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**Decision 73  
(EC-68)  
COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
SECTORS FOR THE BENEFIT OF SOCIETY**

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL,

**Recalling** Resolution 67 (Cg-17) – WMO guidance on partnerships with the private sector,

**Recalling further** the purposes and membership of WMO defined in its Convention,

**Recognizing** that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for multi-stakeholder partnerships, in particular to promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships (United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1, paragraph 17.17),

**Having held** a special dialogue on the complementary contributions of public and private sector institutions to meteorology and hydrology with the participation of private sector representatives,

**Notes** the outcomes of the dialogue as summarized in Annex 1 to this decision;

**Considers** key issues to be addressed in developing policy and guiding principles for public- private engagement in the weather enterprise as outlined in Annex 2 to this decision;

**Decides** to develop a long-term strategy for cooperation between the public and private sectors for the benefit of society;

**Requests** the President of WMO and presidents of regional associations to lead the development of the strategy, in consultation with the broader WMO community, for consideration at its sixty-ninth session, and in particular to pay attention to the following aspects:

- (1) Assessing experience, good practices, opportunities and risks associated with private sector engagement;
- (2) Considering short-, medium- and long-term perspectives and goals;
- (3) Developing draft principles for private sector engagement based on the key issues outlined in Annex 2;
- (4) Proposing mechanisms and structures to foster dialogue and consultations, taking into consideration global, regional and national contexts, with a focus on national circumstances;
- (5) Proposing options for future governance of public-private partnerships and directions for development of WMO guidance to Members;
- (6) Engaging the Permanent Representatives of Members in discussions and deliberations;

**Requests** the Secretary-General to support the implementation of this Decision.

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### **Annex 1 to Decision 73 (EC-68)**

#### **SUMMARY OF THE SPECIAL DIALOGUE ON THE COMPLEMENTARY AND COOPERATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR INSTITUTIONS TO METEOROLOGY AND HYDROLOGY**

EC-68 recognized the importance of this timely and initial dialogue at international level between public and private sector stakeholders, and that the respective strengths of the public and private sector vis-à-vis the provision of weather, water, and climate services could be complementary and reinforcing.

The dialogue reinforced the important role of Governments that have the ultimate responsibility to keep citizens safe from natural hazards and that they generally assign this responsibility to its NMHS to act as the "authoritative voice". However equally, it was also recognized that private sector contributions play an important role in supporting the entire value chain in meeting this responsibility in addition to provision of tailored services to users in support of economic and environmental goals of Governments and other stakeholders.

The Council further observed that with globalization, there were instances where multinational companies were creating forecasts and services in countries, which could be at odds with the authoritative forecasts and warning provided by the NMHS that could lead to confusion among the public and other stakeholders, increasing the risks to public safety. WMO, through a set of agreed principles and policies, could play a major role in facilitating the PPP at regional and local levels and establishing "rules of engagement", especially with respect to warning services.

EC members recognized that NMHSs are now in an accelerated changing environment in terms of technological advances and the increasing demand for more and more diverse services from increasingly sophisticated and capable users. While basic research is, as a rule, the domain/ responsibility of the public sector, the widespread application of technologies, especially those from the rapidly growing field of media, data, communications and computing, often developed by the private sector, are required to meet the responsibility Governments are placing on the NMHSs. This may be representing a paradigm shift for both how public and private sectors operate and serve the end users of their services.

Both the public and private sectors operate in a rapidly changing business landscape. Technological advancements and related trends like "big data" and "crowd sourcing", the appearance of commercial observing networks, data and service providers, the affordability of digital technology, all are game changers that require rapid adaptation and changing behaviors from both the NMHSs and the private sector. In this dynamic, the private sector may contribute by accelerating the uptake of technological innovations, and be able to assist NMHSs in providing more efficient, attractive and accessible personalized services. NMHSs will benefit in working with private sector partners to introduce those innovative methods into their own operations. There are many opportunities for optimization and efficiency through integration of networks, computing power and service delivery through use of social media, etc.

While the private sector has been present in the weather enterprise for decades, the current rapid developments in information technology coupled with the ever growing demand for environmental data, information and services to address emerging needs, provides new grounds for the growth of the private sector, in particular in the provision of sector- or user- specific services. At the same time, the Council also

noted that NMHSs in many countries are under constant pressure from Government to reduce the public budget and this impedes their capacity to sustain the requisite services and infrastructure, easily adopt new technologies and develop new services. In some regions the NMHSs have enhanced their efficiency by working more closely together by establishing common infrastructures and by sharing responsibilities.

The situation differs from country to country. For NMHSs whose budget is adequate and is fully guaranteed by the Government, partnership with the private sector on the basis of complementarity and mutual reinforcement is achievable, particularly where there are legislative frameworks to guide such partnerships. However, in many countries NMHSs are required to charge for services to supplement their public budgets and this leads to competition with the private sector, which may not be based on a level playing field for either partner. This is valid for several developed and developing country Members. The Council noted that the situation is particularly dire in the least developed countries where NMHSs experience severe problems in maintaining their basic functions, thus the competition with the private sector is seen as a major threat.

A major concern for the publicly funded NMHSs is the sustainability of the infrastructure in a competitive environment, particularly in cases of insufficient or only partial funding from the central budget. Active services by the private sector may adversely impact the funding of NMHSs either through the loss of revenue to private sector service providers or by higher government authorities not recognizing the key role NMHSs play in providing basic data and services which support private sector services. In either case, such loss of revenue would reduce the ability of the NMHSs to maintain the basic observing infrastructures, which would in turn negatively affect all players making use of the NMHS basic data, nationally and internationally. Thus in developing the Public Private Partnership (PPP) scenarios, consideration should be given to including cost-sharing arrangements to ensure sustainability of basic networks and infrastructure, which is the backbone for any hydrometeorological activities by all stakeholders. This is of particular importance for the LDCs and SIDS. The Council recalled that the integrity of the global weather enterprise is based upon the exchange of data that conforms to international standards.

EC-68 expressed strong support for a paradigm change and for looking at the PPP concept as an opportunity for both sectors. Such a partnership should be characterized optimally by cooperation rather than competition, and by mutual reinforcement and complementarity. A clear goal should be the highest levels of community resilience and safety. Various scenarios for achieving this goal could be explored, but clear delineation of roles and responsibilities is essential. For example, private sector services could potentially fill gaps where NMHSs are lacking expertise and resources, while at the same time some central and mandatory functions of the NMHSs should be well recognized, respected and funded by Government. Efficient collaborative solutions may help obtain stronger support from Governments.

There are a multitude of existing and potential business models, across both public and private sectors. Thus the development of a broad set of international principles that provide sufficient flexibility to different business models, could usefully be facilitated by WMO with participation of a broad spectrum of interested stakeholders. In deciding the applicability of principles to particular local conditions, it is important to recognize the role of Governments. WMO could consider appropriate mechanisms, such as a global summit, to provide a forum for discussion and building consensus on such a set of principles.

The Council also recognized that the situation differs in each country regarding the presence, level of engagement and regulation of how the private sector engages in

the “Weather Enterprise” at national levels. The Council suggested that WMO could set the playing field by developing policies that build on the principles for private sector engagement globally and to provide guidance to Members, and specifically to NMHSs, on how to demonstrate to their Governments, as well as the private sector, that NMHSs should be the partner of choice.

The building of a successful PPP on the expectations of “win-win” would require coordinated and mutually shared agreed upon principles and values of partnership. While WMO clearly represents the intergovernmental community in developing such a PPP environment, there would need to be consideration of how the private sector as a whole might be represented in such a PPP process, given the number and diversity of relevant private sector enterprises.

The WMO data exchange policies in Resolution 40 (Cg-XII), Resolution 25 (Cg-XIII) and Resolution 60 (Cg-17) are recognized as central intergovernmental decisions that have successfully guided the exchange of data and products to date. With new data types, data providers and data users emerging, these intergovernmental decisions may need to be reviewed and updated and Members strongly encouraged to consider implementing complementary legal or regulatory measures, such as legislation at a national level.

The Council and the invited guests considered that the dialogue initiated by WMO at EC-68 should be continued and broadened to encompass all interested parties. An inclusive approach with public sector, private sector and academia would assist in building the principles of partnership.

Such principles should take into account among others, the need to:

- Seek for win-win public-private partnerships scenarios that benefit society;
- Recognize mandates and responsibilities stemming from international and national legislation and regulations;
- Articulate evidence-based policy options for ensuring a level playing field, fair and equitable cost- and benefit-sharing;
- Provide leadership on matters critical to weather, water and climate and to engage in partnerships where joint action is needed to gain efficiency and better serve the society;
- Promote adherence to international norms and standards in meteorology, hydrology and climatology, in particular those promulgated by WMO, and facilitate their uniform implementation;
- Accelerate uptake of research and technological developments into operations and stimulate the generation, translation and dissemination of valuable knowledge;
- Keep the needs of developing countries, LDCs and SIDS in focus; combine efforts for effective and efficient technical assistance to bridge existing gaps and develop their capacity in using state-of-the-art technology in serving the societal needs in a sustainable manner;
- Monitor the situation and assess trends and advances in technology and business models.

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**Annex 2 to Decision 73(EC-68)****KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED IN DEVELOPING  
POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES FOR ENGAGEMENT**

1. The concept of public-private partnership (PPP) will have different manifestations at global, regional and national levels;
  2. Clear roles and responsibilities – legislation (mandates), authoritative voice of NMHSs for warnings, authoritative source of information;
  3. Need for agreed policies and shared commitment to data policy – free and unrestricted data exchange;
  4. Expertise/knowledge sharing and technology transfer;
  5. Cost, benefit and liability sharing;
  6. The basic systems and infrastructure of WMO/NMHSs is critical to the global, regional and national weather, climate, water, marine and environmental enterprise;
  7. WMO Standards should be complied with (quality, authentication, reliability and verification);
  8. Principle of cooperation, collaboration, complementarity and professionalism;
  9. Inclusiveness – public sector, private sector and academia;
  10. “No country left behind” – keep LDCs and SIDS in focus;
  11. Principle of common and shared responsibility;
  12. Balancing the opportunity and costs of ‘big data’ versus fit-for-purpose data;
  13. Urgency for adapting, accelerated uptake of new/changing technology (including learning from private sector which is more agile/dynamic);
  14. Moving ahead through continuous and expanding dialogue and consultations;
  15. Attribution requirement (credit source of public good information/services);
  16. Accountability (for information/services);
  17. A shared code of conduct for all parties engaged in the global weather enterprise;
  18. WMO’s recognized key role in facilitating and enabling the public-private process.
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