

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC
COMMISSION (OF UNESCO)

JOINT WMO/IOC TECHNICAL COMMISSION FOR
OCEANOGRAPHY AND MARINE METEOROLOGY (JCOMM)
SHIP OBSERVATIONS TEAM

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FOURTH SESSION

ITEM I-2.3

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 16 TO 21 APRIL 2007

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REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE SOT

(Submitted by Mr Graeme Ball, Chairperson of the JCOMM Ship Observations Team)

Summary and purpose of document

This document contains a brief report by Mr Graeme Ball, Chairperson of the SOT, regarding his activities in support of the SOT during the past intersessional period. The document also provides a status on action items requiring attention by the Chairperson of the SOT.

ACTION PROPOSED

The Ship Observations Team is invited to review the information contained in this report, to take the details into consideration when discussing the relevant agenda items, and comment as necessary and/or appropriate.

Appendix: List of Action Items

DISCUSSION

The intersessional period leading up to the SOT-IV was extremely busy and generally very rewarding with good progress made in many areas. In addition to being a Member of many SOT task teams and *ad-hoc* groups, the Chairperson of the SOT was involved in a variety of administrative, technical and promotional activities, which are summarised below:

Administrative

1. Following the resignation of Mr Etienne Charpentier as the DBCP/SOOP Technical Coordinator, the Chairperson of the SOT, Mr Graeme Ball, was invited to become a member of the selection panel to appoint a new DBCP/SOT Technical Coordinator. Formal interviews of the short-listed candidates were conducted at the ECMWF, Reading, United Kingdom, March 2006. Further details regarding the selection and appointment are presented in Agenda Item I-8.2.
2. Mr Ball, Chairperson of the SOT, along with the Chairpersons of other groups in the JCOMM Observations Programme Area, attended a JCOMMOPS Review Meeting, Silver Spring, Maryland, USA, May 2006, to consider the medium to long-term staffing requirements and future location of the JCOMMOPS. Further details regarding the JCOMMOPS Review are presented in Agenda Item I-5.1.1.
3. The Chairperson of the SOT, with assistance from the WMO Secretariat and the Chairpersons of the VOSP, SOOPIP and ASAPP, prepared the agenda for the SOT-IV. The Chairperson of the SOT also took the lead role in appointing the Chairpersons of the Technical and Scientific Workshop and the National Reports sessions of the SOT-IV.
4. The Chairperson of the SOT, with assistance from the Chairpersons of the VOSP, SOOPIP and ASAPP, prepared the 2005 and 2006 National SOT Annual Report templates for distribution by the WMO to National VOS, SOOP and ASAP Focal Points. Further details regarding the SOT Annual Report are presented at Agenda Item I-7.1.
5. The Chairperson of the SOT also reviewed and commented, as necessary, on numerous JCOMM documents, including:
 - a. Report of the Observations Programme Coordinator to the Fourth Session of the JCOMM Management Committee (MAN-IV, Paris, France, 9-12 February 2005);
 - b. Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in support of the UNFCCC (GCOS-92); and
 - c. The JCOMM Data Management Strategy.
6. Mr Ball, Chairperson of the SOT, continued as the Webmaster of JCOMM VOS website. Further details regarding the VOS website are presented in Agenda Item I-7.2.

Task Teams

7. As Chairperson of the *Task Team on Metadata for WMO No. 47*, the Chairperson of the SOT submitted the VOS metadata requirements and reporting formats that were approved at the SOT-III to the JCOMM-II. In accordance with the submission to the JCOMM-II, the Chairpersons of the SOT, VOSP and ASAPP developed a global VOS route scheme for presentation at the SOT-IV. Further details regarding WMO Publication No. 47, including the proposed VOS route scheme, are presented in Agenda Item I-4.3.
8. The Chairperson of the SOT participated in the activities of the *Task Team on VOS Recruitment and Programme Promotion*, the *Task Team on Instrument Standards* and the *Task Team on Coding (of SST)*. The latter was largely incorporated into a broader scheme established by JCOMM to report SST metadata from all marine platforms as part of the META-T Project. The Chairperson of the SOT also attended a META-T meeting in Reading, United Kingdom, March 2006, as a member of the META-T VOS Group. Further details regarding the Task Teams

listed above are presented in Agenda Items I-4.1, I-4.6 and I-4.5. Further details regarding the META-T Project is provided in Agenda Item I-6.2.1.

9. The Chairperson of the SOT, Mr Graeme Ball, participated in an *ad hoc* Task Team on BUFR (for the VOS and VOSCLim) established at the PMO-III (Hamburg, Germany, 23-24 March 2006) to develop a BUFR template to replace the BBXX. Further details regarding the proposed BUFR template for the VOS are presented in Agenda Item I-6.2.2.

Initiatives

10. The Chairperson of the SOT, and the Chairperson of the VOSP, with assistance from selected SOT Members, jointly developed:
 - a. Guidance material to enable Port Meteorological Officers (PMOs) and VOS Programme Managers to perform their duties in accordance with common practices and international reporting requirements. The guidance material is available on the VOS website (<http://www.bom.gov.au/jcomm/vos/>). Further details regarding this guidance material are presented in Agenda I-4.1 as part of the report by the *Task Team on VOS Recruitment and Programme Promotion*.
 - b. A foreign-VOS Inspection form to harmonize PMO practices when visiting ships belonging to the VOF of another country. The foreign-VOS inspection is available on the VOS website. Further details regarding the foreign-VOS inspection form are also presented in Agenda I-4.1 as part of the report by the *Task Team on VOS Recruitment and Programme Promotion*.

Promotion and training

11. At the kind invitation of the Director of the Office of Climate Observation (OCO), the Chairperson of the SOT attended both the 2005 and 2006 OCO Annual Reviews. The 2005 OCO Annual Review provided an opportunity to report on the goals and activities of the SOT to a large audience comprising a wide cross-section of the international climate, oceanographic and meteorological communities.
12. At the kind invitation of the Chairperson of SAMOS, the Chairperson of the SOT prepared a presentation on the synergies between the VOS Scheme and SAMOS for the First Joint GOSUD/SAMOS Meeting (Boulder, Colorado, USA, May 2006). Due to a conflict with dates, the presentation was given by Dr Elizabeth Kent, National Oceanography Centre, Southampton, United Kingdom.
13. As a member of the Data Buoy Cooperation Panel (DBCP), the Chairperson of the SOT gave an overview of the goals and activities of the SOT at the Twenty First Session of the DBCP (DBCP-XXI, Buenos Aires, Argentina, October 2005).
14. The Chairperson of the SOT took the lead in preparing the programme for PMO-III, hosted by Deutscher Wetterdienst (DWD), Hamburg, Germany, March 2006.
15. The Chairperson of SOT attended the Third and Fourth Sessions of the E-SURFMAR VOS Technical Advisory Group (TAG) in Hamburg, Germany, March 2006 and Geneva, Switzerland, April 2007, respectively.

Technical

16. Ship security, as was first discussed at the SOT-III, remained an ongoing and at times highly emotive issue. The Chairperson of the SOT provided briefing material to the WMO Secretariat for presentation to the Fifty-seventh Session of the WMO Executive Council (EC-LVII, Geneva, Switzerland, June 2005). The issue remained unresolved, and the Chairperson of the SOT subsequently briefed the Co-president (elect) of the JCOMM so the issue could be discussed at Second Session of the JCOMM (JCOMM-II, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, September 2005).

The SOT solution to the issue was strongly supported by JCOMM-II, and was further endorsed as a formal recommendation at Third Session of the Port Meteorological Officers (PMO-III, Hamburg, Germany, March 2006). The Fifty-eighth WMO Executive Council (EC-LVIII, Geneva, Switzerland, July 2006), reconsidered the ship security issue and passed a resolution promoting the use of masked callsigns in lieu of the official ITU callsigns for reporting ship's weather report (BBXX). The impact of this recommendation was far-reaching and culminated in the WMO Secretariat, with extensive input from the Chairpersons of the SOT, VOSP, JCOMM DMPA and the JCOMM ETMC, preparing a document describing the implementation of masked callsigns. Further details about ship security are presented in Agenda Item IV-4.1.

Status of Action Items from SOT-III

Refer to Appendix 1.

Summary of mission activities, April 2005 – April 2006

Date	Mission	Location
25-27 April 2005	3 rd OCO Climate Review	Silver Spring, USA
28-29 April 2005	Ad hoc OCG meeting	Silver Spring, USA
20-21 March 2006	E-SURFMAR VOS TAG-III	Hamburg, Germany
22 March 2006	E-SURFMAR PMO Workshop	Hamburg, Germany
23-24 March 2006	PMO-III Training Workshop	Hamburg, Germany
25 March 2006	DBCP/SOT Technical Coordinator Interviews	Reading, United Kingdom
28 March 2006	META-T Workshop	Reading, United Kingdom
9 May 2006	JCOMMOPS Review	Silver Spring, USA
10-12 May 2006	4 th OCO Climate Review	Silver Spring, USA
12-13 April 2007	E-SURFMAR VOS TAG-IV	Geneva, Switzerland

Acknowledgements

17. I would sincerely like to thank the Chairpersons of the VOSP, SOOPIP and ASAPP, the Task Teams, the Secretariat and the Technical Coordinator, both former and current, for their excellent support during this intersessional period.
18. A great deal of progress has been achieved in many areas during this intersessional period. I would like to take this opportunity, and to also place on public record, my appreciation to those who have freely given of their time and talents for the benefit of the SOT community, whilst at the same time continuing to operate national programmes. In this regard, I would particularly like to thank my staff in the Marine Operations Group at the Australian Bureau of Meteorology who, when the demands of the SOT dictated, relieved me of some of my usual work duties.
19. I also wish to thank the Secretariat for the local arrangements and for the excellent facilities provided for this session of the SOT.
20. In closing, I would remind you that the SOT is a community where everybody has an equal voice and I would therefore strongly encourage you to participate in the ensuing discussions over the course of this week. I also hope that SOT-IV enhances intra and inter-program communication, builds long-term friendships and that everybody has a safe and enjoyable stay in Geneva.

Graeme S. Ball
Chairperson, SOT

Appendix: 1

APPENDIX**List of Action Items**

Para	Action	Responsible	Due	Status
I-2.3.4	In order to integrate observations under the coordination of SOT, representatives from the biological and chemical data communities of observations to be invited to SOT-IV	SOT chairperson and Secretariat		Invitations extended to numerous other groups to attend SOT-IV.
I-4.1.2	A single page recruitment flyer to be made available on the JCOMMOPS and VOS web sites	JCOMMOPS Coordinator and BoM		Available on VOS website since Q4 2005. Link from the JCOMMOPS website.
I-4.1.3	Recruitment Power Point Presentation to be kept under review; used whenever appropriate, and made available on the JCOMMOPS and VOS web sites	JCOMMOPS Coordinator and BoM		Available on VOS website since Q4 2005. Also available on the JCOMMOPS website.
I-4.1.5	The generic SOT certificate be made available on the JCOMMOPS and VOS web sites.	JCOMMOPS Coordinator and BoM		Available on VOS website since Q4 2005. Link from the JCOMMOPS website.
I-4.3.9	SOT chairperson to raise the issue of electronic version of Pub. 47 to be a priority issue in the WMO Secretariat.	SOT chairperson	JCOMM-II	Completed
I-8.2	The ad hoc Task Team to thoroughly review the contents and template for the SOT Annual Report so that the 2004 Annual Report can be published. SOT members to send their comments to Mr Graeme Ball as soon as possible	ad hoc Task Team and SOT members	middle of 2005	Nil comments received. The 2004 SOT Annual Report did not progress due to staff changes at WMO. The 2005 SOT Annual Report was available on CD in mid-2006.
I-11.2	The exact dates and venue for SOT-IV to be finalized as soon as possible.	chairpersons and Secretariat		Completed.
II-1	A scientific and technical workshop to also be organized in conjunction with SOT-IV. Participants to submit papers to next workshop.	Secretariat and SOT chairperson		Completed. Mr. Frits Koek agreed to Chair the Scientific and Technical Workshop.
III-A/2.3.2	Barometer calibration practices of countries to be made available on VOS web site.	VOS operators and BoM		Available on VOS website since Q4 2006.
III-A/4.1.3	VOS Panel members to take any possible actions to prevent making the ship positions available on web sites	VOS operators, SOT chairperson		Ongoing. Discussed at JCOMM-II, EC-57 and EC-58. Further discussion at SOT-IV.

