projects to advance the Framework in areas where this would assist in reducing vulnerability to climate change and variability. In addition to the fast-track, capacity building projects, the implementation plan should describe a sustainable programme to underpin the coordination needed to maintain the operational capabilities of the Framework. The implementation plan should set targets to be achieved over the next ten years, further elaborate the roles and responsibilities of components of the Framework that contribute at the global, regional and national levels and of the secretariat that supports it, and include a risk assessment.

Recommendation 4: We strongly recommend that governments and development assistance agencies give high priority to supporting national capacity building that will allow developing countries to participate in the Framework. Further analysis of national needs is required, but in the meantime we recommend a number of fast track projects as outlined above. To ensure effective national access to global climate information by the largest number of countries, we recommend an initial strategy to strengthen rapidly or create the regional elements of the Framework. These regional elements should be led and hosted by countries of the region based upon regional agreements and should be tasked with supporting information flow and assisting national capacity building at national level.

Recommendation 5: The Taskforce is unanimous in recommending the following two options be considered for governance of the Framework:
Option A  An Intergovernmental Board on Climate Services would be established to provide leadership and direction for the Framework. It would report to the World Meteorological Organization Congress. The Board would be open to membership of all countries and would meet in plenary session periodically, probably annually. It would develop formal mechanisms to engage the United Nations and other stakeholders in its work. It would elect a chair and a small executive committee to conduct the affairs of the Board between sessions as well as designating a number of technical management committees to oversee and contribute to the Framework’s implementation work. These management committees would work intergovernmentally and where possible would be based on relevant existing international committees.

Option B  A Joint Board of relevant United Nations System entities (agencies, organizations, programmes, departments and independent funds) would be created to provide leadership and direction for the Framework. The United Nations System Joint Board would report regularly to the UN Chief Executives Board as well as to governments through the plenaries of the sponsoring UN agencies and programmes. The Joint Board would establish technical management committees to implement and manage the Framework, these management committees working intergovernmentally. Mechanisms to engage non-United Nations stakeholders in the work of the Board would be developed through both the User Interface Programme and, up to the level desired by governments, through participation in national delegations.

The Taskforce recommends that Option A be adopted and that the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization convene the first intergovernmental plenary meeting of the Global Framework for Climate Services by the end of 2011. The World Meteorological Organization should lead the process and put in place arrangements to ensure full participation of all interested UN agencies and programmes.

Response to the Taskforce’s Report

11.1.17  Congress congratulated the co-chairs and all Taskforce Members on the work of the Taskforce and endorsed the broad thrust of the High-Level Taskforce’s Report, including the concept that operational climate services should be the focus of the Framework, operating at global, regional and national levels, in support of, and in collaboration with, global, regional and national stakeholders with priority being given to climate-vulnerable developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small island developing states where climate services are also often weakest.

11.1.18  Congress supported the general proposal of the Taskforce that the international community make a significant investment in the implementation of the GFCS (Recommendation 1) and that this investment be seen as an incremental addition to the already significant investment of many governments in climate data, information and services. Congress recognized that detailed proposals need to be developed to ascertain whether USD 75 M per year is both realistic and achievable when the Framework is fully operational.

11.1.19  Congress agreed that the Principles provided in Recommendation 2 would provide useful guidelines into the future for those with the responsibility of implementing the Framework.

11.1.20  Congress strongly endorsed the proposal that WMO should host the secretariat of the GFCS while calling on other UN agencies and programmes to support the initiative and
requested the Secretary-General of WMO to work closely within the UN System and with other relevant partners to achieve the overall success of the Framework (Recommendation 3).

11.1.21 Congress was pleased to see the proposals for the rapid implementation of projects aimed at increasing the capacity of developing and least developed countries to provide climate services (Recommendation 4) but believes that further work needs to be done to ensure that the projects proposed are of high priority and meet clearly identified requirements.

11.1.22 Congress noted that of the two options for governance of the Framework, Option A provides for a higher level of government engagement through the establishment of an intergovernmental board while also allowing for a considerable opportunity for the United Nations System to develop and use mechanisms similar to those described in Option B to support the Framework. Congress recognized that the strong engagement and support of the United Nations System would be especially useful during the preliminary phase that would be required to debate, design and put into place the intergovernmental board. Congress also noted that Option B does provide the advantage of a speedier implementation but considered that this does not outweigh the importance of the high level of government engagement and agreed with the Taskforce preference for Option A.

11.1.23 Congress appreciated the strong sentiments expressed by the Heads of State and other High-Level Officials present at Congress, in support of the work of the Taskforce, and their pledges of ongoing support for the implementation of the GFCS.

11.1.24 Congress adopted Resolution 11.1/1(Cg-XVI) in response to the Report of the Taskforce, leaving consideration of the WMO’s implementation strategy for its part in the GFCS to a separate resolution.
DRAFT RESOLUTION

Res. 11.1/1 (Cg-XVI) – RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL TASKFORCE ON THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE SERVICES

THE CONGRESS,

Noting:

(1) The decision of WCC-3 to establish a Global Framework for Climate Services,

(2) The Report of the High-level Taskforce on the Global Framework for Climate Services,

Considering that:

(1) Present capabilities to provide climate services do not exploit all that we know about climate, fall far short of meeting present and future needs and are not delivering their full and potential benefits. This is particularly the case in developing and least developed countries, which are also the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate variability and change,

(2) Existing climate services are not focused well enough on user needs and the level of interaction between providers and users of climate services is inadequate. Users need access to expert advice and support to help them select and properly apply climate information. Climate services often do not reach “the last mile”, the people who need them most, particularly at the community level in developing and least developed countries,

(3) To support climate services, high quality observations are required across the entire climate system and of relevant socio-economic variables. While existing capabilities for climate observation provide a reasonable basis for strengthening climate services, commitment to sustaining high quality observations is inadequate and enhancements to existing networks are required, particularly in developing countries. Further effort is also needed by governments and others to overcome the currently significant restrictions concerning sharing of, and access to, climate and other relevant data,

(4) Effective climate services will depend on maximizing the potential of existing knowledge, new research developments and strong support from and strengthened collaboration between all relevant research communities. Understanding of the climate system is advancing quickly but is not being effectively translated into services that can inform decision making. In particular, further effort is required to improve our ability to predict climate and help users incorporate its inherent uncertainty into their decision making,

(5) Efforts to provide effective climate services globally will only be successful if capacity is systematically built to enable all countries to manage climate risk effectively. Current capacity building activities to support climate services need to be scaled up and better coordinated. A comprehensive capacity building initiative in the area of climate services is needed to strengthen existing capabilities in the areas of governance, management, human resources development, leadership, partnership creation, science communication, service delivery and resource mobilization,
Decides to:

(1) Endorse the broad thrust of the High-level Taskforce’s Report, including the concept that operational climate services should be the focus of the Framework, operating at global, regional and national levels, in support of, and in collaboration with, global, regional and national stakeholders with priority being given to climate-vulnerable developing countries, particularly African countries, least developed countries, land-locked developing countries and small island developing states where climate services are also often weakest;

(2) Accept the intent of Recommendation (1), thereby supporting the general proposition that the international community make a significant investment in the implementation of the GFCS and that this investment be seen as an incremental addition to the already significant investment of many governments in climate data, information and services;

(3) Accept Recommendation (2), thereby supporting the use of the Principles provided by the Taskforce as guidelines for decision making in the implementation of the Framework;

(4) Accept Recommendation (3);

(5) Accept Recommendation (4), particularly supporting the rapid implementation of projects aimed at increasing the capacity of developing countries to provide climate services but noting that further work needs to be done to ensure that the projects proposed are of high priority and meet clearly identified requirements;

(6) Proceed with Option A of Recommendation (5) [with the following caveats….];

(7) The Framework will have five Management Committees working intergovernmentally that are responsible for leadership and technical direction in the areas of: the User Interface Platform, the Climate Service Information System, Observations and Monitoring, Research Modelling and Prediction, and Capacity Building;

Strongly urges Members to:

(1) Continue to make their expertise and wisdom available during the development and implementation of the GFCS;

(2) Strengthen their national capacity in the attainment of self-sufficiency to meet their climate services needs;

(3) Make maximum use of regional and global capabilities to exchange data, to generate climate information and to provide climate services;

(4) Make voluntary contributions of the resources needed to continue the implementation of this critically important new initiative;

Calls on the United Nations System and International Organizations to give strong support to the implementation of the GFCS through participation in its working mechanisms and contribution of expertise to its programmes, projects and other activities;

Requests the Executive Council to:

(1) Take all necessary actions to enable the Global Framework for Climate Services become an effective operational entity in 2012-2015 and beyond;
Give high priority to ensuring effective overall coordination and leadership of the Framework;

Continue to draw fully on the advice and assistance of climate experts and users of climate services in the further development of the Framework;

**Requests** the Secretary-General to:

(1) Convey the thanks of Congress to the Members of the High-level Taskforce for their work and congratulate them on consulting broadly and producing a high quality and well balanced report in such a short time;

(2) Consistent with Recommendation (3) of the Taskforce’s Report, work with the UN-System to establish an *ad hoc*, technical group to develop a detailed implementation plan for the Global Framework for Climate Services based upon the broad strategy outlined in this report, this plan to be endorsed by governments through an intergovernmental process prior to its implementation;

(3) Convene the first session of the [intergovernmental board] [joint board] before January 2012;

(4) Develop a proposal to establish each of the Management Committees at the first session of the [intergovernmental board] [joint board];

(5) Commence the preparation of a detailed implementation plan for consideration at the first session of the [intergovernmental board] [joint board].