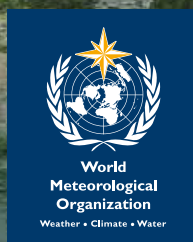


VOLUNTARY COOPERATION PROGRAMME



What is the Voluntary Cooperation Programme?

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) set up the Voluntary Cooperation Programme (VCP) in 1967 to encourage collaboration, capacity-building and support among the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) of its Members for the development and ongoing maintenance of the global observing networks, and enhancement of the scientific capabilities and skills of meteorologists in developing countries. The Programme focuses on meeting the needs of Members through direct financing and/or transfer of expertise and technology among Members. The success of this unique process can be attributed to the commitment of WMO Members to provide financing and share scientific knowledge and the latest technological advances.

Observing weather and climate

The Global Observing System is comprised of national observing systems that provide essential basic data for the weather and climate services rendered by the National Meteorological Services in their efforts to promote public safety, socio-economic well-being and development. The three main categories of these services are: (a) weather forecasts, including reports on current weather, warnings of hazardous weather phenomena and predictions of weather on varying timescales up to one month and beyond; (b) climate information and advice on the application of meteorological data and knowledge; (c) hydrological services, including flood warnings. The Voluntary Cooperation Programme supports these essential services in developing countries, where systems are severely lacking.

Addressing climate variability and change

To mitigate the negative impacts of climate variability and change, the collection and analysis of climate data are essential, along with the development of useful climate information products. Projects that assist NMHSs with adequate data storage and management are supported by VCP. Setting up climate databases, including the collection of historical data, will guarantee standardization and allow for better sharing of critical information.



Media weather presentation

A perfect 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 on national television. These systems are also used to prepare weather forecasts for newspapers and Websites.

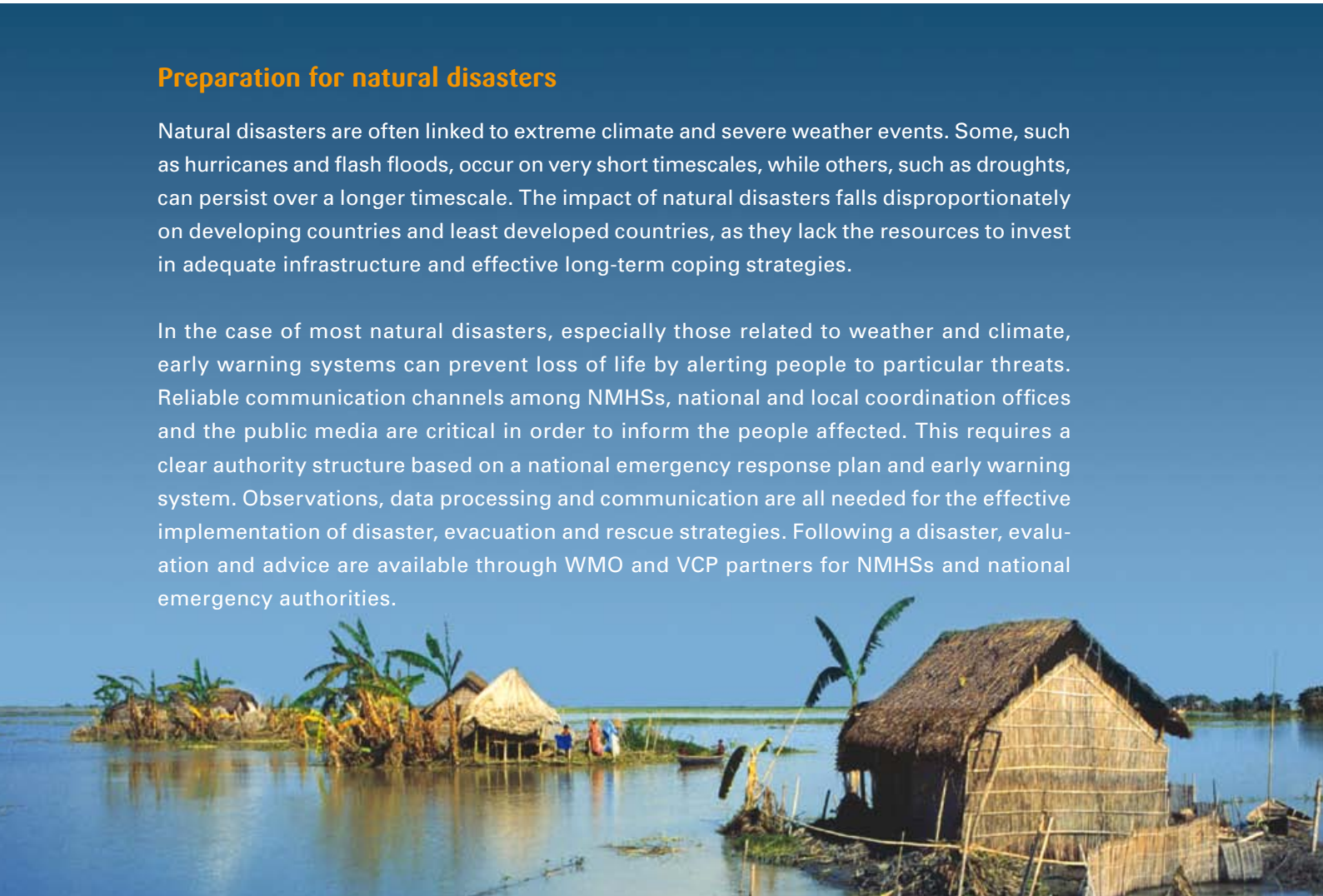
Education and training

WMO has long recognized the need for developing countries to train people who monitor, assess and predict weather and climate information. For over 50 years, WMO has been providing the global mechanism for meteorologists and hydrologists to exchange data and information, which allows for the effective communication of forecasts, from global to local scales, to end-users. WMO supports a Fellowship Programme offering short-term to full academic opportunities in a range of learning settings in many countries.

Preparation for natural disasters

Natural disasters are often linked to extreme climate and severe weather events. Some, such as hurricanes and flash floods, occur on very short timescales, while others, such as droughts, can persist over a longer timescale. The impact of natural disasters falls disproportionately on developing countries and least developed countries, as they lack the resources to invest in adequate infrastructure and effective long-term coping strategies.

In the case of most natural disasters, especially those related to weather and climate, early warning systems can prevent loss of life by alerting people to particular threats. Reliable communication channels among NMHSs, national and local coordination offices and the public media are critical in order to inform the people affected. This requires a clear authority structure based on a national emergency response plan and early warning system. Observations, data processing and communication are all needed for the effective implementation of disaster, evacuation and rescue strategies. Following a disaster, evaluation and advice are available through WMO and VCP partners for NMHSs and national emergency authorities.



How do I find out more?

To find out more on VCP and its projects, please visit our Website at www.wmo.int/dra/vcp. You can also sign up for our regular newsletter by subscribing to www.wmo.int/pages/prog/dra/nwsltr/index_en.php.

How to get involved

Every year, up to 50 countries are supported. In recent years, the number of requests has risen steeply. In spite of the already substantial support, a large number of VCP projects for equipment, services and fellowships are still waiting for a partner. Without your support, VCP will not be able to continue its work in supporting developing and least developed countries. You can contribute directly to the VCP Trust Fund or Emergency Assistance Fund or support a specific project with financial or in-kind contributions through the VCP coordinated process. For a list of outstanding requests, please go to our Website at www.wmo.int/dra/vcp/donor or contact the Secretariat at vcp@wmo.int.

How to apply for funding

VCP supports projects that enhance the capacity of Meteorological and Hydrological Services of WMO Members to provide the weather and climate services needed by their communities. Support may be provided in the form of direct funding, equipment, education and training, fellowships and expert services. WMO Members needing support are invited to submit requests under VCP, using the template found at www.wmo.int/dra/vcp/recipient. WMO will make every effort to find a partner within the WMO community or among development agency partners and to support requests.

For more information, please contact:

World Meteorological Organization

Development and Regional Activities Department (DRA)

Tel.: +41 (0) 22 730 80 03 – Fax: +41 (0) 22 730 80 47

E-mail: vcp@wmo.int

7 bis, avenue de la Paix – P.O. Box 2300 – CH-1211 Geneva 2 – Switzerland

www.wmo.int/dra/vcp