

## FOREWORD

In August-September 1853, a Maritime Conference was convened in Brussels by Lt. Matthew Fontaine Maury (US Navy) for the purpose of "establishing a uniform system of meteorological observations at sea, and of concurring in a general plan of observation on the winds and currents of the ocean." This was the first international meteorological conference and the precursor of international cooperation and coordination in operational meteorology and oceanography. It led more or less directly to the first International Meteorological Congress in Vienna in 1873 and to the establishment of the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), the predecessor of WMO. As such, it was a key milestone in the development of present-day operational meteorology and oceanography.

The year 2003 marked the 150th anniversary of this landmark conference, and a special seminar was organized as a celebration of this anniversary. This seminar took place in Brussels in November 2003 under the high patronage of HM King Albert II of Belgium and in association with the second JCOMM International Workshop on Advances in Marine Climatology (CLIMAR-II). The opening ceremony was chaired by Dr H. Malcorps, Permanent Representative of Belgium with WMO. Other speakers at the ceremony included: Dr R. Aernoudt, Director of the Cabinet of the Minister of Economy, Energy, Foreign Trade and Science Policy, Belgium; Dr P. Mettens, President of the Federal Science Policy, Belgium; Dr P. Bernal, Assistant Director-General of UNESCO and Executive Secretary IOC; Rear Admiral S. Tomaszewski, Oceanographer of the Navy, USA; and Professor G.O.P. Obasi, Secretary-General of WMO.

The seminar was conceived to include historical reviews of the 1853 Conference, and of the development of operational marine meteorology and oceanography, leading to the Joint WMO/IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) and the Global Ocean and Climate Observing Systems (GOOS and GCOS). It also covered burgeoning issues in operational ocean observations, and the role of existing programmes and institutions in dealing with these. The seminar concluded with a future vision of operational oceanography and marine meteorology, based on the lessons learned over the past 150 years. It comprised invited keynote papers by eminent meteorologists and oceanographers, together with some contributed posters. There were also displays of equipment highlighting the development of meteorological and oceanographic instrumentation over the past 150 years, as well as displays of other historical material, such as old logbooks, reports, etc. The displays included some by corporate sponsors.

Altogether, 17 papers were presented to the seminar, which was attended by some 140 interested experts. The event also generated considerable media interest, in Belgium and elsewhere, and a short video clip was prepared, and screened subsequently on CNN.

This JCOMM Technical Report contains electronic presentations and/or papers given at this seminar. Poster presentations both for the seminar and CLIMAR-II are published as a separate JCOMM Technical Report (JCOMM TR-No. 22. WMO/TD-1199).