CARIBBEAN METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

ANNUAL MEETING OF DIRECTORS OF METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES **Doc. 5**
GRACE BAY, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS, 11 NOVEMBER 2026

OUTCOME/HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE WMO 80TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, THE FOURTH (4TH) SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR WEATHER, CLIMATE, HYDROLOGICAL, MARINE AND RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND APPLICATIONS (SERCOM-4) AND OTHER RELEVANT MEETINGS
(Submitted by the Coordinating Director)

SUMMARY

The Eightieth Session of the Executive Council (EC-80) of the World Meteorological organization (WMO) was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 22 to 26 June 2026, while the Fourth Session of the Commission for Weather, Climate, Hydrological, Marine and Related Environmental Services and Applications (SERCOM-4) was held on 19-20 and 22-23 October 2026, also in Geneva, Switzerland, with online participation. Combines, these meeting addressed a range of strategic, governance, scientific and technical matters of relevance to the WMO and its Members.

Some of the outcomes and highlights which can have near term and future impact on operations and hence are relevant to National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) include: *Technical Regulations (WMO-No. 49), Volume I amendments; Progress on S-41X Development and Implementation; SERCOM-4: Implications for WMO Decision-Making and the Importance of Caribbean Participation; Joint Inspection Unit Review of Governing Body Structures in WMO; Modification of the Operating Plan 2026–2027 in the Context of Financial Constraints; and the WMO Draft Strategic Plan 2028–2031; INFCOM-4 Emerging Issues.*

A. TECHNICAL REGULATIONS (WMO-NO. 49), VOLUME I: Part IV and V

1. The Meeting will recall that through Resolution 1 (Cg-Ext(2025)), the Extraordinary World Meteorological Congress, in 2025, requested the technical commissions to explore revision of parts of other technical regulations to ensure alignment with the amendments approved through the same resolution, in accordance with the established procedures.

2. Following this, SERCOM 4 adopted among others, the following proposed amendments to the Technical Regulations (WMO-No. 49), Volume I.

Part IV. Meteorological, Hydrological and Climatological Services

Section C: Meteorological Services for Marine Activities

1.1.1 To the extent possible, Members with Marine Meteorological Services shall provide seafarers at sea with necessary and appropriate maritime safety information, with both content

and dissemination according to the international convention on Safety of Life At Sea (SOLAS) Chapter V Regulation 5.

1.1.2 Marine Meteorological Services shall assist coastal authorities and communities by providing services to reduce risks from coastal hazards and to support operations and applications for a blue economy.

1.1.3 Marine Meteorological Services shall make available accurate and timely warnings, forecasts, information, and services to users at sea and along the coast, using internationally agreed standards and dissemination systems.

Part V. Qualifications and Competencies of Personnel Involved in the Provision of Meteorological, Climatological, Hydrological, Marine and Related Environmental Services

1.1 General

1.1.1 The qualifications and competencies required of personnel involved in the provision of meteorological, climatological, hydrological, marine and related environmental services should be established by Members in accordance with section **1.2-1.10 of WMO-No. 49 and the Compendium of WMO Competency frameworks (WMO-No. 1209)**

1.2.2.3 Volcanic ash forecaster

The amendments introduce a competency framework for volcanic ash forecasters, intended primarily for personnel at designated Volcanic Ash Advisory Centres (VAACs).

3. Nevertheless, given the potential impacts of volcanic ash on the Caribbean aviation, NMHSs should be aware of the framework and ensure appropriate coordination with the responsible VAAC and national aviation authorities for the receipt, interpretation and dissemination of volcanic ash advisories.

4. Tropical cyclone forecaster requirements were unchanged.

1.9 Tropical Cyclone Forecasters
1.9.1 Qualifications

Members should define, in light of their circumstances, the specific qualification required of personnel working in the role of Tropical Cyclone forecasters.

1.9.2 Competencies

The competency standards for Tropical Cyclone forecasters are maintained by SERCOM. The complete framework is published in the *Compendium of WMO Competency Frameworks* (WMO-No. 1209)

B. PROGRESS ON S-41X DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

5. The Meeting is advised that the *International Maritime Organization* (IMO) and the *International Hydrographic Organization* (IHO) are transitioning to the S-100 Universal Hydrographic Data Model as part of the e-navigation strategy.

6. Within this framework, WMO is responsible for the development and maintenance of the S-41X Product Specifications, a family of S-100 based marine meteorological and ice information products that enable digital weather and ice information to be displayed in Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems as overlays to Electronic Navigational Charts.

7. The meeting is informed that SERCOM-4 adopted the S-41X Implementation Plan, including S-412- Marine Weather Warnings, an S-100-based digital Product Specification intended to support the provision of marine weather warning information through modern digital maritime navigation systems. This represents an important step in the digital transformation of marine meteorological warning services to enhance the safety, situational awareness and efficiency of navigation through the integration of graphical weather and ice information into ship navigational systems. S-412 is among the initial S-41X Product Specifications being advanced towards operational implementation, alongside existing text-based products, with an indicative operational readiness of S-412 from 2029.

8. Implementation of S-412 will have implications for Caribbean NMHSs, and should be viewed as a progressive modernization of marine weather warning services, including requirements for appropriate technical infrastructure, software, maintenance, training and human and financial resource capacity, rather than solely as a change in the format of existing warnings.

9. It is recommended that Members NMHSs monitor the development of S-412, assess national readiness and resource requirements and examine opportunities for coordinated or shared regional and sub-regional approaches for future implementation.

C. SERCOM-4 DISCUSSIONS AND TECHNICAL DECISION-MAKING: IMPLICATIONS OF DIVERGENT VIEWS ON PROPOSED TEXTS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CARIBBEAN PARTICIPATION

Background and Observations from SERCOM-4

10. The Meeting is informed that discussions at SERCOM-4 on a number of technical, regulation and governance matters were affected by differing perspectives on the wording of certain proposed texts, including how or whether particular concepts and policy considerations should be expressed.

11. The Meeting is further informed that some discussions concerned references to climate change, climate adaptation, sustainable development, vulnerable groups, inclusive, and gender.

12. In some instances, consensus could not be reached on specific provisions, which were addressed through the applicable WMO procedures, including provision for further consideration of the relevant decision documents by the Executive Council and, where appropriate, potentially by Congress.

13. The matters where problematic wording concerns arose included, revisions to the SERCOM work programme, Long-term Plan for Aeronautical Meteorology, Guide to Early Warning Services, Guide to Storm Surge Forecasting, and Hydrology Education and Training, among others.

14. The Meeting is advised that these developments underscore the importance of consensus-building within WMO and illustrate how discussions on terminology and policy framing can influence the progress of technical guidance, regulatory proposals and governance arrangements.

Implications for CMO Members and NMHSs

15. WMO technical regulations and guidelines directly affect the operational readiness and effectiveness of NMHSs as they establish the technical capabilities, competencies, systems and

procedures required to provide reliable services, which, in turn, support disaster preparedness, risk reduction, climate adaptation and economic prosperity.

16. The Meeting is invited to note that WMO decisions, Technical Regulations and guidance can influence national implementation priorities, capacity-development requirements and resource needs. It is therefore important that these instruments remain technically sound, responsive to the circumstances of SIDS and practical to implement.

17. Active engagement in WMO Commissions provides Members with opportunities to explain their operational circumstances, contribute technical perspectives and help shape outcomes. Directors are encouraged to facilitate the participation of their national experts (from any institution) in SERCOM and INFCOM, thereby ensuring that regional and national priorities are considered.

18. The Meeting is informed that, under General Regulation 141(b) of the WMO General Regulations, all Members may be represented on SERCOM or INFCOM by notifying the Secretary-General of WMO on which commission they wish to participate within 90 days after the close of a session of Congress and no later than 60 days before the relevant commission's ordinary session.

19. Further, according to WMO guidance, this written notification should be submitted by either the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including through the Permanent Mission in Geneva, or the Ministry responsible for the NMHS. Directors are therefore encouraged to liaise with the relevant authorities to formalize their participation in SERCOM, INFCOM, or both Commissions.

D. JOINT INSPECTION UNIT REVIEW OF GOVERNING BODY STRUCTURES IN WMO

20. The Meeting is reminded that the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the United Nations undertook a review of WMO's governing body structures as part of its 2025 programme of work, following a formal request from the WMO Secretary-General on behalf of the Executive Council. The review followed earlier JIU examinations of WMO's management and administrative practices and sought to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization's governance arrangements, including in comparison with those of other United Nations specialized agencies.

21. The Meeting is informed that the resulting report, **Review of Governing Body Structures in the WMO (JIU/REP/2026/2)**, was presented to the WMO Executive Council (EC) at its 80th Session on June 23, 2026 and contains 12 formal recommendations, of which 11 are addressed to the EC and 1 to the Secretary General, together addressing governance structure, accountability, representation, oversight and the functioning of WMO's governing bodies. In addition to the formal recommendations there are 33 informal recommendations complementing or reinforcing the recommendations and WMO governance practices.

22. The Meeting is informed that several of the JIU recommendations could have significant implications for the way in which Members are represented and participate in WMO governance. Of particular significance to the Caribbean are Recommendations 5, 6 and 7 because they could change the relationship between individual Member representation, Executive Council decision-making and the role of Regional Associations. The particular recommendations are as follows:

- **Recommendation 5**: Congress should, no later than its twenty-second ordinary session, consider assigning intergovernmental status to the Executive Council.
- **Recommendation 6:** Congress should, no later than its twenty-second ordinary session, consider assigning all seats with voting rights in the Executive Council to representatives of Members of the Organization.
- **Recommendation 7:** Congress should, by its twenty-first ordinary session, consider amending Annex II to the General Regulations regarding the functions of regional associations, with a view to focusing them on fewer tasks and prioritizing where the most added value can be provided.

23. Greater clarity is needed on how Executive Council seats would be allocated, how equitable regional representation would be safeguarded, and how the interests of smaller Members and SIDS would be protected under any revised arrangements.

24. Similarly, any reduction or reassignment of the functions of Regional Associations raises questions about how sub-regional regional priorities would continue to be identified, coordinated and communicated to the Executive Council.

25. The Meeting is further advised that **Recommendation 3**, which proposes reviewing the terms of reference of governance structures to promote wider participation while limiting or avoiding cross-representation and ex-officio participation arrangements, also warrants attention.

26. It is worth noting that Caribbean NMHSs operate with differing levels of staffing and technical capacity. For some Members, the ability to draw on a relatively small pool of experts and established regional coordination arrangements is important to effective participation in WMO activities.

27. The Meeting is invited to note that these recommendations may have particularly far-reaching implications for the Caribbean, potentially greater than for some other WMO regions, given the longstanding efforts to secure and maintain the participation of the Permanent Representative of the British Caribbean Territories (BCT), which is the responsibility of the Coordinating Director of the CMO, as an elected member in the WMO Executive Council.

28. This arrangement has been of considerable importance in ensuring that Caribbean perspectives, sub-regional priorities and operational realities of the region's NMHSs are represented at the highest level of WMO governance.

29. The Meeting is asked to note that **any proposed changes to the composition, representation or functioning of the Executive Council and Regional Association warrant careful considerations by CMO Members,** particularly in view of their potential implications for the Caribbean and the **importance of preserving the region's established channels of participation and influence within WMO**.

30. Governance reforms aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness also safeguard equitable opportunities for all Members, including smaller Members and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), to participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their services and responsibilities, operational realities and priorities.

31. The Meeting should also note that the CMO supports efforts to strengthen WMO governance. However, such reforms should recognize the value of established regional and sub-regional representation and coordination arrangements and ensure that the specific circumstances and priorities of the Caribbean continue to be effectively represented at the highest levels of WMO decision-making.

32. Directors are invited to recognize that **these are substantive governance questions**, rather than merely administrative considerations. Improvement in efficiency and accountability should not come at the expense of meaningful representation and participation. Further clarity is therefore needed on the proposed changes and their potential consequences, to enable NMHSs to assess whether the intended governance improvements can be achieved without weakening equitable participation, regional representation or the ability of Members within sub-regions to collectively influence WMO decisions.

33. The Meeting is further advised that, at its eightieth session (EC-80), the Executive Council adopted **Resolution 4 (EC-80)**, establishing a Task Force to analyze the JIU recommendations and their interrelationships, assess their applicability to WMO, and propose a roadmap for further consideration. The Task Force is to report to EC-81.

34. The Meeting is informed that the Task Force presented its work to date at SERCOM-4, including emerging positions and options for addressing the recommendations. These remain matters for further analysis and consideration.

35. The Meeting is also advised that the Task Force's Terms of Reference explicitly require consideration of the implications for regional representation, the full participation of Members, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries, and the effectiveness of existing regional coordination and representation mechanisms. This provides an important basis for Caribbean Members to ensure that their concerns are considered in the further development of proposals.

36. Given the potential implications of the recommendations, it would be prudent for Directors to discuss these matters collectively and develop a common sub-regional position. In light of the foregoing, the Meeting may wish to consider the following actions:

- Directors develop a common Caribbean position on the JIU recommendations, particularly Recommendations 3, 5, 6 and 7, and seek consensus on the principles and safeguards that should guide any proposed reforms.
- Provide the agreed position through appropriate WMO channels to the Task Force and the Executive Council.
- Prepare for Congress by establishing a common sub-regional position in advance of Congress so that Caribbean Members can engage constructively and consistently when governance proposals are considered.

E. MODIFICATION OF THE OPERATING PLAN 2026–2027 IN THE CONTEXT OF FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

37. The Meeting is advised that, through Resolution 7 (EC-80), the Executive Council endorsed a revised prioritization framework for implementing the WMO Operating Plan 2026–2027 in response to continuing financial and liquidity constraints affecting the Organization. The exercise, undertaken by the Task Force on Recommended Modifications to the Strategic and Operating Plans, grouped planned outputs into three tiers:

- Tier 1, to be maintained and implemented as planned;
- Tier 2, subject to adjustments in scope, sequencing or level of implementation; and
- Tier 3, deferred during the current financial period.

The exercise is intended to manage the timing and scale of implementation while protecting core operational and normative functions, global systems and the research-to-operations continuum.

38. The resolution requests the Secretary-General to identify further efficiency measures and cost reductions, review Tier 2 outputs in consultation with the presidents of the technical commissions, the Chair of the Research Board and subsequently the presidents of the regional associations, and provide Members with details of the resulting adjustments and their implications for programme delivery. Particular emphasis is placed on preserving core operational, regulatory, coordination, capacity-development and enabling functions.

39. The resolution also calls for continued cost containment, resource mobilization and consideration of an increased Working Capital Fund, while urging Members to meet their assessed contributions and consider voluntary contributions, including through WMO Commons.

40. For CMO Members, it will be important to monitor the implementation of these adjustments and their potential implications for regional programmes, technical support and capacity-development activities, particularly where these activities support the operational needs and capabilities of smaller NMHSs.

F. WMO DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2028–2031

41. The Meeting is advised that, through Resolution 8 (EC-80), the Executive Council adopted the Results Framework provided in the annex to the Resolution as the basis for the development of the Operating Plan and the maximum expenditure proposal for the 2028–2031 financial period.

42. The Council noted, however, that diverging views had been expressed on the draft Strategic Context and Foresight section of the Strategic Plan. The adopted Results Framework is structured around four Long-term Goals (LTGs). Three represent Member-facing desired impacts, focusing on services, infrastructure and institutional sustainability, while the fourth focuses on the organizational foundations for delivery, including governance and organizational effectiveness across the WMO system. The four Goals are described as interconnected and mutually reinforcing, with the delivery of services depending on observations and data, supported by institutional capacity and partnerships, and enabled by effective governance and organizational performance.

43. To address the outstanding differences, the Council decided to establish a Drafting Team composed of up to two members of the Executive Council per Region, chaired by the Chair of the Sessional Committee. The Team's terms of reference include facilitating convergence on outstanding issues and narrowing remaining differences; presenting to the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) a reduced number of well-differentiated options; and proposing a way forward for resolving the outstanding divergences.

44. The Council requested the Policy Advisory Committee to finalize the draft Strategic Plan 2028–2031, develop measures of success at the level of strategic objectives that are measurable, feasible and grounded in available data, and submit the draft Plan to EC-81 for consideration and subsequent submission to the twentieth World Meteorological Congress (Cg-20).

45. The Secretary-General was also requested to develop a draft Operating Plan 2028–2031, translating the strategic objectives and focus areas into concrete outputs and related resource requirements, ensuring coherence with the Strategic Plan and presenting a programmatic view by Major Programme. The draft Strategic Plan, together with the maximum expenditure proposal and relevant implementation progress reports, is to be disseminated to Members in sufficient time for consideration by EC-81 and review in advance of Cg-20.

46. For CMO Members NMHSs, the finalization of the Strategic Plan provides an opportunity to ensure that the priorities, operational realities and capacity constraints of Caribbean NMHSs, particularly those in SIDS, are adequately reflected in WMO's strategic direction and the associated programme and resource planning for 2028–2031.

G. UPCOMING INFCOM-4 EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR NMHS OPERATIONS

47. Several draft documents submitted to the Fourth Session of the WMO Commission for Observation, Infrastructure and Information Systems (INFCOM-4), scheduled for 23–27 November

2026, address developments that could influence the future technical and operational requirements of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs). Of particular relevance to the Caribbean are proposed changes to the Global Basic Observing Network (GBON), WIGOS implementation, climate data management, WIS, data infrastructure, and the **protection of radio-frequency spectrum**. The amendments also address the provision of CLIMAT and DAYCLI reports from dedicated GBON stations and the availability of core and recommended hydrological data.

48. The proposed hydrological data provisions are particularly relevant where responsibility for hydrological observations and data management is shared between NMHSs and separate national hydrological agencies. The WIS 2.0 implementation report reinforces the need for Members to accelerate the transition from the Global Telecommunication System (GTS), with all outgoing GTS data flows expected to be available through WIS 2.0 by 2030 and full GTS retirement anticipated around 2033.

49. These developments could increase the operational and technical responsibilities of NMHSs, particularly in relation to staffing, data management, metadata maintenance, quality monitoring, reporting and the long-term sustainability of observing and information systems. Their implementation will require planning and investment, especially among smaller and resource-constrained Members. The Meeting is therefore encouraged to take note of these developments, consider the implications for national operational arrangements, and participate in INFCOM-4.

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CMO Headquarters
November 2026