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MONDIALE

COMMISSION DE MÉTÉOROLOGIE AGRICOLE

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**J. Salinger
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GENEVA, 30 September 2009

Circular letter CAgM No. 3 of the president of CAgM*

Dear Colleagues,

It has been a particularly productive period with many meetings of our Expert and Implementation/Coordination Teams. As of 30 June 2009, I am very pleased to advise that all meetings have occurred and these various teams are busy preparing their final reports. My thanks go to the hard working staff of the Agricultural Meteorology Division of WMO, and the support of the Secretary-General. I would also like to wish you continuing productivity in all your endeavours during 2009. My final newsletter of this term will come out early in 2010 and report on the results of the CAgM Management Group meeting, preparation for CAgM-XV in Belo Horizonte, Brazil in July 2010 and the results of the World Climate Conference-3.

To: Members of the Commission for Agricultural Meteorology (CAgM-242)
Leaders, co-leaders and experts of OPAGs of the Commission for Agricultural Meteorology who are not members of the Commission

cc: Presidents of technical commissions)
Presidents of regional associations)
Chairmen of working groups and) (for information)
rapporteurs of regional associations)
dealing with CAgM-related topics)

* Distributed by the WMO Secretariat

1. OPAG Activities

I am pleased to inform you that our programme of ICT and ET meetings was completed by May 2009, and all we now await is the final reports of the leaders for input into the CAgM Management Group meeting to be held in early 2010.

OPAG 1 Agrometeorological Services for Agrometeorological Production

A meeting of the ET on Agrometeorological Aspects of Sustainable Agricultural Development was held in Edmonton, Canada, 17-18 July 2008, which was preceded by a very successful three day international workshop on Advances in Operational Weather Systems for Fire Danger Rating. The workshop reviewed operational methods used in fire danger rating (FDR) systems from around the globe and discussed new developments in system design and potential enhancements. Recommendations from the Workshop will be considered at the next session of the Commission for Agricultural Meteorology, and the papers are being published. The final report from the meeting is still pending.

OPAG 2 Support Systems for Agrometeorological Services

The ET on the Collection and Evaluation of Operational Agrometeorological Tools and Methodologies met from 21 to 24 October 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya. This Expert Team used the meeting report from a previous CAgM ET and the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) as reference and input. The final report from the meeting is still pending.

The meeting of ICT-2 was held in New Delhi, India, from 26 to 28 February 2009 in conjunction with the International Conference on Challenges and Opportunities in Agrometeorology (23-25 February 2009) in New Delhi. This meeting focussed on drawing the attention of the global agrometeorological community, administrators and policy makers to debate and devise improved methods and techniques for better prediction, preparedness and mitigation of the adverse weather impacts on agriculture production.

OPAG 3 Climate Change/Variability and Natural Disasters in Agriculture

The ICT members meeting for OPAG 3 was held together with the Workshop on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation to Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries at the National and Regional Levels in Orlando, Florida from 21 to 24 November 2008. Recommendations to be considered at CAgM-XV include:

- Conduct research on the development of precision farming technology to ensure an efficient utilization of resources, especially water and nutrients in crop production;
- Promote the in-country capability to use Regional Climate Models and develop downscaled climate change scenarios;
- Provide climate forecast information that is accurate, timely, useful and relevant for different climate-sensitive activities in agriculture including advisories for the farmers on the onset/length of growing season, sowing dates, rainfall amount and distribution;
- Encourage investigations of the usefulness of seasonal and decadal forecasts to support adaptation planning through downscaling seasonal to decadal forecasts and improving their skill for precipitation and extremes;
- Develop effective pest and disease control methods and preventive measures to cope with the changing climate;

- Promote implementation of adaptation strategies such as improved varieties that resist heat, drought, pests and diseases; changes in cropping patterns; afforestation; improved water and land management; diversification into non-farm activities; crop insurance; and improved management of or access to markets and finance.

The full conclusions and recommendations can be found at:

http://www.wamis.org/agm/meetings/ictusa08/S7-Motha_Summary.pdf

Joint ET Meeting of OPAGs 1 and 2

In a new venture an International Workshop on the Content, Communication and Use of Weather and Climate Products and Services for Sustainable Agriculture was held in Toowoomba, Queensland from 18-20 May 2009 which brought together two ETs: ET 1.2 on the Content and Use of Agrometeorological Products by Farmers and Extension Services (ETCUAP) and ET on Communication of Agrometeorological Products and Services (ETCAPS). The workshop and meetings were highly successful in that they concluded that notwithstanding the high sensitivity of agriculture to climate, no full advantage was taken for the agricultural sector of the advances made in weather and climate forecasts. This was attributed to a lack of contact between the providers of weather and climate information and farming communities. The workshop adopted a set of recommendations aimed at enhancing interaction between National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and the farming community. The workshop adopted recommendations aimed at remedying the communication gap between providers and users of agricultural information and at enhancing the effective use of weather and climate services for sustainable agriculture. Among the recommendations is the identification of a focal point by farmer associations and industry organizations, to interact with weather and climate service providers for product development and dissemination of agrometeorological information.

Other recommendations aim at improving weather and climate information for farmers, for example by integrating climate projections into agrometeorological products, and by enhancing knowledge sharing between countries. The ET reports are pending.

2. Sixty-first session of the Executive Council

The sixty-first session of the Executive Council was held from 3-12 June 2009. Perhaps one important item the EC is considering is the transition to results-based management system. The agenda included:

- The status of development of the next WMO Strategic Plan;
- Development of the WMO Operating Plan 2012-2015, which should, among other, form the basis for the preparation of the Secretary-General's budget proposal for the financial period 2012-2015;
- Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and consider the pertinent recommendations of its Working Group on Strategic and Operational Planning.

The Commission has been called upon to develop expected results for the current period (2008-2011) and plans for 2012-2015. These are to be developed over the next six months; the CAgM secretariat will be working closely with the CAgM Management Group in the development of Expected Results for the Commission.

This was also the first time that the work programmes were reported under the WMO Strategic Plan Expected results. Many of our activities now come under Expected Result 7: Enhanced capabilities of Members to provide and use weather, climate, water and environmental applications and services (ER 7). We were invited to discuss and make decisions on key issues including:

improved products and service delivery, increasing the user focus of NMHSs, socio-economic issues related to the use of weather, climate, water and environmental applications, and building human resource capacity in service delivery.

Under Expected Result 6 Enhanced capacities of members in multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster prevention and preparedness we did report on the WMO Sand and Dust Storm Warning Advisory and Assessment System (SDS-WAS) which is being implemented through the Atmospheric Research and Environment Programme (AREP) of WMO and partners. We also pointed out that our efforts in drought warning and mitigation came under the ambit of ER 6.

3. Future structure of WMO

This has been under consideration for creating a flexible and effective working mechanism for studying and developing recommendations for aligning the structure of WMO with the result-based Strategic Plan. The presidents of technical commissions (PTC-2009) had discussed some of the issues that limit the effectiveness of technical commissions including; the non-alignment of technical commission meetings with the decision making processes of the Organization, at times poor communications between technical commissions and between technical commissions and the regional associations, and the large percentage of the budget of the smaller technical commissions that is spent on their quadrennial Commission meeting which in turn limits the resources available to the volunteers who carry out the implementation work of the Commissions. A proposal has been floated that would see the technical commissions meet together at an eight-day, joint technical conference/intergovernmental meeting held every second (even) year. This joint technical commission meeting would have two components: (1) an intergovernmental component of two days where the work of the technical commissions is organized and elections for officers confirmed; and, (2) up to six days of a scientific/technical component where academia, operations and industry could meet and work together, and the management groups of the various technical commissions could meet to coordinate their work. Two Commissions would meet in parallel, in an Intergovernmental mode to discuss their work plans, each with a team of interpreters supporting them, so that for the joint technical commission meeting there would be two teams of interpreters supporting eight Commissions over eight days on a rotation basis. The scientific/technical component of the joint meeting would be composed of parallel sessions focusing on the range of issues faced by the WMO's technical programmes with NMHSs, academic and industry contributions, and, where necessary, plenary sessions to deal with key cross-cutting or high profile issues. The technical/science component would be held over the eight days of the joint meeting. Much discussion ensued and any proposed changes would not occur until after the next Congress in 2011.

4. World Food Conference 3-5 June 2008

From 3 to 5 June 2008, I was part of the New Zealand delegation attending the FAO High-Level Conference on World Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy. The roundtables were very important.

At the one on climate change and food security Martin Parry stressed the urgency of the climate change which is already reflected in extreme weather events, and called for immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emission and assist vulnerable people and agricultural production systems to adapt, especially in arid and semi-arid areas. Ulla Holm underlined the importance of public-private partnerships to cope with climate change impacts on the food chain. Martin Khor stressed that a resilient agricultural sector was a prerequisite for climate change adaptation and that there was a need to move back to self sufficiency and local food production in developing countries, and called on FAO to assume a stronger role in promoting research and training in sustainable and organic agriculture. The Roundtable agreed that climate change would pose a severe additional threat to food security and development. More research on the links between climate change and food security was proposed, including investments on low carbon technologies and other adaptation measures. Governments were urged to ensure that agriculture, forestry and fisheries

be addressed in the negotiations on the Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM), with a focus on a more equitable access of developing countries to carbon markets.

The Roundtable on Bioenergy and Food Security agreed on the significant potential of bioenergy to contribute to rural development, in particular in developing countries, both as a source of economic growth and as a provider of energy services. However, it was also stressed that bioenergy growth should be managed carefully. It was generally agreed that food security should be put before energy policy goals, and that measures should be taken to avoid competition between food and energy.

Documents, report and the high level declaration can be found at:

http://www.fao.org/foodclimate/conference/doclist/en/?no_cache=1

5. UNDP

Since April 2009, Helen Clark (former PM of New Zealand) has taken over as administrator of UNDP. At EC I noted the comments that the UNDP administrator made to UNDP Board, "The truth is that the brunt of the negative impacts of climate change will be borne by some of the poorest countries and people in the world" so EC urged the Secretary-General to develop closer links between WMO and UNDP programmes dealing with climate change impacts.

Subsequently, the Secretary-General and UNDP Administrator have met and at World Climate Conference-3 Ms Clark noted that the proposed Global Framework for Climate Services which was before the conference for discussion had the full support of UNDP, which will work with other agencies to support its development, and with developing countries to build capacity to predict and assess climate risk in future. Thus there will be renewed cooperation between the CAgM programme and UNDP activities in least developed countries and for small island states.

6. Plans for CAgM-XV and the International Workshop, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Plans are well afoot for the International Workshop on Addressing the Livelihood Crisis of Farmers: Weather and Climate Services to be held in Belo Horizonte, Brazil from 12 to 14 July 2010 immediately prior to the fifteenth session of the Commission at the same location. The aims are to identify the weather and climate risks and uncertainties in different regions of the world which affect the livelihoods of farmers such as extreme climatic events, climate variability and climate change, lack of timely information on weather and climate risks and uncertainties. Various weather and climate services for the farming community, communication methods and ways to implement new tools for dissemination of the weather and climate products and services, especially in regions most vulnerable to weather and climate extremes will be identified. Expected outcomes include strategies for reducing weather and climate risks due to climate variability and extremes for subsistence farming, to make food production more sustainable. This will be a critical meeting and the Secretariat is busy mobilizing resources so people from developing countries can attend.

The workshop will be followed by the first ever CAgM session to be held in the continent of South America, so I am hopeful of a good attendance from RA III.

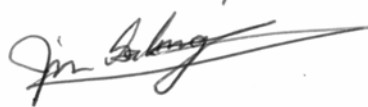
7. Relevant CAgM meetings and training events held from August 2008 to September 2009

- (a) WMO/FAO/UNESCAP International Symposium on Climate Change and Food Security in South Asia, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 25-29 August 2008;
- (b) Training Seminar for Focal Points on the Roving Seminars for Weather, Climate, and Farmers in West Africa, Bamako, Mali, 9-11 September 2008;

- (c) Roving Seminars on Weather, Climate, and Farmers (various dates and locations in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal) September–December 2008;
- (d) CTA International Seminar on the Implications of Global Climate Change for Sustainable Agricultural Production Systems in ACP countries (co-sponsored by WMO), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 26-31 October 2008;
- (e) Evaluation and Planning Meeting on the Roving Seminars on Weather, Climate, and Farmers in West Africa, Bamako, Mali, 18-20 March 2009;
- (f) International Workshop on Adaptation to Climate Change in West African Agriculture, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 27-30 April 2009;
- (g) WMO/COST ACTION/ADAIGO/CECILIA/BOKU International Symposium on Climate Change and Adaptation Options, Vienna, Austria, 22-23 June 2009;
- (h) Training Workshop on Drought Monitor, Bamako, Mali, 14-18 September 2009;

More details on these can be obtained by contacting the CAgM Secretariat of WMO.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Salinger', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James Salinger
(President)
Commission for Agricultural Meteorology