CLIMATE OBSERVATIONS AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

William Westermeyer
Richard Thigpen
John Zillman
The Importance of Climate Observations

• High quality observations necessary for
  – Water resources management, agriculture and food security, preparedness for natural disasters, health, energy production, urban planning, coastal zone management, tourism

• ECVs necessary (but not sufficient) to
  – Reduce losses from extreme events, maximize outputs from agric, reduce incidence from disease, enhance design/location of infrastructure, etc.
The Mission of GCOS

⇒ To ensure the availability and quality of the atmospheric, oceanic and terrestrial and related earth observations needed for monitoring, understanding, predicting and protecting the global climate system

⇒ …and for assisting communities and nations to live successfully with natural climate variability and human-induced climate change

⇒ Requires long-term, high-quality, sustainable, reliable, observations at global (and increasingly at regional and national levels)
National Adaptation Programmes of Action

• 45 NAPAs submitted, 31 from Africa
• 13 of 31 mention gaps and deficiencies in observing systems
• Why not more?
  – Lack of awareness of role good data play?
  – Lack of communication bet NMHSs, planners?
• National Adaptation Plans provide another opportunity to consider climate observations
Climate for Development in Africa Programme and GCOS

- Conceived at April 2006 meeting organized jointly by GCOS and UNECA
- Responds to the challenge that climate change poses to the achievement of Africa’s development objectives
- Entering implementation phase; ACPC in place
- Implementation for “result areas” other than policy should get underway soon
  - Improving climate observing networks in all domains
  - Developing climate services
  - Analysis for decision support
ClimDev Africa—An Opportunity That Must be Seized

• Is supported at the highest levels
• Will support adaptation to climate change and achievement of the MDGs
• An important part of the foundation for the successful implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services
The Value of National and Regional Coordination

• Can act as a national advocate for sustained national observation networks
• Can coordinate across all ministries that deal with climate observations
• Can promote adherence to GCOS Climate Monitoring Principles and best practices
• Can help agencies understand why improving observations is important to achieving their own goals
• Can help identify sources of funding
Policy Recommendations

• Give high priority to improving climate observing networks through ClimDev Africa. Observations underpin development of effective climate services for adapting to climate change

• Countries should include observing system needs when preparing national adaptation plans

• Countries should designate GCOS national coordinators and national committees
Implementation Steps

- ClimDev Africa Programme should hire an experienced Implementation Programme Manager
- One or more pilot projects should be launched under ClimDev Africa as soon as possible
- Technical support projects should be established in African subregions to provide technical assistance when needed
Thank you

WWestermeyer@wmo.int
41 22 730 8083