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**BELGRADE INITIATIVE: ENHANCING THE REGIONAL SEE
COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF CLIMATE CHANGE – CLIMATE
CHANGE FRAMEWORK ACTION PLAN FOR THE SEE REGION, AND
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUB-REGIONAL, VIRTUAL CLIMATE
CHANGE RELATED CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND SYSTEMATIC
OBSERVATION, EDUCATION, TRAINING, PUBLIC AWARENESS, AND
CAPACITY BUILDING**

submitted by

Serbia and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

through the Ad Hoc Working Group of Senior Officials



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CAPACITY-BUILDING

SOUTH-EAST EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

**BELGRADE INITIATIVE: ENHANCING THE REGIONAL SEE COOPERATION IN
THE FIELD OF CLIMATE CHANGE – CLIMATE CHANGE FRAMEWORK ACTION
PLAN FOR THE SEE REGION, AND
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUB-REGIONAL, VIRTUAL CLIMATE CHANGE
RELATED CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION,
EDUCATION, TRAINING, PUBLIC AWARENESS, AND CAPACITY BUILDING¹**

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¹ The text in this document is submitted as received from the authors.

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Belgrade SEE Climate Change Initiative

We, the Ministers of Environment from South-Eastern Europe,

Recognizing the importance of climate change for sustainable development and poverty eradication in our region and the importance of integrating climate change considerations into the development of key economic sectors in our countries to protect the environment and facilitate partnership and cooperation between the SEE countries and other countries in the UNECE region,

Recognizing also that climate change is projected to worsen conditions in the SEE region, already vulnerable to climate variability, and to reduce water availability, hydropower potential, summer tourism and, in general, crop productivity,

Taking full advantage of the Environment for Europe process for regional and SEE sub-regional cooperation in the field of climate change through the initial SEE Climate Change Framework Action Plan (SEE/CCFAP) and the establishment of a Sub-regional, Virtual Climate Change related Centre in Belgrade for Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training, Public Awareness, and Capacity Building,

Noting that this Initiative has no prejudice whatsoever to official procedures and regulations related to the designation of regional climate change centres under the relevant international organisations and that SEE participating countries have no financial obligation as per contributions for the work of the Centre,

Welcoming the hitherto progress in developing the capacity for the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change related to research and systematic observation, education, training and public awareness and advances in sub-regional cooperation in this area,

Agree on the following:

1. Countries of the SEE should strengthen their political support for the implementation of the South-Eastern European Climate Change Framework Action Plan by developing, in accordance with their common interest, programmes and projects with the final aim to support the implementation of Article 5 and Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;
2. Interested countries shall support the SEE pilot project aimed at setting up functions of the Sub-regional Virtual Climate Change related Centre in Belgrade for Research and systematic observation, Education, training and public awareness and Capacity building, which will provide coordination and implementation of the SEE/CCFAP.
3. In developing and implementing the SEE/CCFAP programmes, countries of the SEE shall establish partnerships with relevant international organisations. A close relation should be promoted with Secretariats of the UNFCCC, WMO and the GEF, as well as with the UNDP, UNEP and EU and capacity building initiatives under relevant environmental agreements.
4. Countries of the SEE, international organisations, financing institutions, donors, and other stakeholders are invited to join this open-ended initiative and to be involved fully, sharing their experience and providing much needed support for sub-regional climate change activities.

Executive Summary

This Background document was prepared by the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia and the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), with the support of the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

The present document was prepared as a result of the South-Eastern Europe (SEE) Ministerial consultation process with regards to a possible agenda for the Belgrade October 2007 Conference “Environment for Europe”².

Objective and scope

The overall objective of the document is to present the Belgrade initiative for the enhancement of sub-regional cooperation in the field of climate change, which is to be achieved through a mechanism of coordinated SEE regional action planning.

The analysis covers: scientific findings and an indication of the regional effects of global climate change in SEE; the stocktaking of available information on national achievements and obstacles in fulfilling the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and identification of SEE common regional objectives and needs, as well as the identification of their priority focus (e.g. capacity building related to Article 5 and Article 6 of UNFCCC, technical and financial assistance, transfer of technology, etc.).

The document further elaborates on the need for the development of a SEE Climate Change (multi party) Framework Action Plan (SEE/CCFAP) in Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training and Public Awareness, Capacity Building, as well as on the Establishment of a Sub-regional Virtual Climate Change related Centre as a means of improving regional cooperation, and to facilitate and coordinate implementation of the SEE/CCFAP. This Initiative has no prejudice whatsoever to official procedures and regulations related to the designation of a regional climate change centre under the relevant international organisations and the participating SEE countries have no financial obligation as per contributions for the work of the Centre. In this context the rationale for the Serbian proposal to host the mentioned centre is given.

The following are the recommendations to be considered by the ministers:

Recommendation 1: Developing SEE/CCFAP Programmes for the implementation of the UNFCCC Capacity Building Framework and Article 5 and Article 6 of the Convention;

Recommendation 2: Establishment of a Sub-regional Virtual Climate Change related Centre in Belgrade for Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training and Public Awareness, and Capacity Building, in order to support the coordination of activities under the SEE Regional Climate Change Framework Action Plan; and

Recommendation 3: Developing partnerships with relevant regional and international organisations and conventions in undertaking activities specified in the Recommendations 1 and 2.

² Joint conclusions of the SEE ministerial consultation on the possible agenda items at the Belgrade October 2007 “Environment for Europe” Conference (Belgrade, 16 June 2006), <<http://www.recyu.org/EfE2007>>.

I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

A. Climate change issues

General background

1. The Earth's climate is characterised by many modes of variability, involving the atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere and biosphere. The Earth's climate system evidently changed on both the global and regional scale in the past due to natural forcings such as changes in the Earth's orbital parameters, volcanic aerosols, solar radiation and changes in the natural, well-mixed greenhouse gases (GHGs).
2. Human activities during the last two centuries have substantially increased the atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and aerosols. Central problems for climate scientists, addressed in particular during the second half of the 20th century, is to determine in which ways human activities influence the dynamic nature of the Earth's climate and to identify what should be undertaken on the global level to protect the climate for present and future generations.

Box 1: Important milestones relevant for climate change on the global, regional and sub-regional level:

1988: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) established;

1990: The Second World Climate Conference (WMO/UNEP);

1992: Agenda 21 Plan of Action, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

1992: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Rio de Janeiro;

1992: Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) established;

1997: Kyoto Protocol (KP) to the UNFCCC adopted;

2000: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), United Nations Millennium Summit;

2000: First European Climate Change Programme (ECCP I, 2000-2004);

2001: IPCC – Third Assessment Report released;

2002: World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Plan of Implementation, Johannesburg;

2003: The Thessaloniki Summit enriched the Stabilisation and Association Process with elements inspired by the enlargement process, so that it can better meet new challenges. The Thessaloniki Agenda introduced an array of new instruments to support the reform process in the Western Balkan countries and to bring them closer to the European Union.

2005: European Union Greenhouse Gas Emission Trading Scheme commenced operation as the largest multi-country, multi-sector Greenhouse Gas emission trading scheme world-wide;

2005: Second European Climate Change Programme (ECCP II);

2005: Ad Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the Kyoto Protocol - Negotiations under UNFCCC/KP related to Post-Kyoto commitments;

- 2006:** UNFCCC Nairobi Programme of Work on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation;
- 2006:** All countries of South-Eastern Europe signed a new and improved Central European Free Trade Agreement, Bucharest, Romania;
- 2006:** SEE Initiative to establish sub-regional centres covering satellite data training, marine meteorology, climate, numerical weather prediction, agro-meteorology, hydrology, Informal Conference of the Directors of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in South-Eastern Europe, May 2006, Dubrovnik, Croatia;
- 2006:** Entry into force of the Energy Community Treaty between the European Community and nine partners of South East Europe;
- 2006:** Climate Change is identified as an environmental priority in SEE cooperation. Joint conclusions of the SEE ministerial consultation on the possible agenda items at the Belgrade October 2007 Conference “Environment for Europe” (16 June 2006, Belgrade, Serbia);
- 2006:** Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change released;
- 2007:** IPCC – Fourth Assessment Report released;
- 2007:** Fifteenth World Meteorological Congress (Cg-XV), Geneva, Switzerland.

3. The importance of saving the climate came into the focus of interest at the level of international policy in the 1980s. The international political response to climate change began with the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992.

Goals and Commitments of the UNFCCC

4. The UNFCCC sets out a framework for action aimed at stabilising atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases in order to avoid “dangerous anthropogenic interference” with the climate system, ensuring requirements for food production and sustainable economic development.

5. In their actions to achieve the objective of the Convention and to implement its provisions, the Parties shall be guided, along with other principles, by their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

6. All Parties, taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and their specific national and regional development priorities, objectives and circumstances, among other, shall:

(a) Prepare/implement and regularly update national and, where appropriate, regional programmes containing measures to mitigate climate changes;

(b) Enhance international cooperation in climate-related research, systematic observation and development of data archives related to the climate system, including open and prompt exchange of these data;

(c) Cooperate in preparing assessments on the impact of climate changes and the vulnerability of human and nature systems; develop and elaborate appropriate national and regional integrated plans; promote sustainable management and cooperate in the conservation

and enhancement of sinks and reservoirs of all greenhouse gases (forests, oceans and other terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems);

(d) Promote and cooperate in the development, application and transfer of technologies in all relevant sectors (energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management);

(e) Promote and cooperate in education, training and public awareness.

7. The Parties assume the same commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol with regards to Research and Systematic Observations and Education, Training and Public Awareness.

B. Future effects of climate changes in the SEE region: IPCC AR4³ projections

Recent findings

8. There is a very high consensus among scientists that the observed increase in the globally averaged temperatures since the mid-20th century is attributable to the increase in the concentration of anthropogenic greenhouse gases. The atmospheric concentrations of key anthropogenic greenhouse gases [i.e., carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O)] have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750 and reached the highest recorded levels in 2005⁴. The global increases in the atmospheric concentration of these gases are primarily due to the combustion of fossil fuels, agriculture, land-use changes and increasing transport.

9. As reported in the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC AR4⁵, warming of the climate system is now evident from observations of increases in the global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice and rising of the global average sea level. On continental, ocean basin and regional scales, numerous long-term changes in the climate have been observed. These include changes in the Arctic temperatures and ice, wide spread changes in the amount of precipitations, ocean salinity, wind patterns and aspects of weather and climate extremes, including droughts, heavy precipitation, floods, heat waves and the intensity of tropical cyclones, etc. In parallel to the observed increase in the surface temperatures, a similar trend is observed in the lower atmosphere⁶. Globally averaged, the surface warming at the end of the 21st century, compared to the year 2000 is projected for a range of different future emission scenarios to be in the interval from 1.8 to 4.0°C. The temperature increase is expected to be higher in the polar regions and

³ 2007: Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis, Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC, <<http://www.ipcc.ch/>>.

⁴ 2006: WMO Greenhouse Gas Bulletin - The State of Greenhouse Gases in the Atmosphere Using Global Observations through 2005; World Meteorological Organisation, Global Atmosphere Watch, WMO Greenhouse Gas Bulletin No 2., 1 November 2006.

⁵ Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis, Summary for Policymakers, Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change – IPCC.

⁶ 2006: Temperature Trends in the Lower Atmosphere – Steps for Understanding and Reconciling Differences, U.S. Climate Change Science Program: Synthesis and Assessment Product 1.1, April 2006, <<http://www.climate-science.gov/Library/sap/sap1-1/finalreport/default.htm>>

lower in the equatorial areas. It is very likely that the occurrence of climatic extremes will continue to become more frequent.

Assessments of projected climate change for European subregions

10. The annual mean temperatures in Europe are likely to increase more than the global mean (i.e. for the above-mentioned global temperature change, the regional effect on the European scale would be in the range 2.2 to 5.1°C at the end of this century). The warming in northern Europe is likely to be largest in winters and that in the Mediterranean and South East Europe area largest in summers. Projections indicate that annual precipitation is very likely to increase in most of northern Europe and decrease in most of the Mediterranean and SEE regions. The largest increases in northern and central Europe are expected in winter. In South-Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, the most consistent and largest decreases in precipitation will occur in summer. In central Europe, precipitation is likely to increase in winter but decrease in summer. The annual number of precipitation days is very likely to decrease in the SEE and Mediterranean regions. The risk of summer drought is likely to increase in South-Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean area. The snow season is very likely to shorten in all of Europe, especially in southern Europe, and the snow depth is likely to decrease in most of Europe⁷.

Box 2: Consequences of Climate Change to South East Europe and other European regions

1. Increased pressures on water resources, particularly in South Europe;
2. Aggravated flood hazard. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency of extreme floods;
3. Deterioration in soil quality;
4. Altered natural ecosystems, with loss of some habitats and potential loss of species;
5. Increased productivity of northern commercial forests but reductions in the southern ones;
6. Increased forest fire risk, especially in the southern regions;
7. Positive effects on agriculture in northern Europe but broadly negative effects in southern Europe. In some parts of southern Europe, agriculture may be threatened by climate change due to increased water stress;
8. Altered fisheries potential;
9. Increased property damage. In Europe, 64% of all catastrophic events since 1980 are directly attributable to weather and climate extremes: floods, storms and droughts/heat waves. 79 % of economic losses caused by catastrophic events result from these weather and climate related events. Economic losses resulting from weather and climate related events have increased significantly in the last 20 years, from an annual average of less than USD 5 billion to about USD 11 billion;
10. Changing potential for tourism, especially in southern Europe and the Mediterranean;
11. A range of human health implications. More than 20 000 excess deaths attributable to heat, particularly among the aged population, occurred in western and southern Europe during the summer of 2003. Heat waves are projected to become more frequent and more intense during the twenty-first century;

⁷ Prediction of regional scenarios and uncertainties for defining European climate change risks and effects – PRUDENCE Project, <<http://prudence.dmi.dk/>>.

12. Increased risk of flooding, erosion, wetland loss and degradation in coastal zones;
13. Upward shift of biotic zones and snowlines in mountainous regions;
14. Results from the different GHG emission scenarios give a projection of a global rise in the sea level of 18 to 59 cm by the end of the 21st century. For the Mediterranean, the values range from 1 to 2 cm of regional sea level rise per 1 cm of global sea level rise.

11. Although many features of the simulated climate change in Europe, the Mediterranean and the SEE region are qualitatively consistent between the models and well understood in physical terms, substantial uncertainties remain. The direction of the change is fairly described by the models, but the quantitative figures characterising the change on a regional scale and the time-scale of the whole process are less understood. These uncertainties reflect the sensitivity of the European climate change to the magnitude of the global warming. Deficiencies in modelling the processes in Europe, particularly the limited number of such studies in the SEE region⁸, might also contribute to the uncertainty in both the changes in the mean conditions and extremes. This fact is crucial for adequate understanding of and coping with issues regarding the present and future impact and vulnerability assessments of climate change in the SEE region.

C. Current SEE countries climate change action in the international context

12. UNFCCC includes commitments for all signatory Parties and additional commitments for the Annex I countries (industrialised countries and the countries of Central and Eastern Europe with economies in transition) and Annex II countries (only industrialised countries). Five countries of the SEE region belong to the non-Annex I Parties (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia) and one country belongs to the Annex I Parties (Croatia). All countries in the SEE region have certain commitments to UNFCCC. The Non-Annex I countries have the possibility of receiving support from mechanisms established under UNFCCC in order to meet their commitments.

Table 1: Submitted National Communications and UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol Status of Ratification from SEE Parties

Country	Date of Submission of latest National Communication	Date of Entry Into Force of Unfccc	Kyoto Protocol Status of Ratification/Entry Into Force
Albania	13 September 2002 (First NC)	01/01/95	01/04/05 (Ac)/30/06/05
Bosnia and Herzegovina	In preparation	06/12/00	In Gov. Procedure
Croatia*	06 February 2007 (2nd, 3rd and 4th NC)	07/07/96	11/03/99 (signature)/27/04/07 (adoption)

⁸ 2005: Climate change impacts in the Mediterranean resulting from a 2°C global temperature rise - A report for WWF, C. Giannakopoulos, M. Bindi, M. Moriondo, P. LeSager and T. Tin, WWF, the global conservation organisation, Gland, Switzerland.

Country	Date of Submission of latest National Communication	Date of Entry Into Force of Unfccc	Kyoto Protocol Status of Ratification/Entry Into Force
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	25 March 2003 (First NC)	28/04/98	18/11/04 (Ac)/16/02/05
Montenegro	In preparation	21/01/07	20/03/07 (adoption)
Serbia	In preparation	10/06/01	In Gov. Procedure

* indicates an Annex I Party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

13. A key role in the implementation of the UNFCCC is with the Ministries responsible for the environment in all SEE countries which have appointed the focal points for this purpose. In these countries, the main role in implementing the commitments related to research and systematic observation is delegated to the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services.

14. In the previous period, the opportunities for SEE regional cooperation were not fully utilised due to different management and resource constraints. This cooperation predominantly consisted of a limited number of regional projects and workshops initiated by the WMO, GCOS, UNDP, EU, Regional Environmental Centre⁹ and bilateral initiatives by industrialised countries. Nevertheless, the growing evidence of the impact of climate change in SEE contributed to raising the climate change issue to a higher level on the governments' agenda. This resulted in the acknowledgement at the SEE Joint Ministerial Meeting, held in Belgrade in 2006, that climate change is a common environmental issue requiring a concerted action at the regional level. At present, all countries of the SEE region are parties to the UNFCCC and very soon they will all be parties to the Kyoto Protocol which will increase their requirements in all types of capacity building and development (systemic, institutional and individual). This is a key element of the SEE approach to tackle the capacity building problem which resulted in the region-driven Belgrade Initiative to employ regional climate change framework action in SEE.

II. TAKING STOCK AND CONCLUSIONS ACROSS OBJECTIVES

A. State of the art in research and systematic observation, education, training, public awareness, and capacity building in SEE Countries

1. Objective 1. Research and Systematic Observation

Research

15. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), recalling Article 5 of the Convention, adopted a Decision¹⁰ in 2005 on research needs related to the Convention. Recognising the importance of natural as well as social sciences in responding to the research needs arising from assessments report of the IPCC,

⁹ <<http://www.rec.org/climate>>.

¹⁰ FCCC/CP/2005/5/Add.1, Research needs related to the Convention, Decision 9/CP.11, <<http://unfccc.int/>>.

the COP invited national, regional and international programmes and bodies¹¹ engaged in climate change research to further develop the regional and international programmes and promote a multidisciplinary approach to address research activities. In addition, the COP stressed the importance of enhancing the capacity of developing countries and countries in transition to contribute to, and participate in, the above global climate programmes. In this context, the COP invited developed countries to continue and further strengthen the engagement of national and regional research institutions from developing countries in cooperative climate change activities under the above mentioned programmes.

Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change

16. In 2006, the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC adopted the Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change, which comprise the following thematic areas: Data and observations; Climate modelling, scenarios and downscaling; Climate related risks and extreme events; Socio-economic information; Adaptation planning and practices; Research; Technologies for adaptation; and Economic diversification. All thematic areas are divided into several action-oriented sub-themes.

Action taken to implement the Nairobi Action Plan, 2006

17. The Fifteenth World Meteorological Congress, held in May 2007, noted that UNFCCC/COP12 adopted the Programme as the „Nairobi Work Programme on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation of Climate Change”, officially recognising the role of the WMO and NMHSs in the programme implementation. Therefore, the Congress urged Members to take a proactive role in planning national and regional programmes on adaptation to climate variability and change and requested participation of the WMO and NMHSs in the implementation of the Nairobi Work Programme based on the modalities and deliverables identified in the WMO Concept Paper¹².

Systematic observation

18. Key commitments in the UNFCCC with respect to Systematic observation are Articles 4 and 5, under which all Parties agree to “Promote and cooperate in ... systematic observation and development of data archives related to the climate system”. In pursuing this commitment, the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC adopted Decisions¹³ related to the implementation of the commitments on research and systematic observation. The COP recognised the need to identify the priority capacity-building requirements related to participation in systematic observation and invited Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) to identify the priority for action. In reaction to this, the 2004 GCOS Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate in Support of the UNFCCC, which urged the development of Regional Action Plans,

¹¹ World Climate Research Program – WCRP, International Geosphere-Biosphere Program – IGBP, International Human Dimensions Program on Global Environmental Change - IHDP, International Programme of Biodiversity Science – DIVERSITAS, the WMO, the UNEP, the IPCC, International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research, International Energy Agency, and the Earth System Science Partnership.

¹² Cg-XV/Doc. 3.2(1), Appendix A, p.4.

¹³ FCCC/CP/1999/6/ Add.1, Research and systematic observation, Decision 5/CP.5; <<http://unfccc.int/>>, and <<http://documents.un.org/>>; FCCC/CP/2003/6/ Add.1, Global observin system for climate, Decision 11/CP.9, <<http://unfccc.int/>>.

was adopted¹⁴. The Regional GCOS Action Plan for Eastern and Central Europe (2005) and the Regional GCOS Action Plan for the Mediterranean Basin (2006) identify high-priority projects and requirements for improving regional GCOS networks, especially the Regional Basic Climatological Network and national climatological stations and networks providing climate data required to assess and model the impacts of climate change.

Problems and constraints of SEE NMHSs related to research and systematic observation

19. WMO as the United Nations Specialised Agency with a mandate for weather, climate and water and its Member NMHSs are committed to supporting the UNFCCC by providing pertinent scientific information through climate observations and monitoring, studies of climate variability and climate change, natural disaster prevention and mitigation, the protection of life and property, hydrology and water resources, food security, scientific atmospheric and environmental research, uncertainty reduction and capacity building.

20. All the SEE countries are Members of the WMO and participate in relevant programmes or organisations sustained or co-sponsored by the WMO, in particular in the World Climate Programme, the IPCC, the Global Climate Observing System and the Global Atmosphere Watch, which have long provided significant contributions to the expanded use of climate information in policy making and to the work of the UNFCCC and its subsidiary bodies.

21. While the situation of every WMO Member is unique in terms of its assessment of the major issues currently facing its NMHS, a few of the global 'top ten' issues identified in the WMO survey¹⁵ are clearly having important implications for the future of NMHSs in the SEE Region. The most important constraints are as follows:

(a) Modernisation: This is a major issue for the NMHSs of both non-annex I and Annex I Parties. Much of the technological infrastructure (observation systems, communication facilities, data archival systems, etc.) of developing countries are aged and most Services lack governmental funds for equipment replacement or the political leverage on technical assistance programmes to bring in external funding from abroad or local aid sources;

(b) Overall level of government funding: The level of government funding has become a critical issue for all the NMHSs and has in recent years been subject to cumulative budget cuts of a severity that makes it virtually impossible for them to maintain the historical scope, scale and quality of their operations and services;

(c) Provision of climate services: Most NMHSs are seen by their national communities as primarily the providers of public weather services, playing only a minor role in climate data archival, and supply essentially nothing to the provision of broader climate services to the general public or specialised users. NMHSs in the SEE region which have been precluded by a narrow 'weather service' mission, are presently having to come to grips with the burgeoning community interest in climate, particularly its seasonal to interannual and decadal variability and the prospect of long-term greenhouse gases-induced change;

¹⁴ WMO, TD No.1219.

¹⁵ 2002: WMO Bulletin.

(d) Capacity building: This is an issue for the developing and transitional economy countries. With many traditional sources of Official Development Assistance (ODA) drying up, and sharply reduced government funding for the NMHSs of developing countries subject to economic restructuring programmes, the scope for capacity building through international staff exchange, in-country development experience and the like is severely limited.

22. By far the most important presently available opportunities for capacity building are those through training workshops and fellowship components of various scientific and technical WMO programmes and bilateral capacity-building initiatives being carried out by a number of NMHSs from developed countries and aid agencies. Other possibilities could emerge through the proposed SEE Climate Change Framework Action Planning (SEE/CCFAP).

2. Objective 2. Education, Training and Public Awareness

23. Education, training and public awareness are important foundations for the development and implementation of policies and programmes addressing climate change.

24. The UN Convention on Climate Change under Article 6 on Education, Training and Public Awareness, calls on governments to promote and cooperate in the development and implementation of educational and public awareness programmes, to promote public access to information and public participation, and to promote training of scientific, technical and managerial personnel. The Conference of the Parties, by its decision 11/CP.8¹⁶, adopted the New Delhi five-year work programme on Article 6 of the Convention, which is currently under review.

25. For most Parties, the preparation of national communications and climate-related projects supported by the Global Environment Facility and other bilateral and multilateral organisations provides the impetus for launching public education and information campaigns. Although substantial progress has been made in raising public awareness, this should be complemented by education and training programmes. Especially developing countries share a common concern about the lack of such education and training programmes at national and regional levels.

26. All SEE countries emphasised the difficulties encountered in implementing education, training and public awareness projects due to limited financial and human resources. An overview of the common problems and requirements is as follows:

(a) Education: For most countries in the SEE region, the shortage of experts and professionals working on climate change issues represents a barrier in implementing projects relating to climate change.

(b) Integration of climate change into educational system: Although most Parties from the SEE region continue to face the challenge of integrating climate change into different levels of education, some Parties reported progress in this area. Most Parties reported that governmental efforts and initiatives from the academic sector are under way to mainstream climate change into different school curricula and to address the lack of education on this issue;

¹⁶ FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.1, New Delhi work programme on Article 6 of the Convention, Decision 11/CP.8, <<http://unfccc.int/>>.

(c) **Training:** The training programmes and activities reported by the Parties were in connection with the preparations for Initial national communications and implementation of various projects involving renewable energy and energy efficiency, and vulnerability and adaptation assessments;

(d) **Public awareness:** Parties reported that the specific objectives of their activities in connection with public awareness were to inform people about the causes and threats of climate change. The most common means identified were dissemination of printed material, such as brochures, fliers, posters, pamphlets, technical publications and journals;

(e) **Mass media:** The widespread availability of mass media (radio, print and television) makes it easier for Parties to reach out to the general public on climate change issues. Media exposure to climate change issues depends on the ability of journalists to write articles on these issues and translate technical terms into the language that the public can easily understand. Therefore training activities for journalists and media practitioners are required; and

(f) **Civil society and religious organisations:** Most Parties reported the important role which civil societies and church-based groups play in raising public awareness concerning climate change. NGOs often take a leading role in advocating policies on climate change, conducting training, facilitating the participation of civil society groups and implementing projects.

Requirements, challenges and opportunities

27. Sustaining the activities aimed at training experts and educating and raising the awareness of the public continues to be a challenge in most SEE countries with limited financial and human resources and competing priorities, such as poverty eradication. Issues to be considered for future framework actions could be regional cooperation to complement but not replace efforts at the national level. Promoting cooperation at the sub-regional and regional levels can aid reduction of operational costs, increase the efficiency of resource employment and access to technical assistance and experts. Cooperation could be strengthened through increased networking and collaboration on projects, establishment of national and regional centres of excellence, improved information and communication infrastructure, increased inflow of financial resources, etc. Based on the progress achieved in the implementation of Article 6 of the Convention and lessons learnt and opportunities found, it may be possible and attractive to develop a curriculum at the regional level and then adapt it to the national level.

28. SEE countries recommend applying new, sub-regional and bilateral programmes for education and training and other forms of capacity building for the young staff of developing countries, under the existing international framework and the development of regional partnership proposed with this Initiative (SEE/CCFAP).

3. Objective 3. Capacity Building

Capacity building – UNFCCC framework

29. All SEE countries are signatories to the UNFCCC and have the corresponding obligations. The execution of these obligations implies that the country should have the human,

organisational, institutional and scientific resources for the development of the tasks and functions on a permanent basis.

30. The majority of the SEE countries are faced with an insufficient institutional framework, limited human resource capacities and scarce financial resources, due to the difficult socio-economic situation. Without external assistance these countries will not be able to build the capacity required for appropriate implementation of the UNFCCC.

31. The UNFCCC framework for capacity building in developing countries¹⁷ and countries with economies in transition¹⁸ sets out the scope of, and provides the basis for, action in capacity building related to the implementation of the Convention that will, in a coordinated manner, assist them in promoting sustainable development while meeting the objective of the Convention. It serves as a guide for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as an operating entity of the financial mechanism. Multilateral and bilateral bodies are encouraged to take into account this framework in their consultations with developing countries when supporting capacity-building activities related to the implementation of the Convention.

32. The twelfth Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change recalled and reaffirmed, through its decision¹⁹, to regularly monitor the progress of the implementation of the capacity-building framework.

Capacity-building initiatives under WMO

33. Considering the importance and role of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) in the implementation of WMO Programmes, the Sixth WMO Long-term Plan (2004–2011) sets out as a priority the strengthening of efforts to bridge the gap between NMHSs of developed and developing countries, including attention to the requirements of the NMHSs of countries with economies in transition.

34. One of the decisions of the Fourteenth Session of the WMO Regional Association²⁰ for Europe held in 2005 was the development of a Regional Strategic Plan for the Enhancement of NMHSs. The goal of the Plan is to strengthen the capabilities of all NMHSs throughout the European Region²¹.

Capacity building framework implementation

35. Capacity building activities undertaken within these international frameworks should maximise synergies between the World Meteorological Organisation, other international organisations and Conventions, and global environmental agreements aiming at strengthening the capacity of existing national, sub-regional and regional institutions dealing with climate change.

¹⁷ FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.1, II. THE MARRAKESH ACCORDS, Decision 2/CP.7, <<http://unfccc.int/>>.

¹⁸ FCCC/CP/2001/13/Add.1, Capacity building in countries with economies in transition, Decision 3/CP.7, <<http://unfccc.int/>>.

¹⁹ FCCC/CP/2006/5/Add.1, Capacity-building under the Convention, Decision 4/CP.12, <<http://unfccc.int/>>.

²⁰ World Meteorological Organisation Regional Association for Europe - WMO RA VI, <<http://www.wmo.int/>>.

²¹ WMO Resolution 16/1 (XIV-RA VI), <<http://www.wmo.int/>>.

36. In implementing these frameworks, developing country Parties and Parties undergoing transition to a market economy should: (a) Continue to identify their specific requirements, options and priorities for capacity building on a country-driven basis, taking into account existing capacities and past and current activities; (b) Promote sub-regional cooperation by utilising the services of institutions in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, which can support capacity-building activities at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, wherever possible and effective.

Sub-regional context in addressing climate change

37. The existing national circumstances, priorities in fulfilling the UNFCCC commitments, expected vulnerability to climate change in SEE and other socio-economic conditions make the regional assessments very complex. In addition to country specific circumstances, the following common issues can be identified in SEE countries:

- (a) In general, the SEE countries expect potential adverse impacts of climate change;
- (b) Focusing on environmental protection is challenging under unfavourable economic and social circumstances;
- (c) Many of the SEE countries have made or are making profound transformations in their economic systems, enhancing economic growth in the process of acceding to the EU;
- (d) In many cases, environmental structures are being created at a time of a slimming down of the government capacity;
- (e) The region as whole shows potential skills in human resources dedicated to climate change issues.

38. Within the SEE region, most countries are faced with the problem of eradication of poverty. In such an unfavourable situation, together with the need for transformation and modernisation of their economic systems, it is difficult to give national priority to the climate change protection, and much harder to achieve sustainable capacities.

39. Information and an understanding of the vulnerability of national economic and nature systems to climate change are still inadequate and remain a general concern in SEE. Therefore, it is crucial for SEE countries to assess impacts and levels of vulnerability, especially that of their economic systems. Clear technical and scientific information on national vulnerability would form the basis for establishing adaptation strategies and relevant measures.

40. An important, non-exhaustive list of common capacity needs, covering all three dimensions of capacity building (systemic, institutional and human), considering diverse aspects of climate change issues (observations and measurements, vulnerability and adaptation, understanding of the climate change issue – education, training and awareness, mitigations, transfer of technology, climate change strategy and action plans, negotiating capacity, cross-cutting issues and cross-convention synergies) is as follows:

- (a) An overall short and long-term climate policy framework at the national and regional level;

- (b) An overall policy framework to direct the integrated multi-sector, multi-disciplinary approach to climate change;
- (c) Clearly defined institutional mandates and responsibilities;
- (d) Market strategies and economic incentives that promote sound environmental technologies;
- (e) Specialised institutions, national and regional, dedicated to climate change with a special capacity to analyse the impacts of climate change on the economy;
- (f) Climate change research and training programmes, workshops, seminars at the regional level;
- (g) Modernisation of the national meteorological, climatological and hydrological observational networks;
- (h) Access to data from climate measurements/monitoring systems deployed in countries within the region;
- (i) Trained human resources capable of addressing global climate change;
- (j) Trained individuals with analytical skills to evaluate impact assessments and identify abatement and adaptation options (especially in non-energy sectors), undertake vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning, evaluate barriers to specific policies, and introduce the economic dimension to Vulnerability and Adaptation (V&A) policy planning;
- (k) Staff trained in the preparation of inventories and national communications;
- (l) Climate change education for policy makers and the general public;
- (m) Training of individuals who can identify phenomena and impacts attributable to climate change and separate these from impacts caused by other events (natural climatic variability, socio-economic conditions, etc.);
- (n) Public awareness of commitments made by the country as a signatory of the convention, and the implication on national development policies and programmes;
- (o) Technical staff conversant with theories and models for various aspects of climate change, as well as for capturing cross cutting issues, relationships and mutual influences of sector policies;
- (p) Continuous raising of the awareness of climate change and sustainable development issues among political representatives, decision-makers and the general public;
- (q) Human and financial resources to enable the implementation of national and regional priorities at the local level;
- (r) A critical mass of skilled national negotiators in key institutions;
- (s) Existence of multi-disciplinary teams of qualified government officials, researchers and consultants who can backstop the negotiation issues and implications;
- (t) Experts capable of analysing the cross cutting regional issues, interface and synergies among the conventions;
- (u) Academic human resources for education in climate change economics and policy;

- (v) Strengthened skills of non-government stakeholders.

41. In addition to the above, the SEE Annex I Parties have the following capacity building needs:

- (a) Advanced economic and market instruments;
- (b) Knowledgeable financial institutions capable of evaluating projects introducing new technologies and assessing real investment risks;
- (c) Improved information system, monitoring and national reporting.

42. The initial scope of the needs and areas for capacity building in developing countries, as broadly identified in the annex to COP decision 10/CP.5²², and in countries with economies in transition, given in the annex to the COP decision 3/CP.7²³, is addressed in the proposed SEE Climate Change (multi party) Framework Action Plan (SEE/CCFAP). Other capacity-building requirements and possible responses are being identified by the Parties in their discussions. These deliberations, as well as other activities related to the implementation of the Convention, should continue, aiming at broadening the scope and implementation of this framework.

III. STRENGTHENING SEE REGIONAL COOPERATION IN CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

A. Common SEE problems and priorities in addressing climate change

43. Common SEE issues related to the three objectives –Capacity Building; Research and Systematic Observation, and Education, Training and Public Awareness were elaborated in the previous section. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned problems and complex challenges in the areas of climate change, stronger emphases needs to be placed on the regional approach to capacity development related to Article 5 and Article 6 of UNFCCC, technical and financial assistance and transfer of technology through regional programmes and projects. Within the context of national commitments under the UNFCCC and the opportunities laid out in the Belgrade initiative for enhancing regional SEE cooperation in the field of climate change, the following common priorities have been identified:

- (a) Improvement of collection, management, exchange, access to, and use of the observational data and other relevant information on current and historical climate and its impacts to SEE;
- (b) Enhancement of the capacity to supply and use the data, especially at regional and national levels and exchange information on the impact of observed climate change;
- (c) Promotion of the understanding of the impacts of climate change and vulnerability to climate change;
- (d) Promotion of the development/application of climate models, access to and use of information and data on projected climate change for SEE;

²² FCCC/CP/1999/6/ Add.1, Capacity building in developing countries (non-Annex I Parties), Decision 10/CP.5, <<http://unfccc.int>>.

²³ FCCC/CP/2001/13/ Add.1, Capacity building in countries with economies in transition, Decision 3/CP.7, <<http://unfccc.int>>.

- (e) Promoting the employment of information on the socio-economic aspects of climate change and improving the integration of socio-economic information into impact and vulnerability studies;
- (f) Dissemination of information on practical adaptation actions and measures;
- (g) Facilitating communication and cooperation among the SEE countries and relevant organisations, business, civil society, decision makers, and other stakeholders;
- (h) Promotion of climate change research, development and transfer of technologies, know-how and practices;
- (i) Promotion of the understanding, development and dissemination of measures, methodologies and tools aimed at increasing economic resilience and reducing reliance on vulnerable economic sectors;
- (j) Modernisation of meteorological, climatological and hydrological services in the SEE countries;
- (k) Development and implementation of sub-regional and bilateral programmes for research, education and training and other forms of capacity building under the existing international framework and the development of regional partnerships proposed by this Initiative (SEE/CCFAP).

B. Use of regional SEE climate change framework action plan in research and systematic observation, education, training, public awareness, and capacity building

44. The “Environment for Europe” process provides a framework for improving climate policies in parts of the UNECE region (SEE). It also provides opportunities for action to address the UNFCCC framework for Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training and Public Awareness and Capacity Building,

45. Sub-regional cooperation provides an opportunity to effectively address common climate change problems by using the Regional SEE Climate Change Framework Action Plan. This strategic approach will provide a basis for further development and improvement of national policies of individual countries, and strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation involving SEE countries and other countries in the UNECE region, as well as between different sectors of the society.

46. The SEE regional planning mechanism of climate change aims at identifying areas in which climate change actions are required and in which partnership and cooperation with the SEE countries could be reinforced. It will provide a basis for developing the CCFAP as well as detailed thematic/project -oriented action programmes, creating possibilities for improving partnerships at the national, sub-regional, bilateral and multilateral levels.

47. In developing and implementing the SEE/CCFAP components, through this initiative, the SEE countries should establish, as appropriate, work-sharing arrangements with the UNFCCC and other international organisations which are invited to provide assistance in support to Climate Change partnership framework implementation, in accordance with their respective mandates. A close link should be promoted with the Secretariats of UNFCCC, WMO, GEF, as

well as with UNDP, UNEP, EU and capacity building activities under relevant environmental agreements.

48. International organisations and financial institutions are invited to provide support for the implementation and monitoring of the Climate change SEE Regional Action Framework Plan. The next "Environment for Europe" Ministerial conference may review the implementation of the Plan.

Key Objectives and Areas for initial Action Under SEE/CCFAP

I. Improvement of observations, monitoring of climate variability and climate change, climate data base management and data exchange

Planned Actions

1. Promotion of the implementation of systematic observation, focusing on issues relating to impacts and vulnerability;
2. Improvement of the quality and database management of climate data and the promotion of data exchange between the SEE countries; the publishing a regular sub-regional climate outlook;
3. Enhancing the capacity to supply and use the data, especially for impact assessments at the regional and national levels, and exchange of information on observed impacts of regional climate change.

II. Research and Development/applications of climate models and downscaling techniques and employment of information and data on projected climate change

Planned Actions

1. Identifying gaps in the development of regional and sub-regional climate scenarios, including the necessity for, and availability and applicability of, climate models;
2. Identifying practical opportunities to improve access to, and use of outputs of different models, including training opportunities;
3. Improvement of the availability and applicability of climate change modeling and downscaling data to policy makers at all levels.

III. Reduction of Climate related Risks

Planned Actions

1. Improvement of knowledge of biophysical and socio-economic changes in human systems which would affect the ability to cope with the future climate;
2. Enhancement of the capacity to assess climate related risks through vulnerability-based and natural hazards-based assessments;
3. The sharing and employment of the information on analyses and experience in climate risk assessment and management;
4. Promotion of the use of tools and systems for these purposes.

IV. Improving the integration of socio-economic information in climate impacts and vulnerability studies

Planned Actions

1. Identification of the existing approaches and available data, needs, gaps, barriers and constraints, ways and means to improve the availability of, and access to, relevant socio-economic information and its integration into impact and vulnerability assessments;
2. Enhancement of the capacity to understand the importance of socio-economic aspects of climate change and the integration of this information into impacts and vulnerability studies.

V. Improvement of cooperation in Adaptation planning and practices

Planned Actions

1. Exchange of information on experience, lessons learned, constraints and barriers of past and current adaptation measures and actions;
2. Promotion of different ways and means for information sharing and for the enhancement of cooperation among the Parties and relevant sectors, institutions and communities;
3. Promotion of response strategies, including early warning systems, in assessing ways and means to adapt to climate change.

VI. Development of Sub-regional programmes supporting national capacity-building and awareness raising in the target countries

Planned Actions

1. Development of sub-regional action programmes for addressing regional climate change problems, including a framework for Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training and Public Awareness and Capacity Building;
2. Establishment of a sub-regional roster of experts to serve as the main source of knowledge for the development and implementation of programmes under the SEE/CCFAP and its monitoring;
3. Establishment of a mechanism for day-to-day coordination of sub-regional action programmes implementation, widespread dissemination of information on the existing sub-regional requirements, initiatives and networks, which are of relevance to climate change programmes and projects.

C. Establishment of a Sub-regional climate change related centre

49. Existing regional cooperation in the world has shown the importance and effectiveness of regional climate centres (RCCs) having commonly agreed functions. The RCCs, according to the WMO Resolution²⁴, may be structured following one of the following models: a single-multifunctional centre for all or some parts of a region; a centre with distributed functions in the region and a virtual centre linked and identified as one RCC.

50. Based on the above-mentioned practice, a sub-regional climate change centre may have, inter alia, the following functions: “a Coordination function”, “a training and capacity building

²⁴ XIV-RA VI/Doc. 5.1, Appendix C, p. 2 Res. 5.1/2 (XIV-RA VI) - Establishment of a Regional Climate Centre Network in RA VI (RCC-RA VI) Regional Association VI (Europe).

function”, “an operational function”, “a research and development function” and “a climate data services function”. Its possible functions and activities are listed below:

(a) Coordination Functions: Strengthen collaboration between national institutions of the SEE countries responsible for the implementation of Article 5 and Article 6 of the UNFCCC in implementing SEE/CCFAP;

(b) Training and Capacity Building: Training and capacity building for relevant national institutions responsible for implementation of articles 5 and 6 of the UNFCCC;

(c) Operational Activities: Interpretation and assessment of relevant output products from global prediction centres; Generation of tailor-made products to meet NMHSs requirements, including seasonal outlooks etc.; Product verification, including the necessary exchange of basic data; Product distribution;

(d) Research and Development: Developing a climate Research and Development agenda under SEE/CCFAP;

(e) Climate Data Services: Rescue of climate data sets; Provision of a climate data base and archiving services; Assist in the development and maintenance of software modules for standard applications; Advising on data quality management.

51. As stated in the above WMO Resolution, a sub-regional climate change centre and its partner institutions should have at least some of the mentioned functions, including several operational activities for the SEE Region. These activities should comply with relevant international agreements.

Proposal to host a sub-regional Virtual Climate Change Related Centre in Belgrade for Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training, Public Awareness, and Capacity Building

52. Considering the increasing vulnerability to climate changes and associated natural disasters in the countries of the SEE region, as well as the needs to intensify regional technical and scientific cooperation conducive to the provision of more efficient climate monitoring and forecasting, assessment of the effects of climate changes and early identification of strategies for the adaptation to altered climatic conditions, the Republic of Serbia has launched the initiative to establish a Sub-regional Climate Change Centre in Belgrade, in 2006 (Addendum 1). This initiative received the full support of the National Hydrometeorological Services of the SEE Region countries at the meeting of the Directors held in 2006 in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

53. The necessity for increased international cooperation in the field of climate change through appropriate national, sub-regional and regional climate centres was also supported by the WMO bodies (see Paragraph 55). The proposed sub-regional climate change centre shall be of a virtual type, as defined in WMO Technical Documents²⁵, and will be open for participation to all SEE countries. The virtual climate change centre is to be complementary (non-duplicating) and supportive of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) within the SEE Region.

54. The basic objectives and duties of a sub-regional virtual climate change related centre in Belgrade will be the following:

²⁵ WMO - TD No. 1198, <http://www.wmo.ch/web/wcp/clips2001/html/WCASP62_TD1198.pdf> .

- (a) A further strengthening of cooperation of National Meteorological and Hydrometeorological Services of the countries in the sub-region in the field of climate change;
- (b) Support to the faster transfer of knowledge and technology in the field of regional climate modelling and other downscaling techniques; application of these research results in impacts and vulnerability assessment studies;
- (c) Support personnel and institutional progress of NMHSs in performing tasks related to climate change, education and raising public awareness, including contribution to the implementation and synergies, through cross-cutting issues, of different Conventions (UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – UNFCCC, UN Convention on Biological Diversity - UNCBD and UN Convention to Combat Desertification – UNCCD).

55. The proposed Belgrade initiative on the establishment of a sub-regional virtual climate change related centre, as a means to facilitate and coordinate the implementation of the SEE/CCFAP, would broadly rely on networking with the governmental institutions and officials from the SEE countries dealing with climate change issues.

56. Following the endorsement and support by the “Environment for Europe” 2007 Conference, this Initiative envisages the formation of a Council of the Centre. The Council will set guidelines for the development of thematic and project oriented programmes under the SEE/CCFAP. It will also supervise the whole process. To the extent possible, these activities should be led by the SEE countries. Donors, international organisations and financing institutions should also be fully involved, sharing their experience and providing needed support for sub-regional activities in climate change. The results of the work should be reported to the next “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference.

Establishment of the sub-regional Climate Change Related Centre in Belgrade for Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training, Public Awareness, and Capacity Building - Rationale

57. In the Addendum 1 to this document, the Republic Hydrometeorological Service of the Republic of Serbia (RHMS) elaborated a proposal to host a Sub-regional Climate Change related Centre in Belgrade for Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training, Public Awareness and Capacity Building. With regard to the proposed organisational structure, as generally recognised in the relevant WMO resolutions and technical documents, and due to the very complex nature of the climate change problems, a virtual structure of such a centre or network appears to be the most practical solution.

58. The infrastructure of the Centre is composed of operations, training and communication divisions and is located within the RHMS. Therefore, the majority of the costs could be covered by Serbia (offices, infrastructure, database and web page management). A small communication office would represent the Centre and also serve as the official communication hub. The nominated representatives of the participating countries will constitute the Council of the Centre, which will be responsible for performing the components of the programme in the participating countries, external guidance and supervision. Proposals and offers for functions from the NMHSs of the concerned countries are expected and welcomed.

59. Setting-up of the functions of the Centre in the proposed virtual mode, being a long process, requires a multi-stage approach.

60. The Republic Hydrometeorological Service (RHMS), as a body of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, is responsible for the monitoring of weather, climate and waters, air and water pollution, and air and precipitation radioactivity, including the monitoring of trans-boundary air and water pollution. In addition, it performs the tasks typical for a national hydrometeorological service as a public service of importance for preventive protection and alleviation of the consequences of atmospheric and hydrological disasters and consequences in cases of accidental air and water pollution.

61. In accordance with national laws, the functions of the Republic Hydrometeorological Service comprise international cooperation including the functions of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Centre/National Focal Point of Serbia in the following organisations/Conventions: World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and European Regional Meteorological Data Communication Network (RMDCN).

62. Participating in the World Climate Programme, GCOS, GAW, and other WMO programmes, as well as in the work of IPCC, the Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia directly participates in the implementation of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) related to Research and Systematic observations. In addition, the RHMS is designated as a UNFCCC Article 6 national focal point.

63. The national focal points for IPCC and Article 6 of UNFCCC as well as the Permanent Representative of Republic of Serbia with WMO are staff members of the RHMS. Therefore an efficient flow of information between UNFCCC, WMO and IPCC concerning the Sub-regional climate change centre in Belgrade can be expected. The good international connections of the RHMS and past experience in regional cooperation are further references which could contribute to the organisation and operation of the Centre in the support to the implementation of the Regional SEE Climate Change Framework Action Plan for Article 6 of the UNFCCC and Capacity Building Programme related to Article 6 and Article 5 of the Convention.

D. The main findings relevant to SEE regional cooperation and actions

64. Growing evidence of impacts of climate change in the SEE region contributed to the promotion of the climate change issue to a higher level on the governments' agenda. In response to this, the Belgrade Initiative to enhance SEE sub-regional cooperation by employing the mechanism of sub-regional planning through the SEE/CCFAP was launched.

65. Other findings relevant to SEE regional cooperation and actions in the field of climate change, new challenges and opportunities, are as follows:

(a) It is acknowledged that clear and comprehensive understanding of regional climate change is needed, which requires coordinated utilisation of all available resources. The region as a whole shows potential skills in human resources dedicated to climate change issues;

(b) Following the principles of the stabilisation and association process in South-East Europe, the experience in Environment, Science and Technology, trade and economic

cooperation between the SEE countries, as well as with the South-East Europe Regional Energy Market could be used more intensively in preparing policy directions for climate protection;

(c) Steps should be taken to further elaborate climate change issues of common importance for the SEE region in order to avoid duplication of effort and mobilise available human resources in the preparation and implementation of sub-regional action programmes under the SEE/CCFAP;

(d) There is an urgent need for the initiation of an SEE pilot project aimed at setting up functions of the Sub-regional Climate Change related Centre for Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training, Public Awareness and Capacity Building, which will support the coordination and implementation of the SEE/CCFAP (i.e. actions in capacity building and widespread dissemination of information on regional climate change projections, impacts, vulnerability and mitigation assessments, as well as common regional requirements, initiatives and identification and formulation of networks, which are of relevance to address climate change).

66. The SEE/CCFAP is a practical and specific regional response of the SEE countries towards achieving concrete results in the field of climate change with the region's own available resources and capacities. Further support may be provided to the region by other countries from the UN ECE Region and by the international donor funding community, as appropriate.

IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Developing a SEE/CCFAP Programmes

Interested countries of the SEE should strengthen their political support to the implementation of the South-Eastern European Climate Change Framework Action Plan by developing, in accordance with their common interest, programmes and projects with the final aim of supporting the implementation of Capacity Building Framework, and Article 5 and Article 6 of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change.

Recommendation 2: Establishment of a Sub-regional, Virtual Climate Change Related Centre in Belgrade for Research and Systematic Observation, Education, Training, Public Awareness, and Capacity Building

Interested countries shall support the SEE pilot project aimed at setting up functions of the Sub-regional virtual climate change related centre in Belgrade for research and systematic observation, education, training, public awareness, and capacity building, that will provide coordination and implementation of SEE/CCFAP.

Recommendation 3: Developing partnerships

In the development and implementation of the SEE/CCFAP programmes, Countries of SEE shall establish partnerships with relevant international organisations. A close relation should be promoted with the Secretariats of UNFCCC, WMO, GEF, as well as with UNDP, UNEP, EU and capacity building initiatives under relevant environmental agreements.

List of acronyms

COP – Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC
ECCP – European Climate Change Programme
ECMWF – European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts
EU – European Union
EUMETSAT – European Organisation for the use of Meteorological Satellites
GAW – Global Atmospheric Watch
GCOS – Global Climate Observing System
GEF – Global Environment Facility
GHGs – Greenhouse gases
KP – Kyoto Protocol
ICAO – International Civil Aviation Organisation
IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MDG – Millennium Development Goals
NMHSs – National Meteorological and Hydrological Services
ODA – Official Development Assistance
RCCs – Regional Climate Centres
REC – Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe
RHMS – Republic Hydrometeorological Service of Serbia
RMDCN – Regional Meteorological Data Communication Network
SEE – South-Eastern Europe
SEE/CCFAP – South-Eastern Europe Climate Change Framework Action Plan
UN – United Nations
UNCBD - United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNCCD – United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNECE – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCP – World Climate Programme
WMO – World Meteorological Organisation
WSSD – World Summit on Sustainable Development
