



Ministerial Declaration

Fifth Session of the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET-5)

WE, the Ministers responsible for meteorology in Africa, meeting virtually for the fifth session of the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET) on 17 March 2021:

Note with appreciation the progress made since the fourth session of AMCOMET, particularly the revision of the integrated African strategy on meteorology (Weather and Climate Services), the implementation of the Abidjan Declaration (2018) on Next Generation Satellite Products for Weather and Climate Services in Africa including, inter alia, the establishment of an African Meteorological Satellite Application Facility (AMSAF);

Note with concern, the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on the operations of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) including cost-recovery disruptions from the aviation sector;

Acknowledge the efforts of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the AMCOMET Secretariat in jointly organizing a webinar involving Member States on understanding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on operations of meteorology and building resilience of the African meteorological sector to pandemics;

Note with appreciation the efforts made by the AUC to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic including the convening of a special session of African Ministers responsible for the environment and natural resources including meteorology under the auspices of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (AU STC-ARDWE) on the pandemic and its impacts on NMHS operations;

Note also with appreciation the recognition of meteorology as a sectoral sub-committee of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (AU STC-ARDWE) by AU STC-ARDWE-3 in 2019;

Recognize the unprecedented increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events and impacts of climate change and the need to address them if Africa is to meet the desired targets of the African Union Agenda 2063, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, and the UN Agenda 2030 on the Sustainable Development Goals;

Acknowledge that NMHSs are essential in, among others, the provision of early warnings for natural disasters and attendant hazards, the resilience of climate sensitive sectors and the socioeconomic development of countries and that they require more support to enable them to fulfil their national mandates, and regional and global obligations;

Concerned with observation and infrastructure gaps in Africa limiting the capacity of NMHSs to deliver tailored weather, water and climate services to all users and for effective adaptation to climate and resilience actions;

Conscious of the value of data in generating hydrometeorological information;

Mindful that the Minamata Convention on the banning, transportation and use of mercury has come into force;

Welcoming the establishment of the Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF) by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in collaboration with international organizations, including the members of the Alliance for Hydromet Development;

Taking into perspective evolving technological innovations and the expansion of the private sector into the meteorological and hydrological sectors and the need for win-win engagements;

Note with appreciation the investments of development banks, particularly the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank in the hydrometeorological sector, particularly their support of the implementation of weather and climate initiatives;

Further noting with appreciation, the unwavering and continuous support of WMO to AMCOMET since its establishment; and

Appreciating even further that the WMO Reform currently taking place will bring more benefits to developing countries and, in particular, to Africa noting that it is aimed at bridging the development gap that exists between WMO Member States, with a special focus on LDCs;

Having considered the recommendations of the meeting of experts, which took place on 16 March 2021;

Decide to:

Reaffirm our commitment to fulfil all outstanding decisions of AMCOMET-4, including facilitating the transformation of NMHSs towards semi-autonomy, adopting gender mainstreaming practices, promoting and investing more into research and innovation;

Commend the AUC for its leadership in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the meteorological sector, as well as the convening of a special session of African Ministers responsible for the environment and natural resources including meteorology under the auspices of the Specialized Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (AU STC-ARDWE) on COVID-19 and its impacts on NMHS operations;

Commit to implementing the meteorology-related decisions of the special session of African Ministers responsible for the environment and natural resources, including meteorology, that took place on 13 November 2020;

Endorse the revised integrated African strategy on meteorology (Weather and Climate Services) and **call** upon the AUC, in collaboration with the AMCOMET Chair, to present the strategy to the 4th STC-ARDWE for adoption;

Call upon the AUC to support Member States to align the integrated African strategy on meteorology (Weather and Climate Services) on a national level and ensure coordinated implementation of the strategy in Africa;

Request the AUC, in collaboration with Member States to develop a monitoring and reporting framework for the implementation of the integrated African strategy on meteorology (Weather and Climate Services);

Request the AMCOMET Secretariat, in collaboration with WMO and the AUC, to continue with efforts for mobilizing resources, including under the AfDB CDSF (Climate Development Special Fund) AMCOMET Facility;

Request the AMCOMET Secretariat and the AUC to strengthen collaboration with partners to support the implementation of the revised integrated African strategy on meteorology (Weather and Climate Services);

Commend the AUC and the AMCOMET Secretariat for jointly organizing a webinar involving Member States on understanding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on operations of meteorology and building resilience of the African meteorological sector to pandemics;

Request the AMCOMET Secretariat to collaborate with the Secretariats of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) to create strong synergies in co-designing and co-implementing common initiatives for effective and efficient implementation;

Request Members to expedite the ratification process of the constitution and contribute to the AMCOMET Trust Fund;

Urge Member States to support their NMHSs with legal frameworks to facilitate diverse cost-recovery mechanisms and public-private engagement;

Request Member States to provide extra support to NMHSs during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the decline of resources from the aviation sector;

Urge Members to support NMHSs in replacing their meteorological instruments, equipment and plants in line with the Minamata Convention on Mercury (Treaty of 2013 that came into force on 16 August 2017);

Urge Member States to continue supporting NMHSs to comply with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) requirements for ISO Certification of meteorological services to the aviation sector as well as ensuring that quality management frameworks are updated;

Urge Member States to attend STC-ARDWE;

Urge bilateral and multilateral development partners as well as climate finance partners to consider funding the SOFF initiative;

Request the AUC and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to support the implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury;

Request the AUC and RECs to continue providing political support and seek resources to operationalize the AMSAF and ensure a smooth transition to Meteosat Third Generation (MTG), so that NMHSs can continue exploiting satellite observations to deliver operational services, early warning information and tailored African products, in line with the 2018 Abidjan Declaration on Next Generation Meteorological Satellites;

Request the AMCOMET Chair, in collaboration with the AUC, to bring this Declaration to the attention of the 4th STC-ARDWE and facilitate its endorsement and implementation.

Adopted 17 March 2021 (Virtual meeting)
