

Regional Training Seminar on Public Weather Forecasting and WAFS Products Applications

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

WMO Bulletin

The Czech Hydrometeorological Institute hosted a **Regional Training Seminar on Public Weather Forecasting and WAFS Products Applications** in Prague, Czech Republic for participants from the NIS countries in Regions II and VI. Twenty-two participants from 19 countries attended the seminar. Lecturers from the USA, UK, Austria and the Czech Republic in addition to staff of the Secretariat provided the training material for the participants.

The first part of the seminar was devoted to lectures on NWP techniques and NWP applications to aeronautical meteorology forecasting. Dr Ralph Petersen (USA) made presentations on NWP data sources, data assimilation, quality control and NWP analysis techniques and products post-processing. He concluded his lectures by sharing his views with participants on the future direction of NWP. Lectures by Dr Herbert Puempel (Austria) focused on orographic effects on local and synoptic scale circulations and completed the aviation part of the seminar by discussing additional methods used in NWP post-processing. Mr N.T. Diallo, Scientific Officer at the Aeronautical Meteorology Programme of WMO presented a paper on the objectives, implementation phases and the dissemination of WAFS Products. The afternoons were devoted to hands-on training on the use of the software PCGRIDDS to manipulate and display the World Area Forecast digital gridded fields.

Participants were given the opportunity to share their experience in forecasting in their own countries. The main issues raised by participants were the lack of data in general and the decreasing number of operational weather stations over their territories and access to aviation products from various forecast centres in particular. The global negative impacts of the decreasing volume of data exchanged was referred to by Dr Petersen as resulting in notable reduction in forecast accuracy over North America and Europe.

During the second half of the seminar the focus shifted from aviation to the general public and other users of the products and services provided by the NMHSs. The specific emphasis of this part of the seminar was on the importance of determining user requirements and satisfaction with those services and products. Following an introductory lecture by Ms Haleh Kootval, Chief of the Public Weather and Operational Information Services the objectives and purpose of the WMO Public Weather Services Programme, Mr Roger Stobbs (UK) made a presentation on raising awareness of the general public of the role of PWS in public safety. Dr Petersen illustrated applications

of forecasts to weather-sensitive economic sectors through a clear example applying probabilistic forecasts to the construction industry. Further lectures on this topic elaborated on sensitizing the public to the broad range of services available for the benefit of the public through both commerce and media. These lectures were followed by video presentations prepared especially to illustrate the point clearly.

The last day of the seminar was dedicated to a workshop activity organized by Mr Keith Hymas (UK) and Mr Stobbs, whereby the participants were further tutored on the importance of being aware of user needs for weather forecasts. They worked in teams to prepare special forms for specific business sectors or government, namely, a gas company, a supermarket, highway authorities, and a radio station, whose operations depended heavily on the weather and were all situated in Northern Germany,. Each team then used actual data to produce basic and added-value forecasts and warnings for those users and presented them to the whole group. The workshop clearly demonstrated the necessity to understand and respond to different user needs if the services and products were to be of value. As part of the seminar, a visit was arranged by the hosts to the studios of the Czech Television during which the participants got a first hand experience of how the weather forecasts were prepared and broadcasted.based on the information provided by the Hydrometeorological Institute.