

Voluntary Cooperation Programme

July – September 2010

New Newsletter

Welcome to the second edition of the new VCP Newsletter!

This new edition will not only inform you on the requests for assistance from National HydroMet Services that we have received and supported, it will also provide you with news and information from the Secretariat and from the field. As we were requested to provide more frequent updates on what is going on, you will now receive the VCP newsletter **on a quarterly basis**.

VCP at METEOREX 2010

Thanks to the new chair of IPM, Mr Jaakko Nuottokari, the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) had provided the Secretariat with a stand at METEOREX in Helsinki, Finland. It was the first time that the VCP had been actively promoted during a conference and it was a great success. Many people have shown interest in the programme and taken information flyers as well as signed up for the newsletter. For pictures of the event, please see our website at

http://www.wmo-dra.info/gallery/meteorex_2010/



(Ms Salla Himberg of the VCP Secretariat and Mr Jaakko Nuottokari of FMI at the VCP stand)

VCP Secretariat

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New VCP flyer

The Secretariat has been working to create an updated flyer to inform about the programme. The new flyer has already been used to promote the VCP and created quite a lot of interest and feedback. Currently, a total of about 350 flyers were already distributed. The printed version is a 4-page brochure, which folds out into a poster. For an electronic version of the flyer, please see our website at

<http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/dra/vcp/publications.php>

VCP on Facebook

The VCP now has its own page on Facebook. We will use it to post news updates and links to our website. Since its launch on 21 September, already 11 people have “liked” it and the page has been viewed over 100 times. Please visit the page and support us by clicking the “like” button.

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#!/pages/WMO-Voluntary-Cooperation-Programme/154814407869783>

Requests for VCP assistance received from July to September 2010

The VCP Secretariat received requests from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Suriname, Guyana and Dominica (revised). For more details on these and other outstanding requests, please visit our website at www.wmo.int/dra/vcp/partner.

We welcome offers of support for unmet outstanding requests!

Update on requests that are supported and in process

Between July and September 2010, VCP requests from Kyrgyzstan, Guinea Bissau and Comoros found partners. For an overview of on-going projects and links to partners and donors, please check our website at

<http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/dra/vcp/on-going.php>.

Capacity building in Sierra Leone

Mr Tom Butcher from the WMO Resource Mobilization Office and Mr Ishiaku Muhammed from the WMO Sub-Regional Office in Abuja conducted a mission to Sierra Leone 9-13 August 2010. The purpose of the mission was to carry out a capacity assessment of the Meteorological Department, as well as to work with the UN sister agencies in Sierra Leone to advise on how they can best work together to develop the capacity in Sierra Leone for the sustainable delivery of weather and climate services. The results of this mission will also be closely coordinated and build upon in the Spanish Programme for Cooperation in West Africa and a pipeline food security project with IFAD.



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The outcomes of the mission were an agreed action plan and a project proposal to develop the observing network in Sierra Leone which UNDP, UNEP and possibly other UN partners are ready to take forward. The Government of Sierra Leone has already responded extremely positively, having advertised staff posts at the Meteorological Department (30 technicians and up to 9 trainee forecasters) for the first time since 1994. This will help to address acute staff shortages at the Meteorological Department.



database.

It is extremely positive and encouraging how UNDP, UNEP, FAO and IFAD in Sierra Leone are all committed to work, together with the Meteorological Department and WMO, to build capacity within Sierra Leone to deliver sustainable services in support of national development. The various UN bodies in Sierra Leone recognize the importance of weather and climate services to support their development programmes, reduce vulnerability of the population to natural disasters, and increase resilience to climate change. We are working hard to make a success of this initiative, in particular the "One UN" approach, with the aim of developing a blue print for other countries and regions. UNDP has already begun to support the Met Department by assisting with the digitization of paper records that are held at their headquarters and with the establishment of a climate

Pilot project in East Africa launched

The innovative public-private partnership between WMO, Ericsson and NMHSs in East Africa continues to evolve. The initiative aims to capitalize on the massive uptake of mobile phone technology in East African countries to develop and pilot weather and climate applications, targeting the farming and fishing communities. The reach of NMHSs information dissemination is extended to these rural communities, who greatly need this information for their daily livelihoods. The "proof of concept" pilot will target farming and fishing communities in Uganda and Tanzania and links to the Severe Weather Forecasting Demonstration project recently initiated in East Africa.

Tell us about yourself!

We would like to publish some of YOUR stories. So, have you organized a training session? Installed a new observing station? Let us know! Send us a short description of your project, along with some pictures, links to your website, documents, etc. and have it published on the WMO website (<http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/dra/vcp/field.php>) and inside this newsletter. Get greater visibility for your efforts. We are looking forward to receiving your stories.

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Featured project – TV Weather Presentation for the Comoros Met Service

A forecast of the weather is of little use if it is not communicated to the people who need to know about it. Also, it is essential to provide the information in local languages, with cultural references to enhance understanding. Through VCP, countries are being provided with facilities to prepare informative broadcasts for national television. These systems are also used to prepare weather forecasts for newspapers and websites.

The UK Met Office is helping to establish a studio at the Comoros Met Service and provide training, to enable staff to produce TV and radio broadcasts for weather forecasts and to issue warnings. Currently, no weather information is provided to the Comoros population and warnings are only read out together with other news. By helping to establish a specific weather broadcast, people will be better informed and preventive measures can be taken in the case of natural disasters, helping to save lives and property.

The UK Met Office has been active in helping to establish similar media systems in many countries, and as it is a rather small but very effective way to improve the livelihoods of many.

For more information on a similar project in Guyana, please see “Enhancing Media Systems” on our website with Stories from the field:
<http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/dra/vcp/field.php>



News from Finland

The Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) has announced that it is implementing four projects in the Greater Caribbean region to address capacity building in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) under its VCP bi-lateral cooperation. Those projects include upgrading meteorological workstations, provide training to build a Quality Management System in aeronautical meteorological services, and an extensive feasibility survey with special focus on capacity building needs of the Multi Hazard Early Warning Systems to support Disaster Risk Reduction. These projects will be carried out in cooperation with ACS, CIMH, WMO and related regional organizations.

News from France – update on Haiti

Following the earthquake which hit Haiti on 12 January 2010, WMO has been coordinating the cooperation with the Haitian meteorological service CMN (Centre Météorologique National). Météo-France, Environment Canada and UK Met Office have contributed to assist the NCMH to continue performing its tasks and improve its service on a longer run. Météo-France was in a good position to help, as a close neighbour to Haiti – with the proximity of the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe – and thanks to a language those islands share with the Haitian people.

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After the earthquake, the vulnerability of the population to hurricanes, floods, landslides and natural disasters in general was substantially increased due to the destructions, disorganisation at large and the multiplication of provisional dwellings in risky areas. The main urgency was to provide CMN with the best possible tools to forecast severe weather and floods. It was important to have some solution before the hurricane season, which starts in May. For this purpose, it was agreed to install a shift of French speaking weather forecasters in Martinique who could access directly the relevant information available at Météo-France and within the international meteorological networks. It was also decided to set up in close cooperation with CMN an Internet site in French operated by Canada, which provides information to the population. This was established in due time and will be operating until the end of November with the presence of forecasters from Canada, UK and France at the regional meteorological centre of Fort de France in Martinique. This activity is very much appreciated by the personnel of Météo-France in Martinique, as it allows mutually beneficial exchanges with the meteorologists from other countries involved.

In addition, it was considered necessary to contribute to CMN's capacity building through a strong training programme. Thus, WMO and Météo-France have made the necessary arrangements within a very short delay for organising the participation of five Haitian technicians to a course giving strong basic competences in meteorology and weather forecasting. This course is taking place from September 2010 to July 2011 in the Ecole Nationale de la Météorologie in Météo-France Toulouse. It will drive the five Haitian trainees to the degree of Technician in Meteorology.



(Trainees from Haiti, attending Ecole Nationale de la Météorologie, Toulouse)

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