



WMO FEATURE

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THE WORLD OF WEATHER AND WATER

Point of View

ELEVENTH CONGRESS WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

Interview with Prof. A. Grammelvedt Permanent Representative of Norway with the World Meteorological Organization

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THE WORLD OF WEATHER AND WATER

Point of View
Eleventh Congress

Interview with Prof. A. Grammelvedt
Permanent Representative of Norway with the
World Meteorological Organization
And President of Regional Association VI (Europe)

by Dr. Sylvia Moore
Public Information and Press Office (WMO)

Dr. Moore: This is the Eleventh Congress of the World Meteorological Organization at Geneva. With me in the studio today is Professor A. Grammelvedt from Norway. He is the Permanent Representative of Norway with the World Meteorological Organization and he is also President of the World Meteorological Organization's Regional Association for Europe. Welcome to the studio Professor Grammelvedt. When was the Norwegian Meteorological Institute founded?

Prof. Grammelvedt: The Norwegian Meteorological Institute was founded in 1866 so we are 125 years this year. It belongs to some of the older meteorological institutes in Europe.

Dr. Moore: Which is the oldest one in Europe?

Prof. Grammelvedt: I think it is France which is a few years older.

Dr. Moore: Are the European Meteorological Institutes the oldest in the world?

Prof. Grammelvedt: They all started here in Europe, with the first international meeting in 1853 and the first International Meteorological Organization was founded in Vienna in 1873. So the cooperation in meteorology in Europe is very strong and it has always been very strong.

Dr. Moore: But also cooperation with the Soviet Union I understand.

Prof. Grammelvedt: Yes, this includes Europe, including Eastern Europe and Soviet Union.

Dr. Moore: Could we take a look at the WMO Regional Association for Europe? This must be a unique association in terms of cooperation and in terms of potential. How does that cooperation work?

Prof. Grammelvedt: Especially in the Western part of Europe since the war, Meteorological Institutes have built up a very strong cooperation in meteorology. During the last twenty years this has even been improving and we have two common Institutions in Western Europe today which are the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (ECMWF) in Reading in the United Kingdom and the European Meteorological Satellite Organization unit. This is launching the METEOSAT. It provides satellite pictures and other data for Europe and Africa.

Dr. Moore: What status do these two organizations have within the Regional Association for Europe and in the world?

Prof. Grammelvedt: With regard to ECMWF, all the eighteen member nations cooperate with daily weather forecasts for ten days and these forecasts are also provided to all Members of the WMO on the GTS.

EUMETSAT organises the satellite station METEOSAT situated at zero degrees longitude above the equator and this provides satellite pictures for Europe and all Africa. I think that most of the countries which can take pictures directly from METEOSAT, are using this satellite free of charge except for the member countries in Europe.

Dr. Moore: The recent developments in Europe have led to the breakdown of the old economies of the Eastern European countries. What is the prospect of cooperation in the field of meteorology with those countries now?

Prof. Grammelvedt: We hope that we can improve cooperation with the East-European countries. They have also started by themselves with cooperation between Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia and also with Austria. But I think that with the existing economic situation it will take sometime before they can reach the standard of Western Europe. But they have very strong, also very old and strong Meteorological Institutes, and especially Hydrological Institutes.

Dr. Moore: So you think that there could be a great deal to offer through the cooperation between all the European countries?

Prof. Grammelvedt: I think that the cooperation will be strengthened during the years.

Dr. Moore: If we look at developments in post Second World War Europe, there has been a consistent trend towards integration at the same time maintaining diversity and looking towards a common cause. The European Common Market was initially an economic union but now branches into so many fields of social and cultural life. With the trend towards regionalism that we have in international politics would the European community take a strong stand on certain issues in international organizations? Is this happening in your regional association with regard to WMO?

Prof. Grammelvedt: Yes. Going back to the Western part of Europe, we have a yearly informal meeting of the Directors of the Meteorological Services of the Western European nations where we try to coordinate our views concerning all these international meteorological organizations. Also, we discuss common WMO standards and practices as they affect us in Europe.

Dr. Moore: The World Meteorological Organization just held its Eleventh Congress which is at a time of unprecedented interest in meteorology in the atmosphere, the hydrosphere and what this means for the changing biosphere and the changing planet in terms of deterioration of the planet due to various man made causes. These are now well verified in terms of climate change, ozone depletion and the like. As the President of the WMO Regional Association for Europe, what ways do you feel that the Congress should be looking towards in terms of these issues?

Prof. Grammelvedt: The environmental problems and the climate change problem will be the main issues for WMO in the years to come. That is very clear. And I think we have to build up environmental monitoring stations in Europe and also in the rest of the world. Europe is also very interested in giving aid and support to the developing countries. We need data from all over the globe and for the weather forecasting and, of course, to see if there is a climate change. So, therefore, by also helping the developing countries we are also helping ourselves. That is a very important issue.

Dr. Moore: You talk about environmental monitoring.

Prof. Grammelvedt: This is not new in Europe. We have for the last twenty years this project under the European Economic Commission for Europe in which we have been monitoring the pollution, especially the sulphur, in both the Western part of Europe and in the Eastern part of Europe. This is now a project which has lasted for almost fifteen or sixteen years. We are monitoring the pollution level in the whole region. We are also making a calculation of the transport of pollution across the boundaries of the different countries.

Dr. Moore: This is a transnational issue.

Prof. Grammelvedt: Yes, it is the transboundary transport of pollution and the calculation we are doing. The monitoring we are doing is the base for the conversion of reducing the sulphur content.

Dr. Moore: Do you link the monitoring of the pollution in the environment with the meteorological data?

Prof. Grammelvedt: Yes, they are all a related type of data. You cannot monitor only the pollution components. You also have to monitor the weather and the whole atmosphere.

Dr. Moore: And does this come under the rubric of WMO?

Prof. Grammelvedt: Yes, mainly WMO and partly UNEP. So then in the future, there will be a continuous cooperation between WMO and UNEP.

Dr. Moore: From a European perspective what do you think are the main resolutions of importance which have come out of Congress?

Prof. Grammelvedt: I think the creation of the Global Atmosphere Watch and also the Global Climate Observing System are the two most important results from the observational view point. They will have a long lasting effect. But one problem is to try and find the means to finance the Global Climate Observing System.

Dr. Moore: Given the importance of all the matters you have been talking about and the relation to other Organizations, clearly WMO is going to be cooperating closely with all the Organizations which are involved with the same problem. How do you see that developing?

Prof. Grammelvedt: I think there are many different agencies who want to be involved in environmental monitoring. Especially in Europe and in European Commission, there is a desire to build up a strong institution to monitor the composition of the atmosphere. But I think that in the end, these monitoring systems will merge into one global monitoring system of the environment including the atmosphere and all types of meteorological instruments for observation.

Dr. Moore: So will there be a need for a new Organization to supervise such monitoring?

Prof. Grammelvedt: No, I don't think so. I think WMO can take part in this as the leading Organization at this time.

Dr. Moore: Thank you very much indeed for the most interesting talk.