

National commitments to UN Conventions

The global conventions on climate change, ozone depletion and desertification and programme of action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) presuppose the availability of reliable information of weather and climate produced by the National Meteorological Services. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) requests actions to protect the atmosphere (Articles 4., 5.). A more balanced geographical coverage of the Global Climate Observing System and its components, including the Global Atmospheric Watch, should be ensured by facilitating the establishment and operation of additional systematic observation stations and by contributing to the development, utilization and accessibility of these data. Climate change monitoring is also based on the available meteorological data.

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) calls for national action programmes “to enhance national climatological, meteorological and hydrological capabilities and means to provide for drought early warning (Article 10.2. (d))” as well as systematic measurements of climate (Article 10.4). The linkage between the basic data production of the NMS is noted in the definition of drought: “Drought means the naturally occurring phenomenon that exists when precipitation has been significantly below normal recorded levels, causing serious hydrological imbalances that adversely affect land resource production systems.”

The UN Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States responds to the imple-

mentation of Agenda 21. This programme contains development activities directly linked to the responsibilities of the national meteorological and hydrological services e.g. climate change, climate variability and sealevel rise (Chap. I), natural and environmental disaster preparedness (Chap. II), wind and solar energy (Chap. VII) and science and technology (Chap. XIII).

Finland has ratified these United Nations Conventions. The research and monitoring in the fields of meteorology and climatology of the Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) is reflected in Finland’s second FCCC report in the energy technology development programmes (environmentally sustainable technologies e.g. wind energy programs), scenarios of air temperature and precipitation for the period 1991-2100 and historical values from 1900, financial assistance and technology transfer to developing countries and systematic climate observations. The climatic profile of Finland is presented as part of the national circumstances.

The development cooperation programmes in the field of meteorology and climatology support the participation of the partners in developing countries in international cooperation and their fulfilment of the national commitments of the UN Conventions.

In the development cooperation projects assisted by FMI on a contractual basis with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the FMI has been responsible since 1985 for project specification, formulation, appraisal, administration and implementation. The experts of FMI have participated in the preparatory mission, the project formula-

tion and/or the appraisal missions carried out for the SADC- and Central American projects and the Sudan project 1989 - 94. FMI has provided project personnel in the field, e.g. the Assistant Project Coordinator, Chief Technical Adviser, the Regional Expert on Climatology and the Regional Expert on Data Processing.

In the meteorology programmes of the SADC countries 1987 -1994 and the meteorology and hydrology programmes of the countries on the Central American Isthmus 1990 – 1998, FMI's area of responsibility also covers the procurement, specification, operational design, technical expert services and training programmes, and evaluation of equipment (instruments, telecommu-

nication systems, satellite-based data receiving systems, computerized systems). During these programmes the FMI experts have not only carried out their standard operational and technical tasks, but serious attempts have also been made to identify particular problems of interest to the meteorological community as a whole. Factors affecting the accuracy of meteorological measurements in developing countries can be mentioned as a good example. Improvement of accuracy not only has a positive influence on local or regional climatological statistics and related applications, but also on worldwide evaluations of global warming or on the quality of weather forecasts on all scales.

