

The second meeting of the preparatory process of Habitat III, 14-16 April 2015

**WMO Statement presented by Deon Terblanche,
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Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Michel Jarraud, I would like to thank UN-Habitat for the invitation to this meeting. WMO is a specialized agency of the United Nations. It is the UN system's authoritative voice on the state and behaviour of the Earth's atmosphere, its interaction with the oceans, the climate it produces and the resulting distribution of water resources. At the core of WMO mission lays the protection of life and property through the provision of weather and climate services, as a prerequisite for sustainable development.

WMO recognizes the importance of resilient urban environments as fundamental elements towards sustainability. It further acknowledges that weather, climate, water and related environmental issues are of prime importance to the urban setting, both as a cause of disruptions and disasters but also in the sense of the opportunities that enhanced predictions and services can bring. The urban environment is key to a new revolution the use of science-based information.

WMO has a number of programmes and are involved in activities that are directly relevant to the urban environment. These include but are not limited:

1. The Global Framework for Climate Services, or GFCS – an UN-wide initiative to enhance climate services and their use. The initial priority areas are water, health, agriculture and food security and disaster risk reduction, with urban issues as a cross-cutting theme. Energy is emerging as another key issue,
2. The World Climate Research Programme, co-sponsored by WMO, which provides a fundamental contribution to climate science and therefore provides essential input to the IPCC,
3. The World Weather Research Programme focussing on enhancing the predictive skill of weather phenomena and the application of such forecasts. A new project on High Impact weather with a focus on urban flooding is of particular relevance.

4. The Public Weather Services Programme that deals with the operational use of weather forecasts and their benefits to society.
5. The Global Atmosphere Watch (GAW) Urban Research Meteorology and Environment (GURME) to enhance the capabilities of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) to handle meteorological and related aspects of urban pollution.

The urban setting is complex and the requirements of users are diverse. In order to address these challenges and needs investments are necessary in:

1. Urban observations and data availability that cover both the physical environmental and socio-economic parameters;
2. New data assimilation techniques that can draw benefits from both the new planned observations in cities and the large quantities of non-conventional observations within a city (eg. Cell phones, automobiles);
3. New prediction models that can seamlessly couple the city with its environment across time and spatial scales in order to serve the needs of users from the shortest weather time scale to climate scale projections;
4. Forecast that go beyond mere weather forecasts and warnings but rather focus on the user through impacts based forecasts and risk based warnings.

Investments in these fields will hold considerable benefits such as:

1. Cities that are planned and built or rebuilt after disasters to be resilient against weather and climate extremes,
2. Cities that are managed making the best use of detailed weather, water and related environmental information in order to optimise the quality of life, the use of natural resources and infrastructure,
3. Cities where the quality of air is measured, predicted and managed.

WMO is therefore committed to work towards the success of Habitat III.

Thank you.