

COMMISSION FOR BASIC SYSTEMS
ABRIDGED FINAL REPORT OF THE SIXTH SESSION
Belgrade, 18 March – 4 April 1974
WMO – No. 381

GENERAL SUMMARY

8.2 New SYNOP and SHIP codes

8.2.1 The Commission noted Recommendation 22 (CSM-V), by which the new code forms for SYNOP and SHIP were adopted for international use as from 1 January 1975, subject to modifications and refinements. Since CSM-V, some Members had experienced difficulties in the introduction of the new code forms by 1 January 1975 and, therefore, an Informal Planning Meeting was held which suggested the postponement of the introduction to 1 January 1976 or later, subject to a final date to be recommended at the sixth session of CBS. This suggestion was formally by postal ballot as Recommendation 45 (73-CBS).

8.2.2 Based on the substantial work carried out by the CBS Working Group on Codes, the Secretary-General submitted CBS-VI/Doc. 23, giving detailed specifications for new SYNOP and SHIP codes, which took fully into account the results of the trials carried out by Members. Before going into the detailed proposals for the various coding specifications of the new SYNOP and SHIP codes, there was a discussion on the final date for introducing them for international use. Taking into consideration the First GARP Global Experiment, which is planned to commence in the second half of 1977, it was felt that possible implementation dates would be either 1 January 1977 or after FGGE. In discussing these dates, the Commission noted that some countries might not be able to implement the new code form by 1 January 1977. This led to a discussion on whether, in the event of some Members being unable to comply with this implementation date, the use of two different code forms for surface

synoptic observations would create considerable difficulties for the processing centres. It was, therefore, decided to put alternative proposals to a vote. These proposals were either to introduce for international use of the new code forms for synoptic surface observations on 1 January 1977, or to postpone the introduction to a date after the FGGE. This vote was carried out by a roll call and by a majority decision it was decided not to introduce new code forms for all synoptic surface observations until after the FGGE.

8.2.3 The Commission agreed that the considerable work carried out by the Working Group on Codes in developing the new SYNOP and SHIP code forms should not be lost, and that an updating of these proposed code forms and specifications would be required in the light of the First GARP Global Experiment. The Commission therefore requested the Secretary-General to send CBS-VI/Doc. 23 and other documents relating to the proposed new SYNOP and SHIP codes to all Members of WMO and to the presidents of technical commissions. However, the Commission felt that after FGGE a new approach to the overall code system might be necessary as a result of further technological developments.

8.2.4 As a consequence of the above decision, the Commission reviewed the use of the code forms FM 14.E (SYNOP – Report of synoptic surface observations from land station (AUTOMATIC weather station)) and FM 24.E (SHIP – Report of synoptic surface observations from sea stations (AUTOMATIC weather station)). These two code forms were approved by Recommendation 23 (CSM-V) and were introduced for use in the international exchange of reports containing observations of automatic weather stations, as from 1 January 1972. The Commission recognized that these code forms were accepted in anticipation of the introduction of the new SYNOP and SHIP code by 1 January 1975. Since FM 14.E and FM 24.E were practically identical to the new code forms, it was felt that a uniform system for reporting the surface synoptic observations would be achieved, if the new code forms were introduced. As they would not now be introduced at an early date, the Commission reviewed the use of the code forms SYNOP FM 14.E and SHIP FM 24.E and noted that these code forms were not very widely used. In many cases Members are distributing internationally on the GTS the observations of

automatic weather stations in the code form FM 11.E. It was agreed that Members should be encouraged to use the code form FM 11.E for the international distribution of all surface synoptic observations from land stations and the code form FM 21.E, FM 22.E, FM 23.E and FM 26.D for the distribution of all surface synoptic observations from sea stations.

8.2.5 The Commission however was informed that while normally the data from the automatic weather stations were transmitted to the National Meteorological Centre or editing station in special codes, designed for specific observing systems, in some countries the conversion into international code forms was carried out by computers. Since a reprogramming of the computers might require some time, it was felt that the code forms SYNOP FM 14.E and SHIP FM 24.E should be retained and their use should be reviewed at the next session of CBS. Recommendation 7 (CBS-VI) was adopted.

8.8 Amendments to the code forms FM 21.E – SHIP, FM 22.E – SHIP and FM 23.E – SHRED

The Commission noted the requirements stated by CMM-VI for reporting of resultant wave heights and icing in the new SHIP code forms. Since the Commission agreed not to introduce new codes for synoptic surface observations until after FGGE, after discussion it was agreed that the president of CBS be requested to consult with the president of CMM on the need for adjusting the present code forms FM 21.E, FM 22.E and FM 23.E with a view to meeting the most pressing marine requirements.

RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE SESSION

Rec. 7 (CBS-VI) – USE OF CODE FORMS FOR THE EXCHANGE OF SYNOPTIC SURFACE OBSERVATIONS ORIGINATING FROM AUTOMATIC WEATHER STATIONS

THE COMMISSION FOR BASIC SYSTEMS,

NOTING:

- (1) Recommendation 23 (CSM-V) recommending the use of the code forms SYNOP FM 14.E and SHIP FM 24.E for international exchange of reports containing observational data obtained by automatic weather stations,
- (2) That some Members are using code form FM 11.E for the international distribution of observational data from automatic weather stations,

CONSIDERING:

- (1) That in some cases, special codes are used for the transmission of data from automatic weather stations to National Meteorological Centres,
- (2) That prior to the distribution of observational data obtained from automatic weather stations transcription into WMO code form takes place,
- (3) That a single code form for surface synoptic observation would facilitate the work of processing centres,

RECOMMENDS that preference should be given to the use of code forms FM 11.E, FM 21.E, FM 22.E, FM 23.E and FM 26.D over FM 14.E and FM 24.E for the exchange of reports containing observations of automatic weather stations over the GTS, in particular on the MTC.