

Briefing on the ongoing World Meteorological Organization reform that might impact the International Hydrological Programme

Since the appointment in January 2016 of Mr Petteri Taalas as its new Secretary General, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has been engaged in a reform path. This briefing note presents some elements of this reform that could duplicate existing programmes' tasks, and which could notably impact the International Hydrological Programme.

It should be noted that UNESCO, through its International Hydrological Programme (IHP) benefits from an excellent and long-standing cooperation with WMO and its Commission for Hydrology (CHy).

The Commission for Hydrology of WMO mainly focuses on operational implementations related to hydrology (i.e. establishment and follow-up of monitoring networks, benchmarking, data collection and storage, data analysis and diffusion, etc.). On the other hand, IHP has a holistic approach ranging from information creation and research on freshwater resources for improving knowledge required to make informed decisions, to strengthening Member States' capacities for a better management of those resources. Until now, CHy and IHP were complementing one another and were working in synergy, supported by an *Agreement* signed between the two organizations in November 2013.

Summary

Background

- WMO wishes to reinforce its water-related activities, in order to play a stronger role in the global water agenda;
- There is a risk of duplication of UNESCO's work in several areas, particularly in those related to water;
- June 2018: the Executive Council of WMO made recommendations on a reorganization of WMO, which will be submitted to the WMO Congress in 2019;
- February 2019: an extraordinary session of the Commission for Hydrology of WMO will decide upon the best way of integrating activities related to water and hydrology in the new structure of WMO; recommendations will be presented to WMO Congress in 2019.

Propositions of WMO that risk duplicating the work of several bodies of UNESCO:

- *Strengthening of WMO activities in the field of water:* Programmes concerned: International Hydrological Programme, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission;
- *Establishment of a Research Board on Weather, Climate, Water and the Environment:* Programmes concerned: International Hydrological Programme, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, SC Sector, SHS Sector;
- *Establishment of a Scientific Advisory Panel:* Programmes concerned: International Hydrological Programme, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, SC Sector, SHS Sector;
- *Establishment of an Executive Council Task Force on Water:* Programmes concerned: International Hydrological Programme, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, the International high-level Conference of Dushanbe;

- *Strengthening of education and training:* Programmes concerned: International Hydrological Programme, ED Sector.

Potential impacts on UNESCO Programmes, including the International Hydrological Programme

- By establishing the new, aforementioned governance bodies, WMO's ambition of further strengthening (i) its actions in the field of water and, (ii) the scientific research in the fields of weather, climate, water and the environment, displays a considerable risk of duplicating some actions and activities of the International Hydrological Programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, and more widely SC, SHS, and ED Sectors of UNESCO.
- In the framework of the WMO reform as proposed by its Executive Council, and in the light of the ongoing discussions related to the new global water architecture, it is more than ever critical that IHP and CHy further reinforce their synergies and cooperation in order to avoid duplicating their respective efforts.

Detailed note on the ongoing reform of the World Meteorological Organization:

The last Executive Council of WMO (equivalent to the Executive Board of UNESCO) took place in June 2018 and made several recommendations, which will be presented to the eighteenth session of the WMO Congress (equivalent to the UNESCO General Conference) that will be held in May-June 2019. In particular, the following adjustments¹ are recommended:

1) Reduction of the number of Technical Commissions

The Executive Council of WMO recommends to combine the eight existing Technical Commissions² into the two following bodies:

1. The Commission for Observation, Infrastructure and Information Systems (COIIS);
2. The Commission for Weather, Climate, Water and Related Environmental Services and Applications (CSA).

Considering the specific conditions under which the national hydrological services currently operate and the new direction, the Commission for Hydrology (CHy) has been charged to formally examine the proposed reorganization during an extraordinary session that will be held in February 2019³. Member States and their national hydrological services will be asked to debate on the best ways to integrate activities related to water and hydrology in the new WMO structure. Recommendations made during this extraordinary session of the CHy will be transmitted to the WMO Congress.

It is thus possible that WMO reform leads to the continued existence of the Commission for Hydrology, and to the dissolution of the seven other Technical Commissions into the two aforementioned bodies.

The objective of the Executive Council is notably to reinforce WMO activities in the field of water, in order for the Organization to play a stronger role in the global water agenda (i.e.: 2030 Agenda and SDG 6, International Water Decade, World Water Forum, etc.). It is important to note that WMO is not currently responsible of any indicators related to SDG 6 on access to water and sanitation.

2) Establishment of a Research Board on Weather, Climate, Water and the Environment

In order to better integrate the scientific dimension in WMO activities and to reinforce the leading role of the Organization in the fields of science and research, WMO Executive Council recommends to the Congress the establishment of a Research Board on Weather, Climate, Water and the Environment. This Research Board will ensure the implementation and coordination of research programmes required to implement WMO priorities, and will be assigned the following tasks, among others:

- ✓ Initiating research activities in weather, climate, water and related environmental aspects, taking into consideration different needs amongst members;

¹ [http://meetings.wmo.int/EC-70/ layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/EC-70/English/2.%20PROVISIONAL%20REPORT%20\(Approved%20documents\)/EC-70-d16-3\(4\)-GOVERNANCE-REVIEW-TCs-approved_en.docx&action=default](http://meetings.wmo.int/EC-70/ layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/EC-70/English/2.%20PROVISIONAL%20REPORT%20(Approved%20documents)/EC-70-d16-3(4)-GOVERNANCE-REVIEW-TCs-approved_en.docx&action=default)

² Commission for Aeronautical Meteorology (CAeM), Commission for Agricultural Meteorology (CAgM), Commission for Atmospheric Sciences (CAS), Commission for Basic Systems (CBS), Commission for Climatology (CCI), Commission for Hydrology (CHy), Commission for Instruments and Methods of Observation (CIMO), Joint WMO-IOC Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM). See <https://public.wmo.int/en/our-mandate/how-we-do-it/technical-commissions> for more information.

³ https://www.wmo.int/edistrib_exped/grp_has/en/20344-2018-SG-LCP-CNF-CHy-Ext_en.pdf

- ✓ Maintaining an optimal balance between weather, climate, water, ocean and environmental research initiatives and promote the synergies among such initiatives;
- ✓ Promoting the co-design of research initiatives aimed at strengthening the link between user needs and research project design, and between research and operations, to benefit service delivery to Members;
- ✓ Promoting activities to strengthen scientific development in relevant areas for the benefit of all Members and particularly for developing countries and SIDS;
- ✓ Ensuring close coordination among the physical and social sciences;
- ✓ Promoting the science to service and applications.

3) Establishment of a Scientific Advisory Panel

Considering that benefiting from independent scientific advice would strengthen the ability of WMO to gain from scientific and technological breakthroughs in order to lead advancements in weather, climate, water and related environmental fields, the Executive Council recommends to the Congress the establishment of a Scientific Advisory Panel and to assign it the following tasks, among others:

- ✓ Promoting the global standing and visibility of WMO as a leading scientific organization in the fields of weather, climate, **water and related environmental and social sciences within the UN** and otherwise, and enhance the WMO role as facilitator of international cooperation in weather, climate, water, ocean and environmental sciences among all role players;
- ✓ Promoting science vision, and its downstream trends, within WMO and among its Members as the primary driver for innovation, understanding and the development of new and improved weather, climate, water, ocean and related environmental services and know-how.

4) Establishment of an Executive Council Task Force on Water

The Special Dialogue on Water, which was convened by the Executive Council on 25 June 2018⁴, recommended⁵ to the Congress the establishment of a Task Force on Water and to assign it the task of developing recommendations to the Congress regarding:

- ✓ The contribution that WMO can make to hydrological services, in line with the WMO Strategic Plan and Operational Plan and global water agenda, based on the outcomes of the WMO HydroConference⁶ (May 2018), the Special Dialogue on Water convened by the Executive Council of WMO, and the deliberations of the extraordinary session of CHy;
- ✓ Vision and strategy for the future effective and fit-for-purpose hydrological services delivery;
- ✓ Mechanisms for high-level engagement with partners and stakeholders, including UN-Water.

⁴ See the press release for more information: <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/wmo-steps-action-water>

⁵ [http://meetings.wmo.int/EC-70/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/EC-70/English/2.%20PROVISIONAL%20REPORT%20\(Approved%20documents\)/EC-70-d06\(2\)-WATER-DIALOGUE-OUTCOMES-approved_en.docx&action=default](http://meetings.wmo.int/EC-70/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/EC-70/English/2.%20PROVISIONAL%20REPORT%20(Approved%20documents)/EC-70-d06(2)-WATER-DIALOGUE-OUTCOMES-approved_en.docx&action=default)

⁶ See the 2018 HydroConference website for more information: <https://hydroconference.wmo.int/>

5) Strengthening of education and training

Based on the recommendations of the Executive Council Panel of Experts on Education and Training, which held its 28th session meeting in April 2018, the Executive Council recommends⁷ to:

- ✓ Request the reviewing of the Basic Instructional Package for Meteorologists (BIP-M) and Basic Instructional Package for Meteorological Technicians (BIP-MT), with particular attention to scientific advancements, skills required for identifying and communicating user impacts, utilization of upstream seamless data and products, management development, socio-economic and other relevant societal issues;
- ✓ Endorse the WMO Global Campus initiative for developing a coordinated and collaborative network of institutions that work together to meet the growing education and training needs of WMO Members, building upon the existing network of WMO Regional Training Centres (RTCs) and other WMO training partners;
- ✓ Consider the governance of capacity development including education and training, in the context of the WMO reform process taking into consideration previous work and the current Terms of Reference of both the EC Panels on Education and Training and Capacity Development;
- ✓ Strengthen the Organization's support to fellowships and continuing education and to capacity development overall, so as to provide a strong basis for strengthening the capacity of Members and in particular to focus also on Leadership and Management skills as well as technical skills.

In particular, the Panel of Experts also encouraged⁸ the Executive Council to seek additional resources for hydrology and water resources training and for leadership and management skills development efforts, including curricula, course, workshop and resources development. In relation to the review of Basic Instructional Packages and WMO Competency Frameworks, the Panel also endorsed the ongoing efforts of the Secretariat and Technical Commissions to develop competency frameworks, and encouraged continuation, including the efforts begun in hydrology areas.

⁷ [http://meetings.wmo.int/EC-70/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/EC-70/English/2.%20PROVISIONAL%20REPORT%20\(Approved%20documents\)/EC-70-d11-1-EDUCATION-AND-TRAINING-approved_en.docx&action=default](http://meetings.wmo.int/EC-70/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/EC-70/English/2.%20PROVISIONAL%20REPORT%20(Approved%20documents)/EC-70-d11-1-EDUCATION-AND-TRAINING-approved_en.docx&action=default)

⁸ http://meetings.wmo.int/EC-70/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/EC-70/InformationDocuments/EC-70-INF11-1-EDUCATION-AND-TRAINING_en.docx&action=default