

Meeting of hosts of official website on global city weather forecasts end today

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A three-day meeting of the World Weather Information Service website hosts, run by the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) ends today (January 11). The website is run on behalf of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) of the United Nations.

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(Media-NewsWire.com) - Delegates included representatives from Mainland China, Spain, Oman, Macau, Hong Kong and the WMO Secretariat.

In 2000, the WMO decided to establish an authoritative website on global official city weather forecasts and tasked the Hong Kong Observatory with designing and operating the website, which was named the World Weather Information Service (WWIS) (<http://worldweather.wmo.int>).

A beta version of WWIS was piloted in 2001. It was the world's first source of official forecasts for cities around the world. At that time, it contained climatological information only. By 2002, weather forecasts for some 400 cities were included. In 2004, the number of cities involved surpassed 1,000.

In 2005, the WWIS was declared operational. At present, there are 114 WMO Members supplying official weather forecasts for 1,146 cities. A total of 159 countries also provided climatological data for 1,167 cities through the WWIS. Initially, there was only the English version of the WWIS, hosted by the Hong Kong Observatory. As this website was highly successful, different language versions including Arabic (2003), Chinese (2003), Portuguese (2004) and Spanish (2005) were added.

The objective of this meeting was to enhance cooperation between hosts of the various language versions of the WWIS and to plan for its future expansion with a view to better serving the world.

Mr Lam Chiu-ying, Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, said at the Opening Ceremony of the meeting: "We hope to be able to better coordinate the development of the various language versions of WWIS to benefit as many people as possible. The success of this project is the result of close collaboration between WMO Members all working towards the common goal of providing quality weather services to the global community."

Ms Haleh Kootval, a representative from the WMO Secretariat said: "I have been working on a Public Weather Service (PWS) programme in the WMO for many years. The WWIS project is the most successful international cooperation project in the PWS programme I have ever come across. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Hong Kong Observatory for its contributions."

The coordination meeting has laid down the foundations for future development of the WWIS website. More language versions of the WWIS will be launched under the framework in due course.

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