



Our ref.: 24282/2018/OBS/GCW

20 September 2018

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

Action required: Express interest in participation

Dear Sir/Madam,

There is increasing recognition of the fundamental role played by the mountain cryosphere (glaciers, snow, permafrost) and critical ecosystems at high altitudes, such as páramo systems in the tropics, in providing and regulating freshwater resources, while also contributing to hazards in mountain<sup>1</sup> environments, and the cascading and often devastating effects on populations, economic activities, infrastructure, and ecosystems in mountain regions, downstream, and in lowland areas. About a half of the world's population is affected by changes in high-mountain climate and ecosystems, including in lowland areas, many of which are densely populated, as is for example the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta. In many places, threats from mountain hazards exacerbate existing vulnerabilities caused by poverty, insufficient infrastructure, environmental degradation and limited resources.

Reliable and sustainable climate and hydro-meteorological information services, taking into account changes in high mountains, are important instruments to strengthen climate resilience in support of sustainable development, and the optimization of resource allocation in these regions, by informing and improving individual, public, and private decisions in risk management and sectoral planning, for example in agriculture, tourism, energy sector, land development, health, infrastructure, education, transportation.

Recognizing the challenges faced by the United Nations Member States, in particular those affected by accelerated changes in high mountains, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), as the UN system's authoritative voice on Climate, Weather and Water, is making a concerted worldwide effort with its partners, to address emerging needs precipitated by these changes, and foster robust and sustainable services. These services provide people in mountain, downstream, and lowland regions with adequate information for supporting decision-making regarding water, weather, climate, and hazard management.

At this unique juncture, WMO, and its partners are preparing for co-hosting a High Mountain Summit, which will take place from 25 to 27 February 2019, in Geneva, Switzerland.

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<sup>1</sup> The sixty-ninth session of the Executive Council of WMO (EC-69), adopted Decision 48, which defined the scope of 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".

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

cc: Hydrological Advisers to Permanent Representatives

The objective of the High Mountain Summit is to foster national, international and regional inter-agency collaboration, by leveraging existing and planned initiatives and projects across sectors, scales, and actors, with the goal of developing a framework for integrated climate service delivery functions, along the production and value chain. The aim is to respond to needs for reliable information on water and hazard management in the context of accelerated changes in high-mountain cryosphere and ecosystems, and with the objective to inform, and therefore, promote Sustainable Mountain Development. The Summit will help catalyzing collaboration to strengthen the delivery capabilities of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services.

This Summit will be building on the momentum created by major international initiatives within the 2030 Agenda endorsed in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, establishing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Paris Agreement that entered in force in 2016, and 2019 Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) of the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which will include a dedicated chapter on High Mountain areas.

The Summit will seek to engage relevant stakeholders, practitioners, research and academia, and decision-makers, from national 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, and of the need for regional solutions. In addition to representatives of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, other government agencies are important stakeholders in this process and are encouraged to be engaged. Among those, are:

- Environmental, including land use and urban planning, agencies;
- Disaster and Emergency Management agencies;
- Avalanche forecasting and transportation agencies;
- The energy sector and other private sector representatives.

The Summit will be organized with the participation and support of international funding agencies (e.g. World Bank Group (WBG) – Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), other UN agencies, the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) and representatives of other relevant communities.

If you or your service is interested in being involved, please complete the Expression of Interest Form at: <http://highmountainsummit.wmo.int/> (English version, only).

Yours faithfully,



(W. Zhang)

for the Secretary-General