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Keynote Address to the Symposium on Methods of Meteorological Education and Training

Toronto, Canada - August 19-23, 1991

Each of us has become ever more vulnerable, not only to the vagaries of weather and climate, locally, but weather and climate all over the world. It is in our collective and personal interest that all peoples have the benefit of better weather predictions and better understanding of the global climate system. The loss of productivity or disruption of life and commerce anywhere affects life everywhere. Education and training, in general, and meteorological and hydrological education, in particular, are in the interest of all people.

The next decade will see revolutionary changes in forecast techniques and a continued growth in public demand for services not only in forecasting but in providing insight into environmental concerns. Inefficiencies and losses are incurred when forecasts are poor. Losses are incurred when climatological data are underutilized or when governments or individuals fail to utilize forecasts because of lack of confidence in forecasts or poor communication. The millions of weather-dependent decisions made each day by individuals make a society more productive if they are based upon the best possible forecasts. Weather and climate define the limits of almost all human activity. With each year that passes, the orderly functioning of society becomes more weather-sensitive. Decisions to create major public works or to engage in industrial and agricultural development or introducing new technology, which may have long-term impacts upon atmospheric processes affecting climate and weather, must be made in the context of our understanding of the earth system with all of its complexity.

How well or how poorly we educate our forecasters and officials and the public they serve will contribute significantly to national or world prosperity and the physical well-being of all people. The best meteorological and hydrological technology in the world will yield little unless our meteorologists and hydrologists are educated to a level that enables them to exploit that technology.

National and international policies and agreements on water and air pollution or on measures to minimize the impact of humankind on global change will be effective or even