



World Meteorological Organization  
Organisation météorologique mondiale

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Weather • Climate • Water  
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Our ref.: CLPA/CCA/UNFCCC-COP 21

GENEVA, 14 January 2016

Subject: Outcomes of the UNFCCC COP 21 (Paris, France, 30 November-12 December 2015) relevant to WMO Members

Action required: Representatives from NMHSs are requested to follow-up on relevant COP 21 outcomes

Dear Sir/Madam,

The twenty-first session of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP 21) was held in conjunction with the eleventh session of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 11) in Paris, France, from 30 November to 12 December 2015. The Conference also included the following sessions:

- (a) The forty-third session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 43);
- (b) The forty-third session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 43); and
- (c) The Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP).

## **1. The Leaders Event and High Level Segment**

Before the official opening of COP 21, the first day was dedicated to the Leaders Event which brought together 150 Heads of State and Government in Paris at the UN Climate Change Conference on Monday, 30 November, the largest group of leaders ever to attend a UN event in a single day. The Leaders Event enhanced the moral and political responsibility of all Parties to show leadership in reaching an Agreement which must be: durable; dynamic; and balance between the leading role of developed countries and growing responsibilities of developing countries according to their resources and level of development. The Leaders Event continued with statements of Heads and Deputy Heads of State and Government.

The High-Level Segment (HLS) of COP 21 was attended by ministers and heads of delegations, who delivered national statements on Monday, 7 December 2015.

To: Permanent Representatives (or Directors of Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services) of Members of WMO (PR-6883)

cc: Hydrological Advisers to Permanent Representatives

The following COP 21 related developments are particularly important for WMO and its Members:

## **2. Paris Agreement**

The most important outcome of COP 21 is the Paris Agreement which culminates the result of more than two decades of negotiations by Parties. The full text of the Agreement can be accessed from the following link: <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/l09r01.pdf>

The Paris Agreement is composed of 16 preamble clauses and 29 operative clauses (Articles). The preamble highlights, among others, that the Agreement is guided by the Convention's principles, including the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities. It also emphasizes the need for an effective and progressive response to the urgent threat of climate change on the basis of the best scientific knowledge.

### **2.1 Global Response (Article 2)**

The most important decision of the Paris Agreement is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, including by “holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change”.

### **2.2 Mitigation (Article 3)**

Article 3 of the Paris Agreement stipulates that all Parties, in the context of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to the global response to climate change, are to undertake and communicate ambitious efforts achieving the purpose of this Agreement.

### **2.3 Adaptation (Article 7)**

Article 7 on adaptation, among others, provides that:

- Parties acknowledge that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science;
- Parties should strengthen their cooperation on enhancing action on adaptation, taking into account the Cancun Adaptation Framework, including with regard to: sharing information, good practices, experiences and lessons learned, including, as appropriate, as these relate to science, planning, policies and implementation in relation to adaptation actions; strengthening scientific knowledge on climate, including research, systematic observation of the climate system and early warning systems, in a manner that informs climate services and supports decisionmaking; and assisting developing country parties in identifying effective adaptation practices;
- UN specialized organizations and agencies are encouraged to support the efforts of parties to implement the actions referred to in this Article;
- Each party should, as appropriate, submit and update periodically an adaptation communication, which may include its priorities, implementation and support needs, plans and actions; including a National Adaptation Plan (NAP).

## **2.4 Loss and Damage (Article 8)**

Article 8, among others, provides that:

- Parties recognize the importance of averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow onset events, and the role of sustainable development in reducing the risk of loss and damage through implementation of the Warsaw International Mechanism, which shall be subject to the authority and guidance of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement (CMA);
- Accordingly, areas of cooperation and facilitation to enhance understanding, action and support may include: early warning systems; emergency preparedness; slow onset events; events that may involve irreversible and permanent loss and damage; comprehensive risk assessment and management, risk insurance facilities, climate risk pooling and other insurance solutions; non-economic losses; and resilience of communities, livelihoods and ecosystems.

## **2.5 Capacity-building (Article 11)**

Article 11 provides that:

- Capacity-building under this Agreement should enhance the capacity and ability of developing country parties, in particular countries with the least capacity, such as the LDCs, and those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change such as SIDS, to take effective climate change action, including, inter alia, to implement adaptation and mitigation actions, and should facilitate technology development, dissemination and deployment, access to climate finance, relevant aspects of education, training and public awareness, and the transparent, timely and accurate communication of information;
- Capacity-building activities shall be enhanced through appropriate institutional arrangements to support the implementation of this Agreement, including the appropriate institutional arrangements established under the Convention to serve this Agreement.

## **2.6 Education, training and public awareness (Article 12)**

Article 12 provides that:

- Parties shall cooperate in taking measures, as appropriate, to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information, recognizing the importance of these steps with respect to enhancing actions under this Agreement.

## **3. Other decisions at COP 21**

Beyond the Paris Agreement, COP 21 adopted a number of decisions of relevance to WMO, its co-sponsored programmes and activities of Members, in particular the following:

COP 21 invited the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to provide a special report in 2018 on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global GHG emission pathways.

COP 21 has invited all relevant United Nations agencies and international, regional and national financial institutions to provide information to Parties, through the secretariat, on how their development assistance and climate finance programmes incorporate climate-proofing and climate resilience measures.

### **3.1 Research and systematic observation**

SBSTA 43 noted with appreciation the statements made by WMO and the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) in the opening plenary. It further noted the report of GCOS entitled Status of the Global Observing System for Climate and GCOS Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC.

[http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced\\_search/items/3594.php?rec=j&preref=600008745](http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/3594.php?rec=j&preref=600008745)

[http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/Lists/OSPSubmissionUpload/53\\_170\\_130930260937901056-WMO%20STATEMENT\\_SBSTA43\\_251115\\_clean\\_final.pdf](http://www4.unfccc.int/submissions/Lists/OSPSubmissionUpload/53_170_130930260937901056-WMO%20STATEMENT_SBSTA43_251115_clean_final.pdf)

[http://unfccc.int/files/documentation/submissions\\_from\\_observers/application/pdf/541.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/documentation/submissions_from_observers/application/pdf/541.pdf)

The SBSTA further noted the WMO report on relevant outcomes of the seventeenth session of the World Meteorological Congress (Cg-17), Geneva, 25 May-12 June 2015 and progress made on the implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS).

[http://unfccc.int/files/documentation/submissions\\_from\\_observers/application/pdf/547.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/documentation/submissions_from_observers/application/pdf/547.pdf)

SBSTA 43 also welcomed the WMO Supplement to the Technical Guidelines for the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process, outlining how the GFCS could provide support.

### **3.2 Loss and Damage**

COP 21 decided on the continuation of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts, following the review in 2016 and requested the Executive Committee of the Mechanism to establish a task force to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change.

[http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced\\_search/items/3594.php?rec=j&preref=600008732](http://unfccc.int/documentation/documents/advanced_search/items/3594.php?rec=j&preref=600008732)

### **3.3 Capacity-building**

COP 21 decided to establish the Paris Committee on Capacity-building whose aim will be to address gaps and needs, both current and emerging, in implementing capacity-building in developing country Parties and further enhancing capacity-building efforts, including with regard to coherence and coordination in capacity-building activities under the Convention. It calls upon all Parties to ensure that education, training and public awareness, as reflected in Article 6 of the Convention and in Article 12 of the Agreement, are adequately considered in their contribution to capacity-building.

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/sbi/eng/l33.pdf>

### **3.4 National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)**

COP 21 has invited United Nations organizations, specialized, bilateral and multilateral agencies and other relevant organizations to continue their efforts to coordinate support for the process to formulate and implement national adaptation plans.

#### **4. Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS)**

On the side lines of COP 21, the Government of France announced the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative, which aims to significantly increase the capacity for Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems. These systems effectively generate and communicate impact-based early warnings, delivering risk information for hazardous hydrometeorological and climate events in more than 50 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The CREWS initiative is supported by three international organizations: the WMO, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) and the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), which are actively involved in reducing the vulnerability and exposure of nations and communities to weather-related disasters. The CREWS initiative aims to raise more than US\$ 100 million dollars by 2020 to fill the gaps in the existing bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes. WMO has offered to host a CREWS joint office, to be staffed by WMO, GFDRR and UNISDR, that would provide the secretariat for, and coordinate activities of, the initiative.

#### **5. WMO activities at COP 21**

This year, WMO and its co-sponsored bodies IPCC and GCOS were active at COP 21 and made many submissions to the UNFCCC Secretariat. These included a progress report on the GFCS, relevant outcomes of Cg-17 to UNFCCC activities, report of the GCOS Workshop on Enhancing Observations to Support Preparedness and Adaptation in a Changing Climate, Status Report of the Global Observing System, the new GCOS Implementation Plan, WMO/GFCS Supplement to the Guidelines for Implementation of NAPs, and a set of Key Messages from the WMO Community to COP 21 which were communicated in previous letters before COP 21.

WMO was the co-lead convener of two side events on "Science based climate information - Building on evidence to implement policies" and "The pivotal role of water in climate change adaptation and mitigation" registered under the UN system. These side events attracted high level panelists as well as a significant number of the audience. WMO had also contributed to several other side events in partnership with other UN agencies and organizations. WMO, through its Assistant Secretary-General, coordinated the UN system presence at COP, including side events, exhibits and other activities.

This year, under the UN Delivering as One initiative, UN agencies and programmes joined together in 16 side events and the UN-wide Exhibition Area. The WMO exhibition booth, in cooperation with MétéoFrance, provided information to visitors and delegates on the role of WMO and NMHSs, especially in the area of adaptation. In addition to WMO Programmes, other co-sponsored programmes such as the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) and GCOS contributed electronic publications for distribution in the booth. Furthermore, WMO dedicated a webpage for its preparations and participation in COP 21, which provided background information and updates during the working days of the Conference.

Finally, around 40 Directors of Hydrometeorological Services and Permanent Representatives with WMO attended this Conference, among which there were the Second and Third Vice-Presidents of WMO as well as the presidents of the Regional Associations for Asia (RA II), South-West Pacific (RA V) and Europe (RA VI). Furthermore, 154 delegates from 82 National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) attended as part of their national delegation at COP 21.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those delegates from NMHSs who promoted WMO messages and the value of the WMO contribution to the climate action. I look forward to our continued cooperation in further supporting UNFCCC and Members in their efforts to implement the Paris Agreement.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.

(J. Lengoasa)  
for the Secretary-General