



WMO OMM

ADDRESS OF THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANISATION
AT THE
REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON CLIMATE SERVICES FOR PACIFIC SMALL ISLAND
STATES

RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS

31 March 2014

Honourable Henry Puna, Prime Minister of Cook Islands

Mr Arona Ngari, Director of Cook Islands Meteorological Service & Permanent Representative of Cook Islands with WMO

Netatua Pelesikoti, Secretariat of the Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)

Your Excellencies

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure, on behalf of Mr Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, to address you on the occasion of this important regional consultation on climate services. At the outset, I would like to convey our sincere thanks to the Government of the Cook Islands, the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the sponsors of the meeting and to all members of the Organizing Committee for the wonderful cooperation extended to us in the preparations leading up to this meeting.

This workshop builds on the historical contributions of WMO and various partners and stakeholders in the region in support of weather and climate services, efforts on which we will build as we move forward towards enabling improved availability and application of climate services in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is well recognized that climate and its variability has always been an important driver of the way civilizations evolved. Throughout history, climate has allowed civilizations to flourish or forced settlements and entire civilizations to migrate. This a major concern, today, particularly for low lying small Island Developing States, who owing to their special circumstances, are challenged with the impacts of climate change and variability such as sea level rise, heavy storms, more frequent and devastating typhoons, just to name a few.

Thus, today the need to adapt to seasonal, annual and multi-decadal climate variations is critical for the very existence and sustainability of Small Islands. The challenge is emended. Fortunately, our understanding of the climate system continues to improve, allowing us to anticipate and even predict future climate. It is therefore possible, now, to provide information that governments, organizations and individuals can use to manage climate risks and opportunities.

A growing number of countries are establishing capabilities for offering climate services. They are building on their experiences in providing weather and climate information to create customized services targeting specific users. In this way, climate services make it possible to incorporate science-based climate information and prediction into planning and policy to achieve real benefits for society. This is needed because the challenges facing humanity today are increasingly complex, interconnected, in which climate plays a significant role.

Unfortunately, many countries, including the Small Islands in this region have limited capabilities for the production, delivery and effective use of relevant weather, water and climate information and services for contributing to achieving sustainable development.

Expanding the production, distribution and use of relevant and up-to-date climate services can be best achieved by pooling expertise and resources through international cooperation and partnerships. This was recognized by the Heads of State and Governments, Ministers, and Heads of Delegations of over 150 countries and 70 organizations who unanimously decided at the World Climate Conference – 3, held in Geneva, in 2009, to establish the Global Framework for Climate Services. This recognition shall be stressed here.

Through the Global Framework for Climate Services, UN agencies, development banks, regional institutions, national governments and researchers will work together to generate knowledge, data, information, services and best

practices. This collaboration is needed to build greater capacity from the global to the national level for managing the risks and opportunities of climate variability and change and for adapting to climate change. The results will be effective global partnership for identifying and meeting user needs for climate information; the effective application of climate observations, socio-economic data, models and predictions for solving national, regional and global problems; a system for transferring data, information products and services to inform decision making; and increased capacity around the world for producing and using climate services.

The Implementation Plan of the Global Framework for Climate Services, adopted by the First Session of the Intergovernmental Board on Climate Services at the beginning of July 2013, in Geneva, provides an important opportunity to guide the development of capacities that are urgently needed for enabling improved climate services, delivered in an operational manner to support initially four key priority areas, namely agriculture and food security; water; health and disaster risk reduction. This will be done by capitalizing on the existing capabilities through coordination and integration of existing initiatives and mechanisms and strengthening capacities where they are lacking.

Mr Chairman,

As we gear towards the implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) and as suggested by the High-level Taskforce of independent advisors that developed the blue print for the Global Framework for Climate Services, particular attention should be paid to the regional and national level. It is at these levels that capacities are mostly needed to ensure that user needs are adequately addressed.

This workshop will provide an appreciation of the current capabilities and challenges with respect to the provision of climate services in this region as well as the pressing needs for Climate Services.

This appreciation will be very valuable for articulating action plans to integrate the actions of various actors to address in a consistent manner the entire value chain to enable enhanced availability and application of climate services in the region.

I look forward to the outcomes of this Regional Consultation on Climate Services and wish you all very successful deliberations.

Thank you