

Meteorological Training Centre for Belt and Road Countries established today (with photos)

The Meteorological Training Centre for Belt and Road Countries was established today (December 3), marking a significant milestone in enhancing the capabilities of meteorological professionals in the Belt and Road (B&R) regions and promoting future meteorological co-operation and development.

The establishment ceremony of the Training Centre was held this afternoon at the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO). Officiating guests included the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan; Deputy Administrator of the China Meteorological Administration (CMA) Mr Xiong Shaoyuan; the Commissioner for Belt and Road, Mr Nicholas Ho; the Director of Regional Office for Asia and the South-West Pacific of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Mr Ben Churchill; the Advisor of the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology of Cambodia, Dr Seth Vannareth; the Director of Fiji Meteorological Service, Mr Misaeli Mavoia Funaki; the Director of Jordan Meteorological Department, Mr Ra'ed Ahmad Subhi Rafid; the Director of the Macao Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau, Mr Leong Weng-kun; the Director General of Maldives Meteorological Service, Mr Abdulla Wahid; Deputy Director-General of the Thai Meteorological Department Mr Thanasith Iamananchai; and the Director of the HKO, Dr Chan Pak-wai.

At the ceremony, Mr Tse announced the establishment of the Training Centre. Mr Tse remarked that the Training Centre aims to strengthen climate resilience in the regions through capacity building and knowledge transfer. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government attaches great importance to regional co-operation in meteorological services. The Training Centre will cultivate a network of weather and climate experts to work together to prepare for high-impact and extreme weather.

Mr Xiong congratulated the establishment of the Training Centre and praised the HKO's contributions to various fields in meteorology. He emphasised that the Training Centre will enhance the capabilities of more meteorological organisations along the B&R regions, supporting the WMO's Early Warnings for All initiative. The CMA is willing to strengthen co-operation with the HKO, complement each other's strengths, and fully support the operation of the Training Centre.

Mr Churchill expressed that the establishment of the Training Centre marked a significant step forward in enhancing the resilience of several countries against hazardous weather and aligning with the mission of the Early Warnings for All initiative. He thanked the HKO for its contributions to the WMO over the years and hoped that the Training Centre would provide more information and insights on the latest meteorological developments. He also emphasised the WMO's strong support for the Training Centre.

In addition to the guests present at the ceremony, the President of the WMO, Dr Abdulla Al Mandous, and the heads of more than 10 meteorological agencies from B&R regions extended their congratulations via video on the establishment of the Training Centre. Dr Al Mandous highlighted that the establishment of this Training Centre is a significant milestone in advancing meteorological science and capacity building in the region. The Training Centre aligns with the WMO's mission to promote international co-operation in meteorology, hydrology and related geophysical sciences, contributing to the improvement of weather forecasting and disaster risk reduction.

Dr Chan stated at the ceremony, "The HKO has been involved in providing training to meteorological personnel from around the world for many years. The establishment of the Training Centre will help us strengthen the ability of meteorological professionals over the B&R regions, and promote future meteorological co-operation and technology exchange. Initially, the Training Centre will offer online meteorological training through virtual means and will seek opportunities to provide in-person training for limited number of participants."

The plan of establishing the Training Centre was outlined in the "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" of the HKSAR. The Training Centre will help enhance the capabilities of meteorological personnel over the B&R regions in responding to adverse weather and resisting natural disasters. Through collaboration with other international organisations, such as the WMO and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), in co-organising training courses, the trainings will also be extended to countries outside the B&R regions.

The first activity of the Training Centre will take place from December 3 to 6 with the theme of aviation meteorological science and service development. Over 90 participants from more than 45 WMO members and ICAO Asia Pacific States will attend the workshop either online or in person. Invited experts will share their professional knowledge and experiences at the workshops.

