Climate Information as a Public Good or commodity

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Talking Points

- Setting the scene/context
- The Present Situation
- What are the implications of this situation
- Constraints
- Consequences
- Way Forward and Concluding Remarks

Setting the Scene and Definitions

- **Climate information** – In reality the correct terminology is **weather** and **climate**
- **Information**: processed/ secondary data: In this context (*weather and climate forecasts, warnings and advisories, statistical data*)
- **Public good** :Any service or product provided without profit by an organisation for the benefit of society (*protection of life and property, enhanced quality of life, mitigating and managing impacts of extreme weather and climate such as disaster risk reduction*);

The Present Situation

- At the **global level** (inter-Governmental level) the WMO is the official voice on weather and climate;
- At the **country level**, the official responsibility falls upon the National Meteorological Services or Agencies funded and mandated by the governments;
- The public good services are/ should be free;
- However some meteorological service providers have become semi-autonomous and operate commercially or do cost recovery
- Some weather and climate information is not free (*for example, insurers/ reassures, investors and banks, consultancies and technology companies*)

Implications (what this entails)

- Climate information for public consumption is funded by the tax payer;
- The public has a right to the information;
- The information should be easily accessible and affordable in some cases;
- The information must come from trusted sources (*accuracy, reliability, traceability, timely , quality controlled and meeting international/ WMO standards);*

Constraints

- Many weather and climate information providers are severely underfunded and so are failing to fulfil their mandates yet there is a growing demand for products and services;
- The private sector has taken advantage of this gap and now offering services that are competing with NMSs;
- Provision of weather and climate information is now business and no longer just a service

Consequences

- The future of NMSs is under threat due to the entry by other players such as the private sector and "briefcase/ fly by night climate experts";
- There is increased risk of lower-quality services from private sector entities which, in turn, increase risk to public safety and property (sensational, conflicting and confusing);
- There are no rules regarding the integrity of the information, accountability, verification and ethics in the production and provision of weather and climate information;

Way Forward and Concluding Remarks

- NMSs have to accept the new reality and change otherwise they face redundancy;
  - Integrate in-country networks to increase observations and fill gaps in spatial coverage;
  - Embrace opportunities such as big data, internet of things, smart sensors, cloud computing and social media available in the private sector;
  - Use and maximise benefits from cutting-edge research and technical developments and innovations,
  - Incorporate indigenous knowledge science in your early warning systems

Way Forward and Concluding Remarks (Ctnd)

- Addressing climate change begins with observations, monitoring, data management and forecasting and early warning (*funding of NMSs is crucial and inevitable)*;
- NMSs are single nationally designated authorities on weather warnings;
- There is need to regulate issuance of climate information to protect users/ consumers;