

**ADDRESS BY MR. ARTHUR J. DANIA, PRESIDENT OF WMO REGIONAL ASSOCIATION IV AT THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE “SATELLITE DIRECT READOUT CONFERENCE FOR THE AMERICAS”**

**DECEMBER 9 – 13, 2002**

**MIAMI, FLORIDA, USA**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

It's a pleasure and privilege for me to be able to address the opening of this session of this important NOAA Satellite conference for users in the Americas at these excellent facilities here in Miami.

There are dramatic changes underway in the NOAA satellite system during the next several years because of new and improved technologies and because of new requirements in the user communities. These changes will affect all users of the NOAA/NESDIS satellites significantly. In particular the direct read-out users of these satellites. We, as active users in the meteorological community, will have to modify and/or replace our current receiving equipment and software in order to be in line with these changes in technology.

As we all know, the role of satellites is of crucial importance to the meteorological community. In particular for the services being provided by National Meteorological and Hydrological Services in all the countries of the Americas. Both for the hydrometeorological observing and data gathering system and as one of our most important means of communications.

In this regard we are extremely grateful to NOAA, NESDIS, the National Weather Service and other satellite operators for their support in maintaining and continuously upgrading their services to new technological advances and to the needs of the user community. Without this support of the NOAA/NESDIS satellites, it would be impossible to provide suitable forecasts, warnings and other services in meteorology, hydrology, climate and related fields. With the new advances which are to be implemented in this field in the years to come, we are confident that our services to the communities of the Americas will further improve significantly.

The use of meteorological satellites started several decades ago with polar orbiting satellites, with much less observing and technological capabilities. Over the years the potential and capabilities of this observing system has expanded enormously. The weather satellites have meanwhile become an integral and very important component of the Global Observing System of WMO and have proved to be extremely beneficial to the World Weather Watch Programme of WMO. In particular we wish to emphasize the value of satellite observations in minimizing the loss of lives and property damage,

through improved and advanced information for the initiation of disaster prevention measures against severe weather conditions like tropical cyclones, storms and floods. The considerably improved weather forecasting capabilities in the past years have become the basis of a vast number of practical applications in our daily lives and also form an important component of the socio-economic development of our communities. This has been to a large extent due to a contribution of weather satellites. In other words, nowadays it would be virtually impossible to perform operational tasks in meteorology and hydrology in a serious and professional manner, without the use satellite information

The other importance of these satellites is of course the component of communications. The Global Telecommunication System of WMO and the international meteorological and hydrological community at large, have benefited greatly from advances in satellite telecommunications. We cannot forget the crucial role of the GOES system in the dissemination of important operational WAFS and WEFAX products, which has been ongoing for many years in this Region. In fact this has been the operational backbone of all meteorological activities of the Services in our Region for a very long period. Now it is foreseen that within shortly the present technologies for these types of services will become obsolete and in the coming years will be replaced by radically changing modern technologies

In the present Regional Meteorological Telecommunication Network of the Region I represent (Regional Association IV of WMO) which is composed of North and Central America and the Caribbean, meteorological telecommunications nowadays depend for more than 90 % on satellite communication. Even though this type of communications is mainly through communication satellites, a very important component of our meteorological and hydrological communications also depends on the NESDIS GOES satellites.

During this conference however, emphasis is being placed on the importance of the crucial advances and changes which are foreseen in the coming years in the NOAA/NESDIS satellite programme. The important goal of this conference is to highlight these changes and to make us, as users, aware of these changes and that we will need to prepare ourselves for these changes. In particular with respect to the changes from analogue to digital transmission and with respect to the changes and drastic improvements in new generations of remote sensing instruments which will have significantly improved capabilities and resolutions and much better communication and data distribution systems.

We are confident that with these changes and advances in the new generation of NOAA/NESDIS weather satellites, great advantages and improvements will be achieved in the service provision of the meteorological and hydrological community because of greatly improved resolutions, much faster transmissions of data and products as well as a vastly increased exchange of amounts of data and information. It is hoped that, also in the future with this new generation of satellites, our user community in the Americas will continue to benefit of these freely available satellite services of NOAA/NESDIS by everyone and without any restrictions for operational purposes of meteorology,

climatology, hydrology, and for research. Undoubtedly NOAA/NESDIS, with its weather satellites has contributed significantly for many years to the protection and socio-economic development of all the communities of the Americas. It is foreseen that these improved satellite services will further enhance the quality of life in our communities.

In this regard, on behalf of Regional Association IV of WMO, and on behalf of the whole meteorological, hydrological and climatological community of our region, I wish to make use of this opportunity to express our sincerest gratitude and appreciation for the support which NOAA, NESDIS and the National Weather Service have been providing to this region with this outstanding weather satellite system which over the years has continuously been kept to state-of-the-art technologies. We are extremely privileged to be able to make use of these satellite facilities.

Thank you NOAA, NESDIS and the National Weather Service for the extremely important support you have been providing in this regard to meteorological and hydrological operations in the communities of the Americas for many years. We feel privileged for having been able to make use of your facilities and services for the well-being of our nations and we are very thankful for this support. We are confident that we will be able to continue to make use of your excellent facilities for many more years to come.

Finally we also wish to thank NESDIS and the National Weather Service for the support they have provided to many of us in order to enable us to be here today and for us to be able to participate in this Conference, which in our opinion is an excellent opportunity for us to be exposed to information regarding these important changes, which in the end will be of crucial importance to our operations in the years to come.

I wish you all to have a fruitful conference and I thank you for your patience.