

The General Secretary of the World Meteorological Organization and the Executive Director of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) attend International Conference in Nicosia

On the occasion of the recent International Conference on “Climate Change in the Mediterranean and the Middle East –Challenges and Solutions”, which took place in Nicosia, at the International Conference Centre, on the 18th and 19th of May, have visited the island and attended the Conference, among other world leading scientists and personalities,

the General Secretary of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Professor Petteri Taalas and the Executive Director of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Dr Zerbo Lassina.

An official meeting over lunch was held in honour of the two high-ranking officials and scientists, in the presence of the General Directress of the Cyprus Ministry of Rural Development and Environment and the Director and other members of the Directing Team of the Cyprus Meteorological Department (CMD).

The General Directress, welcomed the two distinguished guests to Cyprus and wished them a happy stay. Then she mentioned the strong commitment of Cyprus to the strict observance of its international obligations and responsibilities within the context of the international institutions represented by the meeting’s honorary guests.

In response, Prof. Taalas of the WMO, made reference to the significance of the mission carried out by the CMD, pointing out the importance of the services that it provides to the general public of the island. Regarding the impact on Cyprus of the World Climate Change, Prof. Taalas mentioned that, according to the available data, the geographic region of the island is already suffering its effects and stressed the fact that meteorological observations in the Eastern Mediterranean, especially in Cyprus, are of paramount importance and necessity for the monitoring of the changing climatic conditions in the broader geographic area of the island.

The General Secretary of the World Meteorological Organization next made mention of the increasing future obligations of the CMD towards the Common Alerting Protocol for the Multi Hazard Early Warning System and also, referring to an older WMO report on the optimal usage of available resources, he stated that there should be an increase in the effort exerted towards a final housing of all the Sectors and Offices and associated personnel of the CMD, under a single, unified premises.

As regards the participation of Cyprus in all European Organizations with a meteorological background or infrastructure, the GS/WMO promised to do his best to help Cyprus become an equal-status member of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), as well as the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT).

On his behalf, the Executive Director of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization stated that, with the assistance of the CMD, the mission of the CTBTO would become even easier regarding the certification of nuclear tests, while the CMD would be given the ability to watch over the evolvement of the results and impacts of nuclear tests. To this aim, Dr Zerbo said that relevant material and

portable equipment would be provided to Cyprus, free of charge, for use by the CMD. In that case, all relevant equipment will be installed at the CMD's Athalassa Radiosonde Station and the necessary personnel required for its handling will be appropriately trained by the CTBTO.

Dr Zerbo emphasized the importance of observations within the broader Eastern Mediterranean geographic region, especially in Cyprus, which is centrally located in this region, giving to these observations the characteristic of being, as he had put it, "observations of disproportionately grand significance" due to the location of Cyprus in relation to the nuclear installations of neighbouring countries in the Middle East, such as Turkey, Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia etc.

Generally, the meeting with the General Secretary of the WMO and the Executive Director of the CTBTO was conducted in a friendly and constructive atmosphere and highlighted the adequacy of the CMD in its field of activity and responsibility, both on a local, as well as on an international level.



Director of the Department of Meteorology, Dr K. Nicolaidis, WMO General Secretary Prof. Petteri Taalas, General Directress of the Cyprus Ministry of Rural Development and Environment Mrs. Olympia Stylianou and Executive Director of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO Dr. Zerbo Lassina.