**Note Memorandum**

**Meeting of WMO Secretary-General, Petteri Taalas, and WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom**

August 24, 2017, 17h00-18h00

Location: WHO

In attendance:

WHO

* **Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus WHO Director-General**
* Maria Neira, WHO, Director of Public Health and the Environment
* Diarmid Campbell Lendrum, WHO, Team Leader, Climate and Health Unit
* Marina Maiero, WHO, Climate and Health Unit

WMO

* **Petteri Taalas, WMO Secretary-General**
* Rob Masters, WMO, External Relations
* Joy Shumake-Guillemot, WMO/WHO Joint Office

A first courtesy visit between the two heads of agencies was held on the 24th of August at the WHO. This visit provided the opportunity for S-G Taalas to congratulate D-G Tedros on his recent appointment and outline key areas of current and future collaboration between the two agencies.

S-G Taalas introduced WMO’s new direction to support more country implementation, and the expansion of WMO regional offices and operations. With respect to health, he identified three priority thematic areas, and two geographic foci for strengthened WHO/WMO collaboration. These include:

1. Climate Change and Health
2. Air Quality and Health
3. Vector-borne and other infectious diseases

Two geographic focus areas of particular common interest: i) small island developing states and, ii) urban areas.

Climate change

* D-G Tedros announced his intention to upgrade the WHO Climate and Environment programme to contribute fully to climate change adaptation and mitigation- the latter as a true preventive approach to public health. He has prioritized this agenda for the organization during his mandate in response to the strong demand from countries to take action on climate and health. D-G Tedros announced his intention to launch a new global initiative on climate change and health in Small Island Developing States, and that Dr Neira will consult with the Pacific Island Health Ministers on his behalf next week in the Cook Islands.
* The DG and the SG concurred that strengthening the existing successful collaborations between WMO-WHO should be an important part of achieving this agenda.
* Mr Taalas has just returned from the equivalent meeting of the Pacific Ministers responsible for the Meteorological Services in the Solomon islands, and raised the opportunity to integrate health in WMO projects under Green Climate Fund (GCF) the joint WMO-World Bank-ISDR CREWS Initiative, and cross-cutting programs such as Urban Services and research (specific health risks of heat islands, flooding, air quality).

Air pollution

* On air pollution, D-G Tedros emphasized the millions of deaths each year from air pollution, and the need to invest on Air Pollution monitoring and to show best practices. Dr Neira highlighted the excellent WHO/WMO collaboration under the Global Platform for Air quality and health, and further opportunities should be explored to bring together WHO’s database of air quality monitoring in over 3000 cities, with the critical contributions of the Global Atmosphere Watch for enhanced modeling and observations of air quality monitoring and forecasting.
* S-G Taalas emphasized the role of meteorological services in air quality monitoring, and modelling, and encouraged exploration of further opportunities to link with WMO’s work on Urban Services, particularly in relation to heat island effects.

Infectious disease:

* S-G Taalas reported on the services that they are providing to countries, and to other UN agencies, on seasonal forecasts, particularly for humanitarian purposes. He highlighted the potential to make more used of these for early warnings and seasonal predictions for communicable diseases, such as cholera, dengue and malaria, as a new type of climate service.
* Dr Tedros welcomed this approach, related this to his own experience in Ethiopia, and the importance of having an engaged and effective national meteorological service to support health.

Mechanisms for collaboration:

* Dr. Shumake-Guillemot and Mr. Masters provided an overview of the functions of the WMO/WHO joint office. The successful approach of a joint office was noted by both as an extremely strong basis for strengthening future collaboration, as its works to build experience in best practices, share information rapidly between the two agencies, and make sure opportunities to integrate health in WMO programs and vice versa are fully capitalized on. Current experiences shared by Mr. Masters and DG Tedros highlighted that although there is interest and demand, health services are often not aware of what meteorological services can provide. It was recommended this joint mechanism is expanded in relation to the areas of collaboration defined to address this gap.
* It was noted, that relatively modest investments in capacity building and technical support can make better use of the investments that are made in meteorological and earth observation technology. Dr. Shumake-Guillemot gave an example, and announced the new Climate and health science portal, funded by the Wellcome Trust, will improve access and visualization of WHO and WMO data and resources.
* S-G Taalas highlighted that WHO will contribute to the WMO flagship State of the Climate Report, and suggested reciprocal briefings, from WMO to WHO senior management on climate science, and from WHO to WMO on health and climate.
* Dr Tedros and Dr. Neira highlighted the opportunity to raise the profile of this issue through coordinated preparation, and social media advocacy, for the Climate Change Conference of the Parties in Bonn in November, and through the Health, Environment and Climate Change Coalition in collaboration with UNEP.

**Follow up action points:**

* Use the WHO/WMO joint office to develop a joint action plan for strengthened scientific and operational exchange on the three priority areas and two geographic foci.
* Ensure coordination in country support, particularly in priority areas such as the SIDS and urban areas, (air quality and heat stress), and on health within WMO’s GCF and CREWS projects.
* Explore possibility of reciprocal technical briefings to senior management of the two organizations in relation to the priority topics.
* Enhance technical collaboration through the joint provision of information, evidence, and technical tools, through the new joint online Climate and Health Science Portal; and WHO Contributions to the State of the Climate Report.
* Promote political engagement through coordinated planning and participation at UNFCCC COP-23 , and the Health, Environment, and Climate Change Coalition.