

**STATEMENT AT THE OPENING OF THE WMO REGIONAL SEMINAR ON  
CLIMATE SERVICES IN REGIONAL ASSOCIATION V**

by

**M. Jarraud**

**Secretary-General**

**World Meteorological Organization**

**(Honiara, Solomon Islands, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2011)**

**Excellency,**

**Ms Sri Woro B. Harijono, President of Regional Association V (South-West Pacific)**

**Mr Chanel Iroi, Undersecretary/Technical Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECDM), and Permanent Representative of Solomon Islands with WMO,**

**Distinguished Participants and Guests,**

**Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure for me to be in Honiara at the opening of the Regional Seminar on Climate Services in Regional Association V. On behalf of WMO, I would like to express our appreciation to Mr Chanel Iroi, Undersecretary/Technical Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management and Meteorology (MECDM), and Permanent Representative of Solomon Islands with WMO, for hosting this key event as well as the meetings of the RA V Management Group and the RA V Working Group on Climate Services, which will take place on Friday.

Honiara is a weather-conscious city, since its name means "*facing the east and south-east wind*". With a total land surface of about 28,000 square kilometers distributed among almost 1000 Pacific Ocean islands, weather awareness is indeed vital for the entire Solomon Islands and their citizens.

Statistics show that about 90 percent of all natural disasters are of hydrometeorological origin. However, Solomon Islands also experience a high level of seismic activity. In April 2007, an 8.1 magnitude temblor was followed by a large tsunami which took the lives of close to 100 citizens and left thousands homeless, but it is noteworthy that these losses were not higher thanks to an exceptional level of local preparedness, since the quake epicenter was only 350 km northwest of Honiara.

After Solomon Islands joined WMO in May 1985, climate variability and change continued to position themselves higher and higher on the international arena, in particular sea-level rise and the potential influence of a warmer climate on the frequency and intensity of natural hazards. These are factors which affect most societal sectors, especially in low-lying Small Island

Developing States (SIDS) which are also Least-developed Countries (LDCs), as is the case for Solomon Islands, so appropriate adaptation to climate change impacts will be decisive to ensure your future sustainable development.

**Excellency,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Your meeting takes place at very special moment in the history of our Organization. As you are aware, the third World Climate Conference (WCC-3; Geneva, 31 August to 4 September 2009) addressed a significant number of key issues related to climate change and adaptation to its impacts, natural disaster prevention and mitigation, agriculture and food security, water resources management, health, tourism, marine meteorology and scientific research, among other vital issues. In particular, WCC-3 considered optimal ways to provide decision-makers the most appropriate scientific tools, information and services to assist them in meeting the mounting climate challenges they are increasingly likely to encounter.

WCC-3 participation reached unprecedented levels, with 13 Heads of State and Government and more than 100 Ministers and UN Agency heads, as well as 2,500 scientists, experts and decision-makers.

May I also recall that on the occasion of the World Meteorological Day last year, which coincided with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Organization, the Solomon Islands Minister of Environment and Conservation noted that the theme "*WMO - 60 Years of service for your safety and well-being*" was especially appropriate at a time when communities around the globe are striving to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals, in particular concerning health, food and water security and poverty alleviation, as well as to improve their resilience in the face of recurrent natural disasters and to assist them in proactively responding to the mounting impacts of climate change.

WCC-3 was followed by an Intergovernmental meeting which approved the composition and terms of reference of a Taskforce of High-level Advisors, in which your Region was represented through H.E. Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, Samoan Minister for Women, Community and Social Development, and Prof. Emil Salim, Member of the Advisory Council to the President of Indonesia

Throughout 2010, the High-level Taskforce (HLT) developed proposals for a Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), which were recently submitted to the Sixteenth World Meteorological Congress (Geneva, May/June 2011). The Congress embraced the core HLT proposals, made key decisions regarding GFCS governance and agreed that the GFCS shall be developed as a major priority in 2012-2015 and beyond, for which an extraordinary session of the WMO Congress will be convened in October 2012. WMO looks forward to the fullest participation of all WMO Members in this vital session, in particular of LDCs and SIDS, for which special resources are being mobilized.

Since Solomon Islands have been especially active in the context of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), I could underscore that although GFCS outreach will extend beyond climate change, it will also contribute significantly to this process by supporting adaptation efforts being made in response to the climate change impacts to which we are already committed as a consequence of the inertia of the climate system, as well as the effects of climate variability and natural hazards.

**Excellency,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Climate change impacts are already being experienced in the South-West Pacific and they are increasingly visible in the form of sea-level rise, as well as through their indirect effects on health, agriculture, water quality, transportation, tourism and biodiversity, to name just a few of the most significantly affected regional sectors. It is therefore encouraging to underline that the four initial GFCS priorities will focus on disaster risk reduction, health, water and food security.

Before concluding, I would like to reiterate WMO's appreciation to Mr Chanel Iroi, for the kind invitation to join you at this key session.

Finally, to all participants in this Regional Seminar, I would like to stress that, as South-West Pacific Permanent Representatives with WMO and senior officials, you will share the major responsibility to strengthen your respective National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, for them to optimally reap the benefits of the wide partnerships, capacity development facilities and resource mobilization opportunities which are expected to become available in the context of GFCS implementation and climate services development in RA V, as well as to identify the relevant national stakeholders and potential users.

I wish you a very successful and productive meeting and an enjoyable stay in Honiara.

Thank you.

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