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The experience of Iberoamerican Meteorological Cooperation in the improvement of the provision of Weather and Climate Services

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The cooperation between Iberoamerican National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHS) is coordinated through the Conference of Directors of Iberoamerican NMHS (CIMHET), who takes advantage of the unique framework that provides the cultural and idiomatic heritage in the region. It is constituted by all 21 NMHSs of Iberoamerica, including Spain and Portugal. CIMHET provides a forum for dialogue between Iberoamerican NMHSs, recognized by World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as an example of cooperation and operability.

The Conference approves, at its annual meetings from 2003, an action plan over three strategic lines: Institutional strengthening and resource mobilization; provision of meteorological, climatic and hydrological services; education and training

Among the activities carried out in the latest action plans related to a better provision of Weather and Climate Services (WCS) includes the support for the creation and operation of Virtual Regional Centers for the Prevention of Severe Events, the development of a free database management system, namely MCH, which has been donated to WMO for distribution among interested NMHS, the implementation of a regional lightning detection network in Central America, or the development of downscaling climate change scenarios for Central America, with access to information and view via web.

In order to carry out the proper provision of WCS, it is also necessary to have sufficient and properly trained NMHS staff. Therefore, this activity, both for technical and management personnel, has been one of the fundamental elements in the activities carried out by CIMHET, with more than 60 courses and workshops from 2004, most of which have been face-to-face, attended by more than 1500 students.

It is also important to have the appropriate infrastructure and human resources so that NMHS can provide their services to society in a reliable and timely manner. For this, several modernization projects have been developed, mainly considering the needs of the different user sectors and showing their potential of NMHS for the different national social and economic sectors in case of solving their shortcomings.

Finally, intersectoral coordination mechanisms have been established with other Iberomeric networks with common interests, such as the Iberoamerican Network of Climate Change Offices (RIOCC) and the Conference of Iberoamerican Directors of Water (CODIA). A number of priority activities related to climate change adaptation issues linked to extreme hydrometeorological phenomena have been identified and started its development.

