

World Meteorological Organization

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is the youngest of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, having obtained that status only on December 20, 1951, when an agreement between WMO and the United Nations became effective. The Convention bringing the Organization into existence was signed by 37 countries in Washington on October 11, 1947 and came into effect on March 23, 1950. WMO's first congress met on March 19, 1951 in Paris.

The purposes of WMO, as outlined by its Convention, are: to facilitate co-operation among the various meteorological services; to promote the establishment and maintenance of systems for the rapid exchange of weather information; to promote standardization of meteorological observations and to ensure the uniform publication of observations and statistics; to further the application of meteorology in such fields as aviation, shipping and agriculture; and to encourage and assist in co-ordinating the international aspects of research and training in meteorology.

The present membership of WMO comprises 54 states and 23 non-sovereign territories which maintain their own weather services. The Organization's headquarters is at Geneva. Its governing body is the congress; which normally will meet once every four years. In the intervals, its affairs will be carried on by an executive committee of fifteen members, by six regional associations and eight technical commissions, as well as by the permanent secretariat established at Geneva. Dr. Andrew Thompson, C.M.G., head of the Canadian Meteorological Service, is a member of the executive committee and president of Regional Association IV for North and Central America.

During its first year of existence WMO was necessarily preoccupied with financial and administrative problems related to its establishment, and with the assumption of the duties, assets and obligations of its predecessor, the International Meteorological Organization. The first congress established financial and administrative regulations for the Organization, approved a five-year budget, set up the regional associations and technical commissions, and drafted a work programme on technical subjects. Subsequently, further attention was given to these and similar questions by the executive committee, which met in Paris on April 30 and in Lausanne on October 3, 1951. A working group on meteorological telecommunications met in Paris on February 11, 1952 and the Regional Association for Europe in Zurich on May 26, 1952. By the middle of 1952 WMO had not only established itself on a sound working basis but had been able, with the help of national meteorological services, to pick up and carry on successfully the technical projects developed by its predecessor, the International Meteorological Organization.