

## WMO OMM

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TEMPS CLIMAT EAU

World Meteorological Organization  
Organisation météorologique mondiale  
Organización Meteorológica Mundial  
Всемирная метеорологическая организация  
المنظمة العالمية للأرصاد الجوية  
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Our ref.: 26277/2018/OBS/GCW

22 October 2018

Annex: 1

Subject: World Meteorological Organization (WMO) High Mountain Summit, Geneva, Switzerland, 25-27 February 2019

Action required: Express interest in participation

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have the honour to inform you that a High Mountain Summit is planned by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the UN system's authoritative voice on Climate, Weather and Water, and its partners, to be held from 25 to 27 February 2019, in Geneva, Switzerland.

WMO and its partners recognize the challenges faced by the United Nations Member States affected by accelerated changes in high mountains in the context of climate change, and are making a concerted worldwide effort to address the emerging need for accessible, reliable, and policy relevant information on water, weather, climate, and hazard management, in support of adequate adaptation strategies, critical to people in mountain, downstream, and lowland regions.

In view of these goals, the High Mountain Summit will be organized as a participative and inclusive scoping process, to create a platform for long-term collaboration among relevant stakeholders at National, Regional and International levels, to map emerging policy and decision needs, and foster relevant integrated monitoring and climate service delivery functions, and advances in critical scientific research, to close the capacity, knowledge, and information gaps in these regions.

The Summit will seek to promote Sustainable Mountain Development, and to assist these countries in their efforts to contribute towards the United Nations 2030 Agenda, and of the climate and water relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Detailed information on the scope and the organization of the Summit is available in the Concept Note, in the Annex to this letter.

It is hoped that institutions and agencies from your country will be interested in taking part, and contribute to this global initiative. In this respect, I should be grateful if this communication be shared with the respective Ministries or agencies in your Government/ country with responsibility for water, meteorology, environment, disaster risk reduction and other organizations as indicated in the enclosed Concept Note.

To: Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Member States of the World Meteorological Organization  
(limited distribution)

The interest in participating in the Summit could be communicated by filling in the Expressions of Interest form at: <http://highmountainsummit.wmo.int/pre-registration>

A copy of this letter is being sent to the Permanent Representatives of your country with WMO.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.



(P. Taalas)  
Secretary-General

## HIGH MOUNTAIN SUMMIT

*Developing end-to-end high mountain hydro-meteorological and climate services to address water and hazard risk management*

25 - 27 February 2019

World Meteorological Organization Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland

### CONCEPT NOTE

#### MOTIVATION

There is increasing recognition of the fundamental role played by the mountain cryosphere (glaciers, snow, and permafrost) and high-altitude ecosystems (such as páramo systems in the tropics) in providing and regulating freshwater resources. In addition to sustaining life, they also cause hazards which have cascading and often devastating effects on populations, economic activities, infrastructure and ecosystems in mountain regions, downstream, and in lowland areas.

Changes in high mountain climate and ecosystems impact about a half of the world's population, including those living in densely populated lowland areas such as the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta. In many places, threats from mountain hazards exacerbate existing vulnerabilities caused by poverty, food insecurity, insufficient infrastructure, environmental degradation and limited resources.

Reliable, sustainable and up-to-date climate and hydro-meteorological services are important instruments to strengthen climate resilience and adaptation in support of sustainable development. Scientifically-based services, reflecting the advanced understanding of changes in high mountain snow, ice, and environments, can help optimize the allocation and utilization of resources by informing decision-making on risk management and sectoral planning, for example in agriculture, tourism, energy sector, land development, health, infrastructure, education and transportation in all regions affected by changes in high mountain regions.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is therefore making a concerted worldwide effort with its partners to address emerging needs precipitated by these changes, and foster robust and sustainable services. Once available and accessible, these services will provide people in mountain, downstream, and lowland regions with adequate information for decision-making regarding water, weather, climate, and hazard management.

WMO, as the UN system's authoritative voice on Weather, Climate and Water, will co-host a High Mountain Summit, on 25-27 February 2019, in Geneva (Switzerland). WMO Executive Council has defined high mountain regions, as "mountain areas where seasonal or perennial cryosphere is present and poses potential and serious risks to society related to water scarcity and disaster resilience."

This Summit will build on the momentum created by major international initiatives. These include the [Sendai Framework](#) for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change, and the [2030 Agenda](#) embracing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as an associated "[Framework for Action for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Mountains](#)" approved in December 2017 by the Mountain Partnership which comprises 330 members including 60 governments. It takes place ahead of the publication of the 2019 Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate ([SROCC](#)) of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which includes a dedicated chapter on High Mountain areas, as well as

a cross-chapter paper on 'Mountains' to feature in the IPCC's sixth assessment report (AR6) Working Group II report on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, scheduled for publication in 2021.

The Summit is being co-organized with the World Bank Group (WBG) – Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Mountain Partnership Secretariat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – International Hydrological Programme (IHP), the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI), the International Association of Cryosphere Sciences (IACS), the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS), the Third Pole Environment program (TPE) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), and with the strong support of Switzerland, Austria, Canada, France, Spain, Italy, and other WMO Members.

## SUMMIT OBJECTIVE

The High Mountain Summit will seek to address the need for accessible, reliable, and policy-relevant information on water resources, natural hazard management, addressing accelerated changes in high mountain cryosphere and ecosystems, with the objective to inform, and therefore, promote sustainable mountain development.

It aims to create a platform for enhanced multi-sectoral inter-agency collaboration at national, regional and international levels, across sectors, scales, and actors, by leveraging existing and planned initiatives for providing integrated and comprehensive climate services along the production and utility value chain. It will identify education and capacity building needs to address mountain challenges.

The Summit seeks to align the efforts of WMO and its partners in increasing accurate and accessible climate and hydro-meteorological knowledge in support of the international agenda on sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The Summit seeks to achieve the following outcomes:

- (a) Mobilize public and private sector leaders to leverage funding in support of relevant initiatives;
- (b) Promote collaboration for new and ongoing initiatives, by developing a roadmap for strengthening the provision of hydro-meteorological, climate, and prediction services for mountain regions, for optimizing and enhancing cryosphere and high mountain observations, and advancing the scientific research agenda to address emerging gaps;
- (c) Leverage the knowledge and influence of relevant stakeholders in order to coordinate and upscale end-to-end services and increase interagency engagement, including identifying barriers and proposing enabling actions;
- (d) Ensure that existing funding mechanisms such as The World Bank, Green Climate Fund, Global Environmental facility, the Adaptation Fund, and others, identify high mountains as priority areas for investments and projects;
- (e) The Summit will conclude with:
  - (i) A statement and call for action, reflecting the Summit outcomes, in line with the 2030 Agenda;
  - (ii) High level mapping of user needs and gaps in observations, predictions, scientific knowledge, and services, which should be addressed through coordinated activities, at international, regional and national level;
  - (iii) Launch a limited number of projects and long-term plans for high mountain observations, predictions, research and services, targeting 2-3 regions and focus areas.



The outcomes of the Summit will contribute to:

- (a) Identifying key specifications and research areas for user-relevant design and implementation of climate services in mountain regions, responding to investment knowledge needs, for instance by national institutions and development partners, with a focus on developing countries;
- (b) Fostering a high-level dialogue, leading to addressing high mountains in the WMO strategic objectives for the 2020-2023 financial period, for consideration at the Eighteenth World Meteorological Congress, as well as in the programs of all co-host organizations;
- (c) Leveraging governance, providing input to policy development, and promoting internationally funded initiatives, to support the goals of the 2030 Agenda, and of sustainable mountain development;
- (d) Promoting closer links between science and policy.

## PARTICIPANTS

The Summit will engage relevant stakeholders, practitioners, research communities, and decision-makers from national, regional, and international institutions, representing all regions of the world affected by changes in the high mountain climate and ecosystems, in recognition of the regional diversity of impacts, and the need for regional solutions.

The co-organizers are expecting up to 250 participants, representing:

- (a) Relevant national governments/governmental agencies;
  - National meteorological and hydrological services;
  - Environmental, including land use and urban planning agencies;
  - Mountain organizations and institutions;
  - Disaster and emergency management agencies;
  - Water resource management agencies;
  - Avalanche forecasting/transportation;
  - Energy (hydropower) authorities;
- (b) Other Funding agencies;
- (c) Relevant UN agencies;
- (d) Regional and International organizations with a mountain focus;
- (e) Research institutions and Academia from different countries and regions;
- (f) World Climate Research Programme (WCRP);
- (g) Private sector;
- (h) Indigenous representation.

For more information, please visit the Summit's Website at: <http://highmountainsummit.wmo.int/>

## CONTACT

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