**Welcome Address by David Grimes, WMO President, to SYMET-XIII, Barbados**

Hello

My name is David Grimes. As President of the World Meteorological Organisation and Chair of the Executive Council Panel of Experts on Education and Training, it is my pleasure to welcome you all to this 13th WMO Symposium on Education and Training.

Unfortunately I cannot be there, with you, in beautiful Barbados. But I wish to thank the Carribean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology for hosting this important symposium, all members of the organising committees for planning, preparing and supporting its delivery, and you, the participants for being there. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate CIMH on its 50th anniversary of excellent service to the region and the model it sets for those beyond the region as well.

This symposium is important for a number of reasons:

SYMET 13 provides the opportunity for those involved in the education and training community to share experiences, challenges and, even more importantly, solutions that support the development and delivery of education, training, and public outreach for Weather, Water, and Climate. The WMO is currently in the process of refining its strategic plan for the years 2020-2023. This plan will highlight the goals to better serve societal needs, to enhance the technical foundation for future service delivery, to advance targeted research, and to close the capability gap among WMO Members.

It is the ETR community that will play the most critical role in closing this gap. The gap includes improving technological infrastructures, but this alone is not enough. Developing the people capable of delivering quality services is key. And we cannot forget that this gap also includes the need for gender-sensitive service delivery, and that WMO’s Gender Equality Policy was established to recognize and address this. The gender gap is more than bringing equality to the staffing of NMHSs, but also providing public services that support both genders equally. The ETR community can help address all these gaps by seeking to better understand the needs for improving services, by strengthening core competencies and expertise, and by establishing partnerships that improve access to education and training opportunities.

SYMET 13 brings together Regional Training Centers and many other training institutions, along with various stakeholders, to discuss and promote good practices and methods to address existing and changing requirements. SYMET promotes the implementation of collaborative initiatives, such as the WMO Global Campus feasibility study, which are very important in helping address the critical needs of today and tomorrow.

As you know, today we face many challenges with respect to the impacts of extreme weather and climate events, including increased stresses on food security and urban and small island environments, all of which create increased demands for expertise, supported by education and training.

SYMET provides a forum to identify initiatives and recommend actions for the education and training community that can support the six current WMO priority areas in Disaster Risk Reduction, the Global Framework for Climate Services, Aeronautical Meteorological Services, WIGOS, Polar and High Mountains, and of course, Capacity Development, which cuts across all of these.

Underlying these priorities is the common need to more directly address the impacts to society of severe events and a changing climate. To do this, we need a workforce that better understands the impacts to varied users, the thresholds at which these impacts are felt, the methods for making accurate and timely predictions, and ways for issuing consistent messages and performing coordinated warning delivery. Of course, also underlying the priorities are the needs for a technically competent staff able to meet the needs for high performance computing for data distribution, modelling and product generation and communication. So you can see the breadth of the challenge, and given the diversity of WMO Members, also its depth.

So with this, I wish you all interesting discussions during this symposium, and I look forward to your recommendations for how we can best address our current challenges and priorities in order to bring benefits to the communities we serve.