



**United Nations**

# **Review of governing body structures in the World Meteorological Organization**

**Report of the Joint Inspection Unit**

**Prepared by Eileen A. Cronin**





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## *Executive summary*

In July 2025, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) received a request from the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), on behalf of the Executive Council, to review the WMO governance framework. The topic was added to the Unit's 2025 work programme. The aim of the review was to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the WMO governance structure with a view to identifying areas for improvement and benchmarking its governance against that of other United Nations specialized agencies to identify areas in which WMO diverges from common practices.

The WMO governance model still reflects its origins in the International Meteorological Organization, a non-governmental body founded in 1873. While the secretariat has integrated more closely with the United Nations system, the governance framework has evolved only incrementally. This is reflected in the Convention of the World Meteorological Organization, which contains outdated provisions that are misaligned with sustainable and effective governance standards. As a result, WMO is an outlier in several key governance areas, with notable risks related to the Secretary-General's accountability to the Members of the Organization, insufficient segregation of duties, cross-representation across governance structures and gaps in oversight.

### **Updating the WMO Convention**

Clarifications added to the General Regulations show that Members and the WMO secretariat recognize that the Convention no longer meets the Organization's needs. Although amending foundational documents is complex, the review identified seven articles suitable for targeted revisions. The first step for amending the Convention would be for the Executive Council to establish a task force to draft options and recommendations for Congress in this regard (**recommendation 1**).

### **Leadership and membership**

WMO is the only United Nations specialized agency whose executive head lacks accountability to its Members, a core United Nations governance principle; Congress should address this gap and reconsider the role of the President, which still reflects the non-governmental origins of WMO (**recommendation 2**). The review identified an insufficient separation of duties and excessive workloads for certain functions. This is largely due to cross-representation, whereby governing body officers serve on multiple bodies, duplicating efforts and limiting diversity of perspectives (**recommendation 3**).

### **Constituent bodies: Congress and the Executive Council**

Congress and the Executive Council have not undergone governance reforms in the past, and their current functioning reflects only incremental adjustments. Congress needs clearer rules, a sharper mandate, more effective debate practices and greater agility. The four-year intersessional period, now used by only two other United Nations specialized agencies, is increasingly impractical and has required extraordinary sessions to fill the gap (**recommendation 4**).

Members have raised concerns about representation on the Executive Council, unclear regional seat distribution and its focus on technical rather than oversight matters. The high volume of resolutions adopted by the Executive Council may also warrant review. WMO differs from peer United Nations specialized agencies in a few key areas, including having an executive body without intergovernmental status that

reviews its budget and expenditure (**recommendation 5**) and that provides voting rights to its 10 ex officio members. Reassigning these ex officio seats to members specifically elected for the Executive Council would broaden representation and prompt a reassessment of regional seat distribution (**recommendation 6**).

#### **Constituent bodies: regional associations and technical commissions**

Regional associations have been central to recent governance reform discussions, as their mandates have expanded while resources have not. Coordination challenges with technical commissions have further strained capacity, prompting the creation of parallel scientific and technical teams within regional structures, in part to compensate for limited representation of Members in technical commissions. A pragmatic revision of the role of regional associations should leverage their proximity to Members to identify regional needs and priorities and align their functions with regional governance requirements (**recommendation 7**).

Technical commissions underwent a major reform in 2019, and their number was reduced from eight to two. However, the terminated structures have re-emerged in other forms, and additional scientific and technical bodies have appeared outside the commissions' scope, which has produced siloed discussions and overlapping mandates. These systemic issues support the recommendation to review the establishment of subsidiary bodies outside the commissions and integrate them into commission workstreams (**recommendation 8**), reducing duplication and improving coherence.

The Inspector also highlights the overly complex strategic planning process, which runs through three parallel workstreams: secretariat, technical commissions and regional associations. Finally, stakeholders consistently noted poor sequencing of governing body sessions, which prevents decisions and priorities from informing one another in a timely way.

#### **Committees and task forces of the Executive Council**

The review identified significant overlap between Executive Council members and the membership of most of its subsidiary bodies, limiting diversity of perspectives and reinforcing insular decision-making. Scientific and strategic issues are repeatedly discussed across multiple forums, creating duplication and inefficiency. Stakeholders highlighted redundant discussions held at the level of the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee. Merging the two committees responsible for technical coordination and strategic planning would be expected to streamline deliberations (**recommendation 9**).

#### **Oversight in governance**

For oversight of the secretariat, Congress and the Executive Council rely on the Financial Advisory Committee, comprising Member representatives, and the Audit and Oversight Committee, comprising individual external experts – both advisory bodies. The Financial Advisory Committee lacks the mandate, independence and authority required for effective financial oversight and reflects broader governance issues, such as cross-representation and limited geographical balance. Revising its terms of reference and transforming it into a regionally balanced, elected oversight committee would strengthen the WMO governance framework (**recommendation 10**).

### **Interactions within the United Nations system and secretariat support to governance**

The participation of WMO in the United Nations system is essential for aligning WMO with United Nations priorities and compensating for its somewhat limited diplomatic presence in governance structures. Although WMO maintains institutional links with the United Nations Secretariat, its role in system-wide processes, such as contributing to and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals, remains narrow, limiting its influence. This underpins the recommendation, addressed to the Secretary-General, to develop a formal outreach plan to position WMO within upcoming United Nations system-wide goals (**recommendation 11**). At the same time, the costs of creating and supporting governing bodies are opaque, with no clear accountability for decisions to establish or terminate subsidiary structures. The Executive Council could request the Secretary-General to present such information (**recommendation 12**).

### **Risks and recommendations**

WMO Members have consistently demonstrated a commitment to modernizing the Organization's governance, yet significant structural weaknesses persist, largely rooted in its non-governmental origins and its founding document, the Convention. WMO diverges from United Nations governance norms, in particular due to the fact that its executive body is not intergovernmental, the limited authority and accountability exercised by the Financial Advisory Committee and the blurred leadership responsibilities between the Secretary-General and the President of WMO. Addressing these structural flaws is essential to ensure clear authority lines, proper accountability and sustainable governance.

To this end, the report contains 12 formal recommendations, of which 11 are addressed to the supreme governing body or executive body of WMO and 1 to the Secretary-General. These recommendations are complemented by 33 informal recommendations.



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## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Executive summary . . . . .	iii
Abbreviations and acronyms . . . . .	viii
I. Introduction . . . . .	1
A. Background . . . . .	1
B. Objectives and scope . . . . .	3
C. Methodology . . . . .	4
II. Changes to the Convention: practical, innovative and sustainable governance . . . . .	7
III. Leadership and membership . . . . .	14
IV. Constituent bodies: Congress and the Executive Council . . . . .	24
A. Congress . . . . .	24
B. Executive Council . . . . .	28
V. Constituent bodies: regional associations, technical commissions and cross-cutting issues . . . . .	34
A. Regional associations . . . . .	34
B. Technical commissions . . . . .	39
C. Cross-cutting issues . . . . .	42
VI. Committees and task forces of the Executive Council . . . . .	44
VII. Oversight in governance . . . . .	48
A. Financial Advisory Committee . . . . .	49
B. Audit and Oversight Committee . . . . .	52
VIII. Interactions within the United Nations system and secretariat support to governance . . . . .	53
A. External representation and links with the United Nations system . . . . .	53
B. Secretariat support provided to governing bodies . . . . .	55
IX. Prioritizing a way forward . . . . .	58
Annexes	
I. WMO governance structure . . . . .	60
II. Governance benchmarks and WMO assessment . . . . .	61
III. Comparisons of governance across UN specialized agencies . . . . .	73
IV. Survey methodology . . . . .	82
V. Summary of suggested amendments to the WMO Convention . . . . .	83
VI. Summary of suggested amendments to the General Regulations . . . . .	86
VII. Cost of secretariat support to governing bodies . . . . .	89
VIII. Governance trajectory for the Early Warnings for All initiative . . . . .	91
IX. Overview of actions to be taken by the participating organizations on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit . . . . .	94

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## Abbreviations and acronyms

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
INFCOM	Commission for Observation, Infrastructure and Information Systems
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight Services
SERCOM	Commission for Weather, Climate, Hydrological, Marine and Related Environmental Services and Applications
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UN Tourism	World Tourism Organization
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WFP	World Food Programme

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WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization



## I. Introduction

1. At its nineteenth session, held in 2023, the World Meteorological Congress requested the Executive Council to commission an external evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the governing bodies and structures of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to inform the decisions of the twentieth session of Congress, to be held in 2027. In June 2025, the Executive Council further decided that the objective of the review would be: “to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the WMO governing body structures. The evaluation will look into the structure and function of core WMO governing bodies and their continued relevance and will make recommendations for improvement.”<sup>1</sup>

2. In July 2025, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system received a request from the WMO Secretary-General on behalf of the WMO Executive Council<sup>2</sup> to conduct a review of the Organization’s governance framework, a topic that was subsequently added to the Unit’s 2025 programme of work. The agreement of JIU to conduct the review was communicated in a letter to the Secretary-General on 15 July 2025. The review of governing body structures in WMO is in line with the JIU long-term strategic framework 2020–2029, under the thematic area of focus (d), governance arrangements and mechanisms.

### A. Background

#### Previous reviews of WMO

3. JIU has delivered three previous reviews on WMO. In 2007, JIU issued a review of management and administration in WMO<sup>3</sup> and a review of the working capital fund in WMO<sup>4</sup> and, in 2021, another review of management and administration in WMO.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned reviews, the Unit also issued confidential letters in 2004 and 2008 responding to management issues and internal controls.

4. The most recent management and administration review, published in 2021, built on the findings of the 2007 assessment by reinforcing the requests made by JIU for continuous improvement in Member engagement, decision-making flexibility and regional inclusivity for governing bodies. JIU emphasized the need to strengthen resource efficiency through more structured governance processes. The incremental approach recommended by JIU encouraged WMO to engage in ongoing improvements, and to respond to emerging issues as they arose. The 2021 JIU review of WMO recognized the reform effort as a significant investment to streamline the governance structure of WMO and recommended that it be continuously adjusted to ensure that it meets its stated objectives and is assessed for lessons learned and good practices.

#### Previous governance reforms and results

5. WMO has been working on reforming its governance framework for more than a decade. It launched a major governance restructuring in 2015, which was then translated into a phased reform plan developed by the Executive Council between 2016 and 2017. A transition plan and a Constituent Body Reform Task Force were established in 2018

<sup>1</sup> WMO, “External evaluation of effectiveness and efficiency of WMO bodies and structures”, document EC-79/Doc. 7.2.3, para. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Letter 07598/SG/2025, dated 18 June 2025.

<sup>3</sup> [JIU/REP/2007/11](#).

<sup>4</sup> [JIU/REP/2007/3](#).

<sup>5</sup> [JIU/REP/2021/1](#).

to guide the process. At that time, WMO had eight intergovernmental technical commissions supported by numerous subsidiary bodies.

6. In 2019, Congress approved a consolidated reform that abolished the eight existing commissions and replaced them with two intergovernmental technical commissions – the Commission for Observation, Infrastructure and Information Systems (INFCOM) and the Commission for Weather, Climate, Hydrological, Marine and Related Environmental Services and Applications (SERCOM) – to reduce fragmentation and improve efficiency. Their technical mandates are currently carried out through multi-level subsidiary structures and, by 2025, the two commissions were overseeing a combined 102 active subsidiary bodies. It is important to note that the mandates of the former commissions were not discarded in the 2019 reform; instead they were redistributed across the new structure of technical bodies.

7. A 2021 JIU survey found that following the governance reform, over half of governing body members experienced notable improvements in participation and in decision-making processes, and it highlighted the need for simpler structures, fewer overlapping bodies, more time-limited tasks and better geographical and gender balance in the membership of governing bodies. An external evaluation of the reform of technical bodies delivered in 2022 issued 36 recommendations on governance, planning and performance monitoring, although less than half were adopted as originally proposed.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Governance structure of WMO**

8. Established by the ratification of the WMO Convention on 23 March 1950, WMO became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1951. Its membership currently comprises 187 Member States and 6 Territories. The mandate of the Organization is to provide the framework for international cooperation at a global scale on weather, climate and water cycle, for the development of meteorology and operational hydrology. The supreme governing body of WMO, and its highest-level decision-making structure, is the World Meteorological Congress (Congress), which meets in ordinary sessions every four years. Congress, the Executive Council, the regional associations and the technical commissions represent the constituent bodies of WMO (see annex I).

9. The Executive Council is responsible for coordinating WMO programmes and using its budget in line with Congress decisions. The six regional associations are responsible for the coordination of meteorological, hydrological and related activities within their respective regions.<sup>7</sup> Technical commissions, consisting of technical experts nominated by Member States, are expected to review advances in science and technology and make recommendations on international standards for methods, procedures, techniques and practices in meteorology and operational hydrology to be included in the WMO Technical Regulations, guides and manuals.

10. Additional bodies, which provide advice on specific subjects, have been established by Congress, such as the Research Board, Scientific Advisory Panel, Joint WMO-Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) Collaborative Board, and Financial Advisory Committee. The Executive Council created the Audit and Oversight Committee to provide expert advice on oversight matters.

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<sup>6</sup> Ernst & Young, *External Evaluation of the WMO Governance Reform: Final Evaluation Report* (2022).

<sup>7</sup> The regions of WMO are: Region I – Africa (53 Members); Region II – Asia (34 Members); Region III – South America (12 Members); Region IV – North America, Central America and the Caribbean (22 Members); Region V – South-West Pacific (22 Members); and Region VI – Europe (50 Members).

11. The WMO secretariat, headquartered in Geneva, is led by a Secretary-General who is responsible for the overall technical and administrative work of the secretariat and is the legal representative of the Organization.

#### **Relevant documents and terminology**

12. The basic documents governing the establishment and functioning of WMO<sup>8</sup> are listed, in order of their legal hierarchy: (a) the Convention; (b) the General Regulations; (c) the Staff Regulations; and (d) the Financial Regulations. These are complemented by a second set of key documents, the Technical Regulations,<sup>9</sup> which translate the WMO mandate into practice.

13. One important distinction made in WMO documents and throughout the present report is the use of “Member” (understood as Member State or Member Territory) and “member” (understood as an individual participating in the work of various governing bodies).<sup>10</sup>

14. The officers of the Organization are designated by article 6 of the Convention as the President and Vice-Presidents of WMO and the presidents and vice-presidents of the regional associations.

## **B. Objectives and scope**

15. The overall objective of the review was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the WMO governance structure, whether it is fit for purpose for responding to current challenges and to identify gaps and propose actions to improve the Organization’s overall governance arrangements. To this end, the aim of the review was to:

(a) Analyse the functioning of the governing bodies, with a focus on the constituent bodies that were not the subject of the most recent governance reform, in 2019;

(b) Examine the key documents concerning the foundation and functioning of WMO, their internal coherence and their suitability with respect to present challenges and contexts;

(c) Examine the governing bodies responsible for the oversight of the Organization and how effectively they deliver upon their mandates;

(d) Analyse WMO efforts to achieve equitable generational, gender and regional representation in its governance structure;

(e) Examine the secretariat functions linked to the support of governing bodies and the secretariat’s contribution to enhancing the presence of WMO in the United Nations system;

<sup>8</sup> WMO, *Basic Documents No. 1*, 2023 ed., document WMO-No. 15 (containing the Convention, the General Regulations, the Staff Regulations, the Financial Regulations and agreements).

<sup>9</sup> WMO, *Technical Regulations: Basic Documents No. 2*, vol. I, *General Meteorological Standards and Recommended Practices* (2023 ed., updated in 2025), vol. II, *Meteorological Service for International Air Navigation* (2018 ed., updated in 2021), and vol. III, *Hydrology* (2021 ed.), document WMO-No. 49.

<sup>10</sup> See the distinction made in the definition of the two terms in the definitions section of the General Regulations.

(f) Identify the current governance-related practices in WMO and how these compare to those at other United Nations specialized agencies.<sup>11</sup>

16. The scope of the review includes the WMO Convention, its governance structures and the implementation of reforms undertaken as well as the functioning of Congress, the Executive Council, technical commissions, regional associations and subsidiary bodies. The review focused on how WMO constituent bodies direct, oversee and are accountable for the Organization. It did not include a comprehensive review of how WMO manages its substantive mandate, including the norms, standards, and rules within its domain of expertise. The review also does not include in its scope the administration, management or programmatic areas of WMO. However, the review does include an assessment of the interactions between the governing bodies and the WMO secretariat relative to their mandate and respective responsibilities.

### C. Methodology

17. **Methods.** The review was conducted in accordance with the JIU statute and internal procedures. The Inspector used a range of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods from various sources to ensure the consistency, validity and reliability of its findings. The quantitative data used in the preparation of the present report was current as at November 2025. The qualitative data was valid as at December 2025. In accordance with the collaborative approach taken by JIU with its stakeholders, comments and suggestions from WMO management and governing body officers and members were sought at various stages of the review process.

18. **Stages.** The preparation of the report included:

(a) *Desk review.* A desk review of foundational documents, rules of procedure, terms of reference and session reports of all governing bodies, as well as existing reviews and evaluation reports of WMO;

(b) *Benchmarking.* Based on best practices in United Nations governance, a set of benchmarks were developed against which WMO has been assessed and the identified gaps were highlighted (see annex II for a summary of the proposed benchmarks and WMO assessment). The benchmarks cover the following topics: governance and leadership; effectiveness of governing bodies; strategic direction and planning; organizational performance; and oversight and accountability. In addition, a comparative analysis of key governance components across United Nations specialized agencies was conducted to provide an assessment of the alignment of WMO with similar United Nations system organizations (see annex III for comparisons on key topics across United Nations specialized agencies);

(c) *Questionnaire.* A corporate questionnaire was issued to the WMO secretariat covering governance arrangements, results from recommendations and secretariat roles and responsibilities in carrying out the various reforms. Follow-up clarification and documentary requests were also elicited;

(d) *Interviews with stakeholders.* JIU conducted 40 interviews with a total of 57 individuals, including WMO officers and members of governing bodies, representatives

<sup>11</sup> The comparative analysis was made across the following United Nations specialized agencies: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Tourism Organization (UN Tourism), the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

and stakeholders from Member States, external stakeholders, WMO secretariat staff and governance experts;

(e) *Online survey to members of WMO governing bodies.* A survey was conducted between November and December 2025 to collect the viewpoints of governing body members on various aspects of WMO governance arrangements. A total of 641 members were invited to complete the survey, and 129 responses were received (a response rate of approximately 20 per cent<sup>12</sup>). Findings from the survey are summarized throughout the report (see annex IV for details on the corresponding methodology);

(f) *Direct observation.* The JIU team observed the 2025 extraordinary sessions of Congress and the Executive Council, including the online pre-consultations scheduled with Members, and numerous sessions of subsidiary governing bodies, including the Financial Advisory Committee, the Audit and Oversight Committee, the Technical Coordination Committee, the Capacity Development Panel, the Research Board, the Scientific Advisory Panel and the Joint WMO-IOC Collaborative Board.

19. **Limitations.** The time to complete this review was compressed to meet the anticipated presentation of the report to the Executive Council at its eightieth session, scheduled to be held in June 2026, creating some exceptions to internal processes and procedures. During the data collection phase of the review, some governing body members did not respond to requests for interviews and, in a few cases, did not attend scheduled interviews. Additionally, the response to the corporate questionnaire from the secretariat was delayed by several weeks.

20. **Acknowledgement and finalization of the report.** The Inspector wishes to express her appreciation to all members of WMO governing bodies and staff of the WMO secretariat who assisted in the preparation of the report by participating in the interviews and surveys and who willingly shared their knowledge and perspectives. The Inspector notes the excellent level of cooperation and responsiveness of the WMO secretariat during the review process. Due consideration was given to protecting the confidentiality of stakeholders who responded to questionnaires and/or participated in interviews.

21. **Internal peer review and quality control.** In accordance with article 11 (2) of the JIU statute and for quality assurance purposes, the draft report was subjected to an internal peer review to obtain comments from JIU Inspectors and to test the recommendations against the collective wisdom of the Unit. The revised report was then circulated to WMO management to correct any factual errors. The report was finalized taking into consideration all the comments received, although the final responsibility for the review rests solely with the author.

22. **Independence.** In fulfilling its professional and ethical obligations, the JIU team was not subject to any external influence that could have affected its independence, fairness, neutrality or professional integrity during the planning, execution and drafting phases of this report.

23. **About the report.** This report contains nine chapters, starting with an examination of the Convention (chapter II), followed by the leadership and membership of governing bodies (chapter III), constituent bodies (chapters IV and V), committees and task forces of the Executive Council (chapter VI), oversight by governing bodies (chapter VII), interactions within the United Nations system and secretariat support to governance (chapter VIII) and a final chapter that identifies priority matters to be addressed (chapter IX). Each chapter begins with a summary of the conclusions, key findings and

<sup>12</sup> The overall response rate is indicative, as a single reply was submitted in several cases on behalf of multiple respondents representing the same Member.

formal recommendations and, where relevant, the referenced articles of the Convention. All matters discussed in chapter II as part of the suggested amendments to the Convention are further analysed in the relevant subsequent sections of the report. Annexes I to IX provide support and additional information on the findings from the review.

24. **Recommendations.** The present report contains 12 formal recommendations, of which 11 are addressed to the supreme governing body or executive body of WMO and 1 to the Secretary-General. To facilitate the handling of the present report and the monitoring and implementation of its recommendations, annex IX contains a table specifying whether each recommendation requires action by a governing body or by the executive head. In addition to the formal recommendations, 33 informal recommendations, appearing in bold in the narrative, complement the formal recommendations and provide additional suggestions for reinforcing the governance practices in WMO.

## II. Changes to the Convention: practical, innovative and sustainable governance

### Summary of the chapter

The outdated governance structure of WMO established in the Convention lacks clear leadership, accountability and alignment with United Nations best practices, creating representation gaps and forcing inconsistent workarounds. Targeted amendments –focused on the functions of Congress and the frequency of its sessions, the composition of the Executive Council and the role of officers – could modernize decision-making and strengthen coherence. Selective revisions to key articles would streamline governance without requiring a full overhaul.

### Findings

- The Convention reflects an outdated governance model inherited from the International Meteorological Organization.
- The General Regulations have been updated and internal practices have evolved to compensate for outdated articles, but they cannot override the Convention, creating inconsistencies and misalignments.
- Article 22 on the Secretary-General’s accountability to a function (the President) poses a governance risk as it contradicts United Nations norms by which the executive head of the Organization should be accountable to its Members.
- The fact that Executive Council members do not serve in an intergovernmental role, pursuant to article 6 of the Convention, remains an exception among the United Nations agencies and impedes the effective exercise of their responsibilities.
- WMO, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) are the only United Nations specialized agencies still operating on a four-year meeting cycle for the supreme governing body – an approach rooted in pre-1900s models and misaligned with current fast paced scientific and technical environments and the more agile governance of other United Nations specialized agencies.
- The Convention has been amended eight times through Congress resolutions, mainly to increase the number of Executive Council seats, without requiring parliamentary ratification, demonstrating precedent for targeted revisions.

### Formal recommendation

- The Executive Council should form a task force to examine amending articles 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14 and 22 of the Convention, as well as related General Regulations.

25. WMO traces its origins to the International Meteorological Organization, founded in 1873 with a charter adopted in 1878. By the mid-1930s, the non-governmental status of the Organization had become increasingly unsuitable amid rapid economic and technological change. From 1946 onward, its Directors debated an organizational

reform, and in 1947 proposed a new constitution to transform it into an intergovernmental body. The International Meteorological Organization formally became WMO when the Convention entered into force in 1950. WMO was designated as a United Nations specialized agency in 1951.<sup>13</sup>

### **Transition from non-governmental organization to United Nations specialized agency**

26. The transition from the International Meteorological Organization to WMO involved careful consideration of its intergovernmental role, its integration into the United Nations system, and the preservation of its scientific and technical character. These origins are reflected in the Convention’s preamble and several articles, most notably article 6, which require Executive Council members to serve as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members, while being Directors of National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services in their countries of origin. The non-governmental organization legacy also appears in articles 4 and 22, which assigns the President to lead both Congress and the Executive Council, as well as direct the work of the Secretary-General. The four-year interval for Congress sessions mentioned in article 10 (a) likely reflects the technological and travel constraints of the 1940s–1950s.

27. Article 28 outlines the procedures for amending the Convention and the requirements for amendments to come into force. Although many stakeholders expressed reluctance to amend the Convention, it has already been amended eight times through resolutions adopted by Congress.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, text from one of the amendments reminds Members of the importance of “keeping the Convention under continuing review in order that its efficiency as the principal working instrument of the Organization may not be impaired” and instructs the Executive Council to “bring to the notice of Members any deficiencies or ambiguities in the Convention”.<sup>15</sup>

### **“Deficiencies and ambiguities” in the WMO Convention**

28. As outlined above, the WMO Convention is a historical document that reflected an evolution from a non-governmental organization model to a nascent intergovernmental, United Nations specialized agency. While it remains relevant in many respects, certain aspects are outdated, misaligned with governance practices from United Nations system organizations, and holds inherent risks to sustainable governance, delegation of duties, accountability and agile decision-making.

29. As the foundational document for WMO, the Convention’s primacy is unquestionable in the legal hierarchy of the Organization. However, it contains deficiencies and ambiguities, which parallel and complementary provisions in other regulations and policy documents have tried to address and the Organization has grown to depend on as there has been little appetite to substantively amend the Convention. The Convention should be the overarching governance document building the foundation for all other regulations and policies instead of being corrected by them.

### **Previous JIU recommendations related to WMO governance and the WMO Convention**

30. Over the last 20 years, the JIU has issued 13 recommendations directly to the governing and/or legislative bodies of WMO, including nearly half of the

<sup>13</sup> The history of IMO and WMO are available at <https://wmo.int/about-wmo/history-of-imo-and-wmo>.

<sup>14</sup> The Convention has been amended eight times: at the third, fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth, ninth, fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of Congress. Six resolutions concerned increases in the number of Executive Council seats and two were intended to clarify the text.

<sup>15</sup> *Third Congress of the World Meteorological Organization: Abridged Report with Resolutions, Geneva, 1–28 April 1959*, document WMO-No. 88, resolution 4.

recommendations from its 2007 management and administration review<sup>16</sup> and one recommendation from its 2021 management and administration review.<sup>17</sup> Of these, eight were accepted and subsequently reported as implemented by WMO.

#### **Article 6: the Executive Council is not intergovernmental**

31. The first recommendation from the 2007 JIU report,<sup>18</sup> requested Congress to amend article 6 of the Convention<sup>19</sup> to clarify the status of the Executive Council as an intergovernmental body. This recommendation was not accepted and the response, which came from the Executive Council itself, conveyed that the function and composition of the Executive Council is driven by the science and technical nature of WMO and that Member involvement is adequately ensured between Congress sessions.<sup>20</sup> While there are some examples in other United Nations specialized agencies of members of committees or commissions in governing bodies serving in a professional or technical capacity to provide their scientific or technical expertise,<sup>21</sup> no other executive body of a United Nations system organization diverges from an intergovernmental model. The challenge of having members of an executive body not serving in an intergovernmental capacity is most acute in budget deliberations, where the Executive Council approves<sup>22</sup> the annual expenditure of the Organization.<sup>23</sup> Budget and financial deliberations, given their potential and ultimate implications on Member State contributions, require an intergovernmental governance model to ensure proper representation of Members.

32. From interviews, it was noted that some believe that Executive Council members already behave as government representatives in practice as they are civil servants in their national governments. This informal arrangement is neither disciplined nor sustainable. The Inspector therefore reiterates the need to amend article 6 (b) to establish an intergovernmental model for the executive body of WMO. It is important to note that amending this article would have an impact on the General Regulations and other parts of the Convention, such as articles 8 (j) and 13.

#### **Article 13: composition of the Executive Council**

33. Shifting the Executive Council to an intergovernmental model would require Members to appoint Permanent Representatives and their alternates to serve on the Council with voting rights, as is standard in other United Nations entities. The current Council has 37 members: 27 elected to Council and 10 ex officio (the President and the three Vice-Presidents of WMO and six regional association presidents). Under an intergovernmental model, by amending article 6 (b) and consequently article 13, these

<sup>16</sup> Twelve of the 27 recommendations contained in document [JIU/REP/2007/11](#) were made to either Congress or the Executive Council. Seven were accepted and reported as implemented.

<sup>17</sup> One of the four recommendations contained in document [JIU/REP/2021/1](#) was made to the Executive Council and was reported as implemented.

<sup>18</sup> [JIU/REP/2007/11](#).

<sup>19</sup> Which refers to members of the Executive Council serving as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members.

<sup>20</sup> WMO response to [JIU/REP/2007/11](#), para. 5: The Council decided that this recommendation did not require implementation in WMO, noting that the function and composition of the Executive Council is driven by the science and technical nature of WMO and that transparency of the work of the Executive Council is enhanced including through the participation of WMO Members in governance between sessions of Congress. See *Executive Council: Sixty-first Session – Abridged Final Report with Resolutions, Geneva, 3–12 June 2009*, document WMO-No. 1042, para. 7.2.51.

<sup>21</sup> For example, the ICAO Air Navigation Commission comprises independent technical commissioners and the ITU Radio Regulations Board consists of elected radio specialists, who serve as neutral arbiters.

<sup>22</sup> See article 14 (b) of the WMO Convention.

<sup>23</sup> See article 23 (b) of the WMO Convention.

10 ex officio<sup>24</sup> officers, not elected as Executive Council members, would no longer hold representational or voting roles and would instead participate as observers, similar to technical commission presidents. This change would allow broader Member representation without increasing the Council's size. The General Regulations would need to be revised to define observer roles and ensure that regional association presidents can effectively convey their members' views. This approach supports Members' interest in improving geographical balance and keeps WMO aligned with the executive body structures of other United Nations specialized agencies.

#### **Article 14: oversight and accountability role of the Executive Council**

34. The roles and responsibilities of the Executive Council should also be clarified to reflect the current practices of the Organization, as well as best practices from across the United Nations system.

35. One of the primary roles of an executive body in United Nations system governance is to provide oversight and accountability for financial, administrative and programmatic aspects of the work of the organization. This role is typically delegated to the executive body by its supreme governing body. In the case of oversight at WMO, this has been happening in practice with reporting by the Audit and Oversight Committee and the Financial Advisory Committee to the Executive Council, as well as by integrating accountability-related topics into Executive Council sessions. But in some cases, the reporting is also duplicated, with Congress receiving the same or similar reports as the executive body. This duplicative reporting likely traces back to article 6 so as to ensure that an intergovernmental body, Congress, is checking the actions of Executive Council members who are serving as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members, or to the inherent oversight function of Congress over the responsibilities delegated to the Executive Council. The result is an inefficient and ineffective process for considering oversight and accountability matters.

36. Moreover, article 14 outlines the functions of the Executive Council but does not explicitly state its role in oversight and accountability of the technical and administrative work of the secretariat. This function is somewhat implied in the General Regulations<sup>25</sup> but not explicitly stated.

#### **Articles 4, 8 and 22: the role of the President and the accountability of the Secretary-General**

37. The roles and responsibilities of the President and Vice-Presidents are not aligned with United Nations practices and are an exception among the United Nations specialized agencies in a few facets, particularly in their duties of chairing multiple bodies. Article 4 of the Convention defines the WMO President and Vice-Presidents as heads of both Congress and the Executive Council.

38. No other United Nations system agency designates the same officer to lead both its supreme governing body and its executive body. This dual role impedes an adequate segregation of roles in the governance of the organization, especially for the function of the presidency, which is effectively reporting to itself when presenting Executive Council outcomes to Congress. Although regulation 7 of the General Regulations restricts members from holding dual office roles, it explicitly exempts article 4 (b) of

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<sup>24</sup> For the purpose of this review, ex officio means that a person is a member of a governing body by virtue of a position they already hold, not because they were appointed or elected specifically for that specific governing body.

<sup>25</sup> Regulations 153 and 154 of the General Regulations.

the Convention in order to avoid contradicting the latter.<sup>26</sup> The Convention should not incorporate the only exception to this rule.

39. Clarifying article 4 to define the officers' governance responsibilities and representational functions would bring the WMO leadership into line with the governance standards of the United Nations system.

40. Related to the duties of the officers, particularly the President, the most crucial issue to resolve in the Convention is article 22, which states: "The Secretary-General is responsible to the President of the Organization for the technical and administrative work of the Secretariat". Pursuant to the aforementioned article of the Convention, the Secretary-General is responsible only to the President. This, in effect, is a structural inconsistency as the Secretary-General is appointed by Members through a collective mechanism (i.e. Congress) but is responsible to a single function (i.e. the President). This arrangement goes against a core principle in United Nations governance: the Secretary-General should be accountable to Member States collectively, meaning that the accountability of the executive head is to the supreme governing body.

41. No other United Nations system organization has this practice. This aspect of the Convention puts the President of WMO in a position to direct the work of the Secretary-General. This is impractical as the position of President must be encumbered by a Director of a National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Service with a full-time position in their home country and may consequently not have the resources or skill set to perform this type of oversight. Moreover, the work (direction, funding, objectives, etc.) of WMO is set through a strategic plan, which is approved by its collective membership (Congress) – this document is expected to guide the work of the Secretary-General and the Organization overall.

42. Some safeguards exist, such as regular reporting to the Executive Council and Congress, as well as transparent contract details for the Secretary-General.<sup>27</sup> But these are not sufficient, and no performance appraisal has been conducted for a WMO Secretary-General in recent times. Assessing the performance of the Secretary-General should be addressed with a compact for the Secretary-General tied to the strategic plan, assessed by the Executive Council and reported on to Congress; that is, the same body that elects the position.

43. Article 22 should be amended to reinforce the accountability of the Secretary-General to all WMO Members through Congress. Amending article 22 would also necessitate a revision to article 8 (e) to reflect the accountability of the Secretary-General to Congress, by adding a specific reference to such reporting among functions assigned to Congress. This would subsequently provide clarity on both the position of President and the function of Secretary-General.

44. It should be noted by Congress that there is a current lack of clarity on the executive leadership of WMO externally as some online sources<sup>28</sup> confuse the roles of the Secretary-General and the President, which poses a risk to the credibility of WMO.

<sup>26</sup> Regulation 7 of the General Regulations: "Except as provided by Article 4 (b) of the Convention, no person shall be entitled to act at the same time as president or vice-president of more than one of the constituent bodies; or as president of a constituent body and an elected member of the Executive Council".

<sup>27</sup> *World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Final Report of the Nineteenth Session, Geneva, 22 May–2 June 2023*, document WMO-No. 1326, resolution 52.

<sup>28</sup> As a reflection of article 22 of the WMO Convention, some external websites and sources list the President as the executive head of WMO, for example, the analysis by the American Enterprise Institute of United Nations system organizations (see [www.aei.org/un-review/world-meteorological-organization/](http://www.aei.org/un-review/world-meteorological-organization/)). A search of Google for the leader of WMO lists both the President and the Secretary-General. Additionally, the current President maintains a separate website on the WMO presidency (see <https://wmo-president.com/>).

Further details and analysis, as well as recommendation 3 related to this topic, are found in chapter III.

#### **Article 10: the periodicity of Congress**

45. According to article 10 of the Convention, Congress “shall normally be convened at intervals as near as possible to four years”. As the 2007 JIU review also pointed out, only two other organizations –the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) – meet so infrequently. This situation was reconfirmed through the JIU comparative analysis across United Nations specialized agencies conducted for the current review. The majority of supreme governing bodies of other United Nations specialized agencies meet every two years and some meet annually.

46. The 2007 JIU review acknowledged that WMO is an outlier in the system in this regard, but the possibility of convening extraordinary sessions of Congress “somewhat mitigated” this concern and that changing the periodicity to two years was not feasible in 2007, but it should be considered in the future.<sup>29</sup>

47. Nearly 20 years and three extraordinary sessions of Congress later,<sup>30</sup> the Inspector calls for the formal revision of the periodicity of Congress sessions to provide WMO the agility needed to match the pace of change in science and technology, address current challenges in the United Nations system and strengthen accountability to Members. Extraordinary sessions cannot be a substitute for a predictable, sustainable meeting cycle that supports effective governance. This change would require an amendment to article 10 of the Convention.

48. A periodicity of every two years would mean that the terms of governing body officers, such as the President and Vice-Presidents, could also be two years as these are interlinked with the intersessional periods.<sup>31</sup> While UPU and ITU have four-year terms for the Presidents of their supreme governing bodies, these functions are limited to facilitating the governance of the respective body during its session. In fact, most United Nations specialized agencies assign one- or two-year terms to such functions whose duties focus primarily on facilitating governance. By contrast, the officers of WMO carry continuous and wider responsibilities throughout their four-year term.

49. Shorter terms for its officers would broaden opportunities for Member participation and align WMO with the governance practices of other United Nations agencies. It could also make the presidency more accessible to candidates from low-income and lower-middle-income countries, which may face resource constraints under the current four-year, intense-commitment model. Ultimately, a two-year Congress cycle could also allow staggered elections to maintain continuity. This topic is covered in more detail in chapter III.

#### **Amending articles of the Convention to provide effective and sustainable governance for WMO**

50. The General Regulations and other documents have been used to correct or clarify some of the issues with the Convention as outlined above. There are other examples in the General Regulations that go beyond clarifying provisions of the Convention, such as regulation 153 on the duties of the Secretary-General and accountability to the Executive Council and the President. The creation of the Disciplinary Board, which

<sup>29</sup> See [JIU/REP/2007/11](#), paras. 13–14.

<sup>30</sup> Extraordinary sessions of Congress were held in 2012, 2021 and 2025.

<sup>31</sup> See regulation 10 of the General Regulations.

addresses allegations against the Secretary-General, is another example of a structural device and related procedures used to offset article 22 of the Convention.

51. The primary issue with the workarounds is the policy hierarchy for WMO. As for other United Nations system organizations, the Convention is the highest-level legal instrument. The General Regulations, guidance documents, other types of regulations and rules all must conform to and align with the highest-level document, in line with the established hierarchy of norms. Sustainable change to the governance of WMO should be either aligned with the Convention or the Convention should be amended. As outlined above, the Inspector strongly believes in the need to amend certain articles of the Convention in a targeted and disciplined manner.

52. Based on past amendments<sup>32</sup> and the analysis conducted, the proposed changes could be adopted through Congress resolutions, which require a two-thirds majority of votes. Should parliamentary approval be deemed necessary for certain provisions, this should not deter Congress from addressing critical issues to mitigate governance risks, align WMO with United Nations system standards, and ensure modern, sustainable governance.

53. Annex V provides a summary of the Convention articles proposed to be examined and amended to align WMO with United Nations principles and other specialized agencies, mitigate risks and provide for sustainable and agile governance. These are also referenced across subsequent chapters of the report. Annex VI complements these changes with proposals of adjustments to the General Regulations. These two annexes could be the basis for a road map related to the proposed amendments.

54. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this review was requested by the Executive Council to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of WMO governing structures, and the following recommendation is therefore intended to reflect the mandate of the Executive Council and to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the governance of WMO:

#### **Recommendation 1**

**The Executive Council should, at its eighty-second ordinary session, in 2027, form a task force to formulate recommendations to Congress regarding potential amendments to articles 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 14 and 22 of the Convention, as well as related General Regulations.**

<sup>32</sup> Pursuant to article 28 of the WMO Convention, the text of any proposed amendments to the Convention is to be communicated by the Secretary-General to Members of the Organization at least six months in advance of its consideration by Congress. At plenary, following the approval by two thirds of the Members which are States, the amendments are passed and subsequently come into force. As the past amendments to the Convention did not impose any additional obligations upon Members, they did not require prior parliamentary approval.

### III. Leadership and membership

#### Summary of the chapter

Governance roles should be clearly defined, with the President's function refocused on facilitating processes in line with United Nations specialized agencies and with Vice-Presidents being formally assigned to chair key governing bodies, thus reinforcing segregation of duties. Broader Member participation could be achieved by reducing officers' workloads, introducing two-year (potentially staggered) terms, and reassessing the roles of regional association presidents, while limiting cross-representation in governing bodies in order to diversify viewpoints. Strengthening accountability for the Secretary-General through a performance compact, establishing a rapporteur role for Congress drafting committees and applying a code of conduct to all nominated experts would reinforce integrity and coherence across the governance system.

#### Findings

- The roles of the President and Vice-Presidents of WMO, as well as presidents and vice-presidents of regional associations lack clarity.
- The duties assigned to the President are different than the standard in United Nations system entities, where such roles typically focus on facilitating governance and chairing meetings of supreme governing bodies.
- WMO lacks adequate segregation of governance duties across its supreme, executive and oversight bodies.
- Four-year renewable terms for officers and Executive Council members are among the longest in the United Nations system and impose significant burdens on officials who also hold national roles.
- Since 2011, only five of sixteen WMO President and Vice-President positions were held by individuals from low or lower-middle income countries, and only two were held by women; all Presidents elected during this period came from high-income countries.
- Regional association presidents are required to participate in multiple governance bodies, adding to their workload.
- Pursuant to the Convention, the Secretary-General is accountable to the President rather than to Congress, which is a risk to governance accountability and an anomaly within the United Nations system because of the concentration of influence in one function (i.e. the President) and the reduced oversight by Member States over the technical and administrative work of the secretariat.
- There is no comprehensive document outlining expected outcomes for the Secretary-General beyond his or her contract and WMO strategic plans.
- The drafting of resolutions during sessions of Congress relies on plenary debates or ad hoc committees, which can be politicized and unbalanced.
- The current code of conduct does not cover nominated experts serving on subsidiary bodies addressing scientific and technical issues.

- Gender balance and regional representation are issues across governing bodies.

#### **Convention articles discussed**

- Articles 4, 8 and 22

#### **Formal recommendations**

- Reflect individual accountability of the Secretary-General to WMO Members, as a function of Congress and clarify the role of the President of WMO as being primarily to facilitate governance.
- Review the terms of reference of all governance structures to promote wider participation of members and limit cross-representation and ex officio participation to a minimum.

55. The Convention identifies the leadership functions of WMO as the officers of the Organization, and the Secretary-General. The President, Vice-Presidents of WMO and the Secretary-General are elected in ordinary sessions of Congress, currently held every four years. In addition, each regional association has its own elected president and vice-president. Similarly to Congress, such elections at regional levels take place every four years.<sup>33</sup> All elected officials in the functions of presidents and vice-presidents of WMO and of regional associations must be persons who are designated as Directors of their National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services.<sup>34</sup>

56. The modernization of WMO governance will require amendments to several Convention articles, particularly those concerning the functions of the Organization's officers. Interviews and survey results underscore that those in leadership roles – such as the WMO President and Vice-Presidents, and the presidents of technical commissions and regional associations – have significant influence on decision-making and on facilitating discussions within their respective bodies. Stakeholders consistently indicated the need for clearer definitions of the roles and responsibilities of the WMO President and regional association presidents. They also highlighted that the roles of vice-presidents, across all governing bodies where it exists, would benefit from reframing and could be strengthened through the assignment of additional responsibilities.

#### **The functions of the President and the accountability arrangements for the Secretary-General: outliers in the United Nations system**

57. Beyond the Convention, the functions of the President are further expanded in regulation 8 of the General Regulations. The functions described in this regulation span from guiding and coordinating the work of constituent bodies of the Organization (i.e. Congress, the Executive Council, technical commissions and regional associations) to issuing directives to the Secretary-General and acting on behalf of the Executive Council in certain cases.<sup>35</sup> The breadth of responsibilities assigned to this one position creates conflicts between roles that are accountable, responsible and consulted on financial, policy and oversight matters. No other United Nations system organization vests this much authority in one presiding officer, and the current arrangement risks undermining

<sup>33</sup> See regulations 67 and 137 of the General Regulations.

<sup>34</sup> See article 6 of the WMO Convention.

<sup>35</sup> This showcases another example of the General Regulations not being solely used for clarifying the Convention, but for adding elements beyond the conditions set by the Convention.

the accountability of the Secretary-General collectively to Congress and to the Members of WMO.

58. JIU analysis (see annex III) shows that in all other United Nations system organizations, the President or Chair of the supreme governing body focuses on facilitating governance, for example: opening and closing meetings, directing and managing debates, ensuring compliance with rules, managing speaking rights, putting questions to a vote and announcing decisions. Refocusing the role of the WMO President on these core functions would further support the accountability of the Secretary-General to Congress. It would also be supportive of the dual demands placed on incumbents, who simultaneously serve as Directors of their National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services.

59. Article 4 of the Convention assigns the President of WMO the role of chairing both Congress and the Executive Council for a four-year term – in most of United Nations system organizations, each body elects its own Chair for each session or term. In WMO, the President also chairs the Financial Advisory Committee and the Policy Advisory Committee, both of which report to the Executive Council and, the former, also to Congress. This translates into having the same function chairing interlinked advisory and decision-making governing bodies, which may potentially reduce the functional independence of each of these bodies. **The Inspector concludes that the current arrangements of WMO do not support good governance and recommends having unique Chairs for the different governing bodies, particularly Congress, the Executive Council and the Financial Advisory Committee.** A sustainable solution to this issue would require an amendment to article 4 of the Convention.

60. The WMO secretariat is led by a Secretary-General<sup>36</sup> whose functions are detailed in regulation 153 of the General Regulations. The results of the survey and interviews conducted by the JIU show that, while the role and functions of the Secretary-General in the Organization are clear, the discharge of the accountability for this function is less so. This reinforces the conclusions and findings presented in chapter II, which singled out the accountability arrangements between the President and the Secretary-General as being one of the major differences between WMO and all other United Nations specialized agencies and a risk for the Organization due to the concentration of influence in one function (i.e. the President) and the reduced oversight by Member States over the technical and administrative work of the secretariat.

61. The Inspector notes the following elements that are supportive of the accountability of the executive head to Congress:

(a) In accordance with article 21 of the Convention, Congress appoints the Secretary-General;

(b) The process has been further clarified in regulation 151 of the General Regulations, which states that the Secretary-General is elected by a two-thirds majority in Congress sessions;

(c) The appointment of the Secretary-General is through a contract approved by Congress (regulation 149);

(d) The strategic plan, approved by Congress, complemented by the operating plan of the Organization are the documents that guide the work of the Secretary-General.

62. At the same time, there are a number of contradictory arrangements that undermine the collective authority of Congress:

<sup>36</sup> See articles 20 and 21 of the WMO Convention.

(a) Article 22 (a) of the Convention states that the Secretary-General is responsible to the President for the technical and administrative work of the secretariat;

(b) Regulation 8 states that one of the duties of the President is to issue directives to the Secretary-General with respect to the fulfilment of the duties;

(c) Unlike the case for executive heads in United Nations funds and programmes, WMO does not have a holistic single document that states the expected outcomes of the Secretary-General over the course of his or her term;

(d) There is no procedure in place to assess the performance of the Secretary-General based on achievement of the strategic and operating plans.

63. The accountability of an executive head to Member States as a whole is a critical element of good governance, which is inconsistently defined in WMO governing documents. There is a clear disconnect between articles 21 and 22 of the Convention, as the Secretary-General should inherently be accountable to the collective body that appointed her or him, not to a single individual.

64. The Inspector notes that regulation 153 of the General Regulations, which seeks to correct article 22 of the Convention by indicating the Secretary-General is also accountable to the Executive Council, is another example of the General Regulations attempting to correct the Convention. This is not to be viewed as a sustainable solution. The responsibility should be clearly defined as a function of Congress or one delegated by Congress to Executive Council and should be clearly referenced in article 8 of the Convention. To ensure coherence, also article 4 of the Convention and regulation 8 of the General Regulations should be revised considering the suggested updates in relation to the President's responsibilities. Consideration should be made to address other articles of the Convention that are more administrative in nature, regarding the authorities of the Secretary-General, which may benefit from a more modern and practical interpretation.<sup>37</sup>

65. The implementation of the following recommendation is intended to complement recommendation 1 in chapter II and is expected to strengthen the accountability framework and enhance the coherence and harmonization of the governance arrangements of the Organization.

#### **Recommendation 2**

**Congress should, no later than its twenty-first ordinary session, in 2031, establish a task force to assess the role of the President and the accountability arrangements of the Secretary-General, with a view to proposing recommendations that better align WMO governance practices with United Nations system norms.**

66. The formal recommendation above alongside the proposed changes outlined in annex V concerning article 22 of the Convention, refer to the shift in accountability of the Secretary-General from the President to the supreme governing body of the Organization, seeking alignment with all other United Nations specialized agencies. However, such accountability arrangements need to be reinforced by having a clear and measurable set of actions defined for the Secretary-General that can be reported on during the sessions of Congress to fulfil the accountability relationship. **The Inspector suggests establishing a compact for the Secretary-General that would comprehensively present the actions and expected outcomes that the Secretary-**

<sup>37</sup> Such as articles 21 (b) and 26 (a) of the WMO Convention.

**General intends to deliver upon in intersessional periods and which are based on the objectives included in the approved strategic and operating plans of the Organization.**

#### **Further definition of the role of Vice-President**

67. The General Regulations do not define the role of the three Vice-Presidents of WMO, a gap also identified in the 2022 external evaluation of WMO governance. To address this, the Executive Council adopted resolution 16 at its seventy-ninth session (2025), aiming to clarify the vice-presidential functions. In practice, however, only the second and third Vice-Presidents have been assigned thematic portfolios, and the resolution allows these portfolios to change whenever new individuals are elected for the functions. For sound governance, predictability and clear expectations for candidates, vice-presidential roles should be stable and not dependent on the office holder. This would also make the election process more transparent, as Members would know exactly what functions and capacities they are electing each Vice-President to serve in. To support proper segregation of duties, **the Inspector suggests assigning each of the three Vice-Presidents to chair a different governing body**, for example: the first Vice-President could chair the Executive Council, the second Vice-President could chair the body responsible for strategic planning and technical coordination (see chapter VI) and the third Vice-President could chair the body responsible for oversight and financial management. Similar to the President's chairing of Congress, these roles would also be facilitatory in nature.

#### **Excessive ex officio arrangements**

68. Ex officio arrangements are common across WMO governance, meaning individuals sit on certain bodies automatically by virtue of being elected to another role, resulting in simultaneous membership in multiple governing bodies. While not uncommon in the United Nations system, for WMO governance these arrangements can be overwhelming. For example, the presidents of regional associations are serving in a minimum of four bodies because of ex officio arrangements,<sup>38</sup> are potentially invited to attend four other bodies,<sup>39</sup> and may also be appointed as Chairs or Vice-Chairs of standing committees in technical commissions. This is all in addition to their participation in Congress as delegated Permanent Representatives for their countries and the meetings of the regional association, positions to which they were selected and elected for originally. Regional association presidents sit on parallel committees that have conflicting accountability, responsibility and consultative duties.

69. Further, taking into consideration their full-time role as civil servants in their countries, it becomes clear that their responsibilities in WMO governing bodies, with each meeting demanding their contribution and sharing of regional perspectives, require a careful rebalancing of their priorities. Reducing ex officio arrangements could increase effectiveness across existing governing bodies by avoiding the duplication of efforts and reducing the workloads of the presidents of regional associations. This change should be holistically aligned with all recommendations of the present review concerning the functioning and existence of the various WMO governing bodies.

<sup>38</sup> The Executive Council, the Financial Advisory Committee, the Technical Coordination Committee and the Policy Advisory Committee. In addition, Executive Council task forces created for intersessional periods usually have the presidents of regional associations as ex officio members.

<sup>39</sup> The Capacity Development Panel, the Hydrological Coordination Panel, the Panel on Polar and High-mountain Observations, Research and Services; the Research Board.

70. The presidents of technical commissions and the Chair of the Research Board are also present in several governing bodies as ex officio members,<sup>40</sup> and attend several other meetings as observers.<sup>41</sup> However, their ex officio engagement is less strenuous than that of presidents of regional associations. According to the survey conducted by the JIU among members of governing bodies, the issue of cross-representation in governing bodies provides some advantages including consistent views but mainly disadvantages (per 66 per cent of responses). Respondents pointed to the high workload cross-representation generates and the consistent but ultimately limited diversity of viewpoints. The need to reduce cross-representation in various governing bodies was also a recurring topic raised by stakeholders during interviews. In light of these findings, WMO would benefit from a holistic review of the membership of all governing bodies with a view to reduce cross-representation and potentially limit ex officio arrangements to a maximum of two governing bodies per function.

71. The implementation of the following recommendation is intended to expand the diversity of views and reduce the cross-representation of members in governing bodies, as well as promote efficiency and effectiveness:

### **Recommendation 3**

**The Executive Council should, no later than its eighty-second ordinary session, in 2027, form a task force to review the terms of reference of all governance structures with a view to promoting wider participation of members or Member representatives, as relevant, and limiting or avoiding cross-representation and ex officio participation arrangements.**

### **Clearer definition and focus needed for the roles of presidents and vice-presidents of regional associations**

72. The role of presidents of regional associations<sup>42</sup> is defined in regulation 134 of the General Regulations and is further expanded in the *Terms of Reference for Regional Associations*. Congress resolutions routinely also assign tasks directly to regional association presidents.<sup>43</sup> The Inspector notes that the *Terms of Reference for Regional Associations* are adding to the content of regulation 134, increasing the complexity of the duties assigned to regional association presidents. Stakeholders frequently raised the need for clearer expectations for regional association presidents. This reflects broader debates about the role of regional associations and their contribution to the technical work of WMO and underscores the need for a pragmatic reassessment of what presidents of regional associations are expected to deliver, starting with a clear definition of the role of regional associations themselves (see chapter V for further analysis of the topic).

73. Vice-presidents of regional associations have limited and vaguely defined duties, generally confined to assisting the presidents.<sup>44</sup> Assigning responsibilities – such as

<sup>40</sup> In particular, in the Policy Advisory Committee, the Technical Coordination Committee and as observers in the Hydrological Coordination Panel, the Panel on Hydrological Operational Requirements and Services, the Regional Board (for Presidents of Technical Commissions and the Scientific Advisory Panel (for Chair of the Regional Board).

<sup>41</sup> Specifically, the Executive Council and Financial Advisory Committee may be observed by the presidents of technical commissions.

<sup>42</sup> As defined in annex II to the General Regulations.

<sup>43</sup> See, for example, resolutions 20, 21, 35 and 37 of the nineteenth session of Congress. *World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Final Report of the Nineteenth Session, Geneva, 22 May–2 June 2023*, document WMO-No. 1326.

<sup>44</sup> *Rules of Procedure for Regional Associations*, 2021 ed., document WMO-No. 1241, para. 4.5.

attendance at different governing bodies – between presidents and vice-presidents would improve segregation of duties and make more efficient use of their time. Survey results also show that coordinating regional inputs across governing bodies is not widely viewed as a core duty for the presidents of regional associations, despite their ex officio presence in multiple bodies. **The Inspector suggests refocusing the role of regional association presidents on facilitating regional association activities and representing their Regions, while consolidating their responsibilities in a single, comprehensive source document.**

#### **Advantages of having a rapporteur function in Congress and in the Executive Council**

74. One additional function that regularly emerges in governing bodies of United Nations entities is that of the rapporteur. While this is generally foreseen in larger specialized agencies, WMO could adopt this practice, which intends to bring a certain discipline to the debates emerging during sessions of supreme governing or executive bodies. As the Inspector observed in the extraordinary session of Congress held in October 2025, there was no standard process in place to address the negotiations on language in resolutions, which translated into an overreliance on secretariat staff for drafting and redrafting such documents. Furthermore, when Members could not reach agreement on wording during plenary sessions, ad hoc drafting committees were created to negotiate text outside plenary discussions. Interested and available Member representatives met to revise the language and a volunteer from the group was chosen on the spot to lead the committee. In the absence of procedures for identifying the structure and chairs of such committees, they can be easily politicized and moved in a particular direction.

75. To avoid an ad hoc approach in future sessions of Congress, **the Inspector suggests revising the General Regulations to include a procedure for the appointment of rapporteurs and a structure for drafting committees for sessions of Congress.**

#### **Ethical guidelines necessary for all WMO members**

76. Membership in WMO governing bodies is dependent on national positions held or scientific expertise. Permanent Representatives serve because they are Directors of their National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services. Experts in technical bodies are nominated because of their scientific knowledge and experience in their respective technical domains. These backgrounds may not come with the awareness of ethical standards and effective conflict-of-interest safeguards that are specific to the United Nations system. Reinforcement in these ethical areas is necessary in WMO governing bodies particularly given the contributions of stakeholders from academia and the private sector, which are perceived by more than half of survey respondents as having a moderate or high involvement and influence in WMO governing bodies.

77. WMO has a code of ethics for public-private engagement<sup>45</sup> and a Code of Conduct for Officers, Executive Council members and delegates,<sup>46</sup> but these documents are informational only; members are not required to acknowledge them upon assuming their duties. Ethics is not currently included as a dedicated topic in induction training for

<sup>45</sup> Adopted through resolution 27, see *Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventy-eighth Session, Geneva, 10–14 June 2024*, document WMO-No. 1358.

<sup>46</sup> Adopted through resolution 34, see *Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventieth Session, Geneva, 20–29 June 2018*, document WMO-No. 1218, subsequently revised through resolution 3.1/1 adopted at the extraordinary session of Congress in 2025, see *World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Final Report of the Extraordinary Session, Geneva, 20–23 October 2025*, document WMO-No. 1385.

Permanent Representatives, and experts serving on subsidiary bodies are not covered by any code of conduct. **The Inspector calls for a structured approach that: (a) extends the code of conduct to all members of governing bodies and subsidiary structures; (b) requires all members to sign an acknowledgment of the relevant provisions of the Code of Conduct; and (c) incorporates ethics as a standard component of induction training for new Permanent Representatives.**

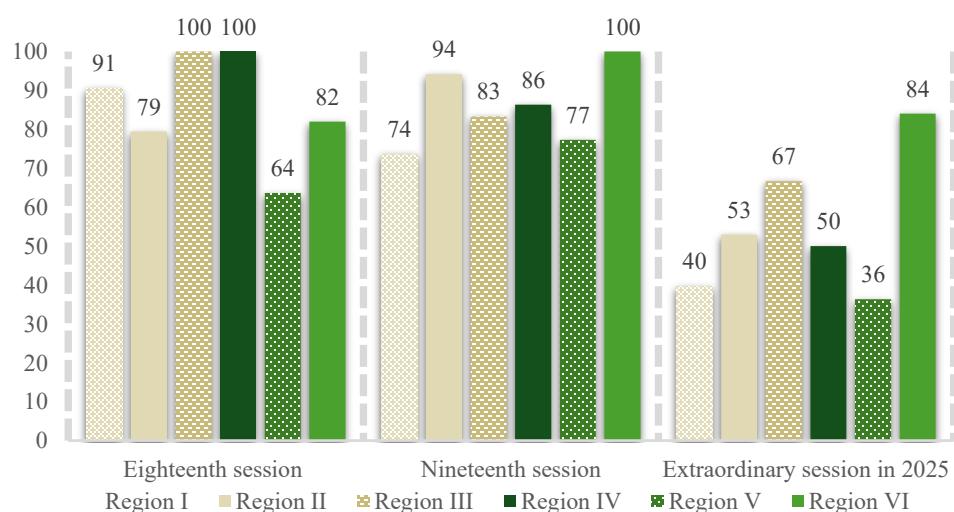
### Wider inclusiveness and participation across governing bodies: gaps and challenges

78. Elected officers may serve two consecutive four-year terms, pursuant to the Convention and the General Regulations. Such long mandates can discourage low-income and lower-middle-income Members – often with limited institutional capacity – from putting forward candidates for leadership roles. For example, since 2011, all elected WMO Presidents have come from high-income countries,<sup>47</sup> and less than half of Vice-Presidents have come from low-income or lower-middle-income countries. Gender representation, which is subject to targets in some WMO governing bodies,<sup>48</sup> was also unbalanced in this same period: only 2 of 16 officer positions were held by women.

79. Representation challenges extend across all governing bodies, for example:

(a) *Congress participation.* Ordinary sessions attract broader participation than extraordinary ones; the extraordinary session of Congress in October 2025 had 35 per cent fewer countries in attendance (108) than its nineteenth ordinary session, held in 2023 (167). Regional disparities are also evident between the two – for example, in 2023, Region II had almost full representation, while in 2025, only half of its Members were present (see figure I below). Even though the 2025 session was hybrid, with both on-site and online presence, Regions I and V had less than half of their Members attending the session, while Regions II and IV were represented by only half of their Members.<sup>49</sup>

Figure I  
Percentage of Members from each Region attending recent Congress sessions



Source: Prepared by JIU, based on information from the corporate questionnaire (2025).

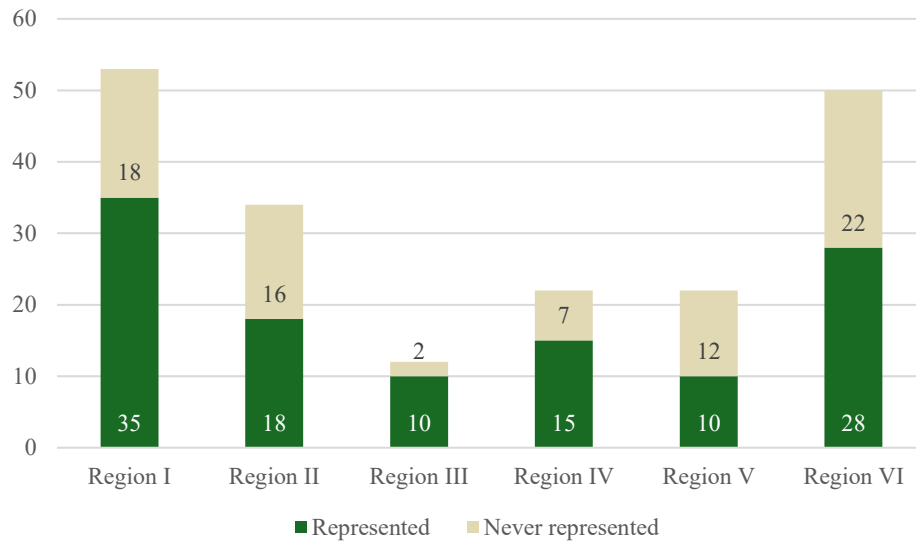
<sup>47</sup> Canada, Germany and the United Arab Emirates.

<sup>48</sup> In resolution 39, adopted at its nineteenth session, Congress established a target of 40 per cent female members by 2027 for the main and subsidiary bodies of regional associations, technical commissions and the Research Board.

<sup>49</sup> The geographical limits of each region are set out in annex II to the General Regulations.

(b) *Executive Council membership.* Very alarming is the fact that 77 of 193 Members (40 per cent) have never been elected by Congress to hold a seat in the Executive Council. As evident in figure II below, this is particularly concerning for Regions II and V.

Figure II  
**Representation of Members in Executive Council seats throughout WMO history**



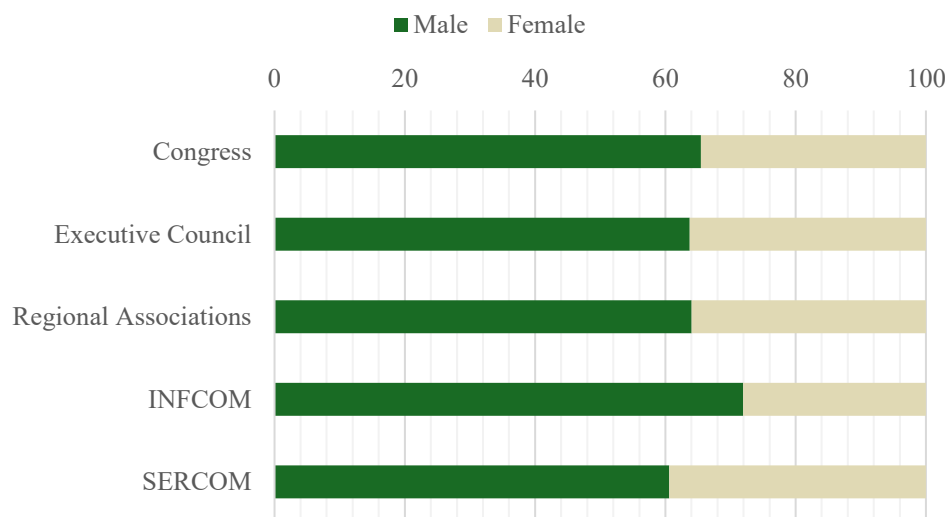
Source: Prepared by JIU, based on data provided by the WMO secretariat (2025).

(c) *Technical commissions.* Roughly 80 Members attended the third ordinary sessions of the two technical commissions, representing 41 per cent of all WMO Members and about 60 per cent of those enrolled in the commissions. Looking at their total number of Members, Regions I, IV, and V had less than 40 per cent of their countries represented;

(d) *Active experts.* In August 2025, active experts in subsidiary bodies represented only 60 per cent of the Members enrolled in the technical commissions. Many nominated experts do not participate, especially from Regions II and VI; Regions III and V have the most participation of their nominated experts;

(e) *Gender balance.* Participants in governing body meetings between 2019 and 2025 were predominantly male, reflecting the gender imbalance in the technical and scientific fields of WMO (see figure III below). Among active experts, the male-female ratio is roughly 70 to 30. When looking at the annual evolution, the Inspector notes, however, that the efforts made by WMO to increase the participation of women are producing gradual improvements.

Figure III  
**Gender distribution of members participating in WMO governing body sessions held from 2019 to 2025**  
 (Percentage)



Source: Prepared by JIU, based on data from the corporate questionnaire (2025).

80. Given these trends, **the Inspector stresses the need to broaden Member representation in WMO governance, while advancing gender balance.** Suggested measures could include: (a) increasing rotation of seats in the Executive Council by reducing terms to two years and/or staggering membership so that half the Council is renewed every two years; (b) introducing two-year terms for officers of the Organization; and (c) encouraging greater expert engagement – particularly from Regions I, III and V – in technical workstreams.

## IV. Constituent bodies: Congress and the Executive Council

81. Among the four constituent bodies of WMO, only the technical commissions have been the subject of a recent (2019) governance reform. While the working methods of Congress, the Executive Council and regional associations have evolved and changed over time, this has mostly occurred through incremental additions rather than a thorough review of the pertinence and soundness of the existing framework.

82. Building on the proposed changes to the Convention outlined in chapter II, Congress and the Executive Council require both streamlining and modernization of foundational and related documents.

### A. Congress

#### Summary of the section

Congress is expected to devote more time to strategic issues and requires clearer procedures and a more precise definition of its functions. Its frequency should be increased, and extraordinary sessions should not be seen as a workaround. Line ministers would be expected to attend selected high-level segments, which would in turn facilitate the uptake of resolutions of Congress at the national level by each Member. Finally, to understand Members' full obligations, Congress should review the status of resolutions adopted by all constituent bodies.

#### Findings

- Congress lacks its own stand-alone rules of procedure.
- Functions of Congress do not explicitly include reviewing the Secretary-General's reports.
- In the last three sessions, 55 per cent of resolutions addressed technical matters, while only about 15 per cent concerned the strategic direction of WMO.
- Resolutions on scientific and technical matters require long implementation periods.
- Congress does not require participation by line ministers, and WMO is the only specialized agency whose supreme governing body lacks formal ministerial or foreign affairs representation.
- Significant plenary time was spent in the last Congress session correcting language issues, and fewer than half of JIU survey respondents were fully satisfied with the quality of debates in Congress.
- Congress directly reviews the status of its own resolutions but not those of other constituent bodies.

#### Convention article discussed

- Article 10

#### Formal recommendation

- Assign a two-year frequency to Congress ordinary sessions.

83. Congress brings together all 193 Members and Territories to coordinate and advance meteorological, climatological, hydrological, and related environmental services.<sup>50</sup> It is the main forum for decisions on WMO activities and its governance framework. Its session and voting practices are embedded in the General Regulations,<sup>51</sup> whereas the supreme governing bodies of most United Nations specialized agencies have stand-alone rules of procedure. All other WMO constituent bodies have their own rules of procedure, in addition to the General Regulations. **The Inspector therefore recommends compiling the relevant provisions from the General Regulations and other documents to establish dedicated, self-contained rules of procedure for Congress.**

#### **Functions of Congress and the focus of its debates**

84. Congress sets overall WMO policies, adopts technical regulations, issues recommendations to Members, establishes rules, reviews the work of the Executive Council, coordinates WMO bodies and elects the Organization's leadership, including the President, the Vice-Presidents, Executive Council members and the Secretary-General.<sup>52</sup> As noted in chapter III, the functions of Congress should be updated to explicitly include reviewing the Secretary-General's performance reports, supporting the accountability of the latter to WMO Members as a whole.

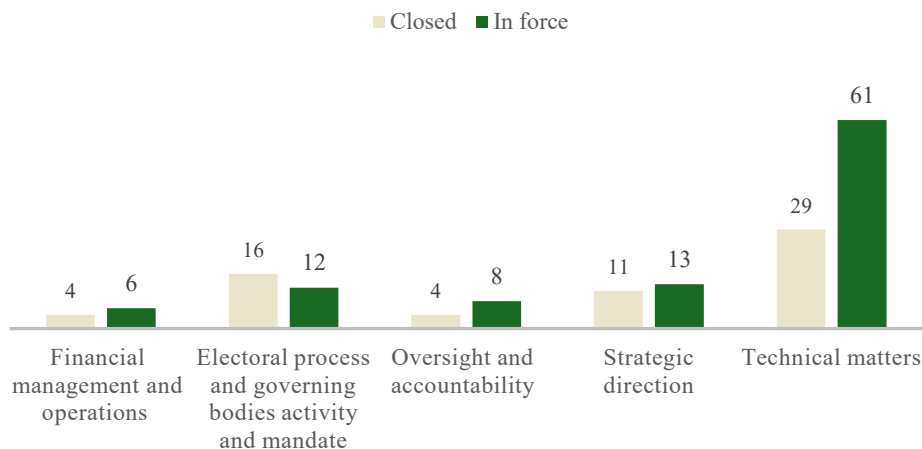
85. JIU survey respondents indicated that, on average, Congress should devote 25 per cent of its time to technical matters. However, the outputs of Congress, i.e. the majority of resolutions, from the last three sessions have addressed scientific and technical matters (55 per cent) (see figure IV below). Given their rather slow closure rate (33 per cent over the course of 6 years), it becomes evident that technical resolutions require long implementation periods, and without clearer prioritization, their accumulation risks overburdening Members. Respondents to the JIU survey also indicated a desire that most of Congress's time (35 per cent) be devoted to strategic direction, while only about 15 per cent of its outcomes from the last three sessions have addressed this topic. **As financial management and oversight may align more naturally with the Executive Council's role, the Inspector stresses the need for Congress to allocate sufficient time for discussions on the strategic direction of WMO.**

<sup>50</sup> See article 5 of the WMO Convention.

<sup>51</sup> See regulations 17 to 111 of the General Regulations, although only regulations 102 to 111 are dedicated specifically to Congress, while the rest refer to all constituent bodies of WMO.

<sup>52</sup> See articles 8 and 21 of the WMO Convention.

Figure IV  
**Status of implementation in November 2025 of Congress resolutions issued from its eighteenth session, held in 2019, to its extraordinary session held in 2025, by topic**



Source: Prepared by JIU, based on the corporate questionnaire data and a documentary review (2025).

#### Extraordinary sessions: neither a workaround nor a solution

86. The WMO Convention maintains a four-year interval between Congress sessions, allowing extraordinary sessions between ordinary ones at the request of the Executive Council.<sup>53</sup> Despite eight revisions to the Convention, the four-year cycle has remained unchanged since 1947, mirroring the practice of the International Meteorological Organization of having its constituency meet at intervals seldom less frequent than every four years.

87. Extraordinary sessions of Congress cannot be a substitute for ordinary ones: they attract fewer Members, have less regional balance across participants and focus on narrow issues rather than the full range of the functions of Congress (see also chapter III).<sup>54</sup> Across the United Nations system, extraordinary sessions are rare and not treated as equivalent to ordinary sessions of supreme governing bodies. Survey results show that 60 per cent of respondents consider the current four-year cycle adequate if extraordinary sessions remain available, while 40 per cent prefer annual or biennial sessions. Yet only 45 per cent of respondents rated Congress's ability to address emerging issues as good or very good.

88. Given practices in other specialized agencies, the availability of remote participation through virtual modalities, the need for broad and inclusive participation, and the importance of responding to fast-moving global developments, WMO should consider a two-year cycle for its ordinary sessions of Congress. This would entail an amendment to article 10 of the Convention. Concerns about time and resource constraints can be mitigated through hybrid meeting formats, already used for the 2023 ordinary session and the 2025 extraordinary session of Congress.

<sup>53</sup> Organized in 2012, 2021 and 2025.

<sup>54</sup> The topics for which extraordinary sessions of Congress have been convened in the past are: in 2012, the implementation plan for the Global Framework for Climate Services; in 2021, progress on the WMO reform, WMO support for the global water agenda and the Earth System Data Exchange; and, in 2025, the WMO contribution to the Early Warnings for All initiative, revisions on the election processes and the financial situation of the Organization.

89. The implementation of the following recommendation is intended to complement recommendation 1 in chapter II and is expected to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the governance arrangements of the Organization:

**Recommendation 4**

**Congress should, no later than its twenty-first ordinary session, in 2031, consider assigning a two-year frequency for ordinary sessions of Congress.**

**Congress attendance in light of broader objectives**

90. Each Member is expected to designate the Director of its Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Service as its principal delegate to Congress.<sup>55</sup> WMO already demonstrates good transparency by publishing participant lists for the sessions of its supreme governing body, something not consistently done across United Nations specialized agencies. Based on publicly available attendance records, WMO is the only United Nations specialized agency whose supreme governing body does not explicitly require the presence of line ministers or ambassadors. This reflects the diversity of national institutional arrangements among Members: roughly half place meteorological and hydrological services under environment or climate ministries, about a third under transport ministries, and the remainder across portfolios relating to defence, internal affairs, emergency services, communications, education or central government.

91. Decisions adopted by Congress that create obligations for Members – such as compliance with new technical standards – often require subsequent approval within national line ministries. This may help explain why only one third of technical resolutions of Congress from the past six years are reported as closed. At the same time, having Directors of National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services as principal delegates ensures technically grounded discussions. **The Inspector stresses that this should not be a binary choice: ministers and Directors should ideally participate together in Congress sessions. Previous Congress sessions, including the extraordinary session in 2025, demonstrated that joint participation is feasible, and the Inspector recommends formalizing this approach for future sessions.**

**Debates in Congress: practices and challenges**

92. Fewer than half of JIU survey respondents rated Congress debates as very or extremely effective in addressing core agenda issues, despite pre-consultations held with Members. As directly observed during the extraordinary session of Congress held in 2025, and further explained in chapter III, discussions often drifted towards terminology and language rather than the substance of the issues. **The Inspector therefore calls for stricter chairing of Congress sessions to ensure efficient use of time when most Members are present and key decisions are under consideration, by ensuring that deliberations remain centred on the agreed agenda items and avoiding diversions into political issues.**

93. Monitoring the implementation of Congress resolutions received relatively low effectiveness ratings in the JIU survey. Although each Congress session includes an agenda item to review its past resolutions, Members must also implement additional resolutions issued by the other constituent bodies: the Executive Council, technical commissions and regional associations. These additional resolutions appear in individual reports submitted by the Chairs or presidents of these bodies as information

<sup>55</sup> See article 7 of the WMO Convention.

documents for Congress, rather than in a consolidated report to Congress. **To provide Members with a comprehensive view of all obligations adopted during the intersessional period, the Inspector recommends that Congress or, by delegation, the Executive Council, review the status of resolutions from all constituent bodies during its sessions.**

## B. Executive Council

### Summary of the section

Adjusting the Executive Council's composition and role would help address Member concerns about representation and align WMO with practices in other United Nations specialized agencies. As additional seats in the Executive Council become available for representatives of Members, the basis for regional distribution of Council seats should be more clearly defined in the General Regulations, and the Council's oversight and accountability functions strengthened.

### Findings

- WMO is the only United Nations specialized agency whose executive body does not have intergovernmental status.
- Although the Executive Council has 37 seats, only 27 are elected by Members for the specific purpose of serving on the Executive Council – the lowest number among specialized agencies – and 10 seats are held ex officio by officers of the Organization.
- No other United Nations specialized agency grants voting rights to ex officio members in its executive body.
- Past expansions of Council seats generally occurred when at least 10 new Members joined; since the last increase, only six have joined WMO.
- The General Regulations do not clearly explain how the distribution of Council seats among Regions is decided upon.
- The oversight role of the Executive Council remains insufficiently defined, and Members see potential for stronger engagement on oversight and accountability.
- Members view the quality of Executive Council debates as effective.
- The Executive Council issues more resolutions than decisions or recommendations, and since 2020 has adopted more resolutions than Congress in its last three sessions combined, i.e. since 2019.

### Convention articles discussed

- Articles 6, 13, 14

### Formal recommendations

- Assign intergovernmental status to the Executive Council.
- Assign all seats with voting rights in the Executive Council to Members of the Organization.

94. The Executive Council is the executive body of WMO. It is responsible for coordinating WMO programmes, overseeing the use of budgetary resources and providing technical advice and recommendations in accordance with Congress decisions.<sup>56</sup> The rules of procedure of the Executive Council were adopted in 1951 and have been subsequently revised 23 times, most recently in 2024 and 2025. The Executive Council issues resolutions, decisions and recommendations to Congress. Its sessions are chaired by the President of WMO.

**An executive body elected by the Members, but which acts independently from them**

95. The Executive Council has 37 voting seats: the President, three Vice-Presidents, six presidents of regional associations and 27 Directors of National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services. Under article 6 (b) of the Convention, all members of the Council serve as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members thereof. This sits uneasily with the fact that the members elected to serve on Executive Council are Permanent Representatives of Members in Congress and civil servants in their respective governments and as such must align their views with those of their Government. Further, it can create a conflict between the personal independence of Council members and their responsibility to make financial and administrative decisions on behalf of all Members. In order to avoid such conflicts, the executive governance bodies of all other United Nations specialized agencies are intergovernmental.

96. As conveyed in chapter II, a similar concern was raised in the 2007 JIU review<sup>57</sup> but dismissed on the grounds that the Executive Council's composition reflected the scientific and technical nature of WMO.<sup>58</sup> However, the Organization's technical commissions – also responsible for scientific and technical functions – already operate with intergovernmental status. This demonstrates that granting the Executive Council such status would not necessarily undermine its scientific and technical role.

97. This arrangement is not only unique within the United Nations system, but also unrealistic for Executive Council members. Based on interviews and survey results, serving on the Executive Council as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members is challenging and not always implemented in practice. Geopolitical considerations and contexts were cited as the most frequent challenge, followed by having to serve in both personal and intergovernmental capacities in different bodies of the same Organization. Members of the Executive Council face conflicting duties: having to make recommendations as representatives of the Organization to Congress and then taking decisions on those recommendations as representatives of Members.

98. The Executive Council is expected to take decisions on the budget and expenditure of WMO. Decisions and recommendations coming from other bodies, such as the Financial Advisory Committee and the technical commissions, which may have financial implications for Member States, also require intergovernmental deliberation. Serving as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members, in an executive body on matters of finance, budget and oversight does not allow for a credible Executive Council, puts its members in an unrealistic role and does not provide Member States with an appropriate level of input on the financial and oversight of their contributions to the Organization. Changes in the statute of the Executive Council would entail an amendment to article 6 (b) of the Convention.

<sup>56</sup> See article 14 of the WMO Convention.

<sup>57</sup> [JIU/REP/2007/11](#).

<sup>58</sup> *Executive Council: Sixty-first Session – Abridged Final Report with Resolutions, Geneva, 3–12 June 2009*, document WMO-No. 1042, para. 7.2.51.

99. The implementation of the following recommendation is intended to complement recommendation 1 in chapter II and is expected to enhance the effectiveness and the transparency and accountability of the governance arrangements of the Organization:

**Recommendation 5**

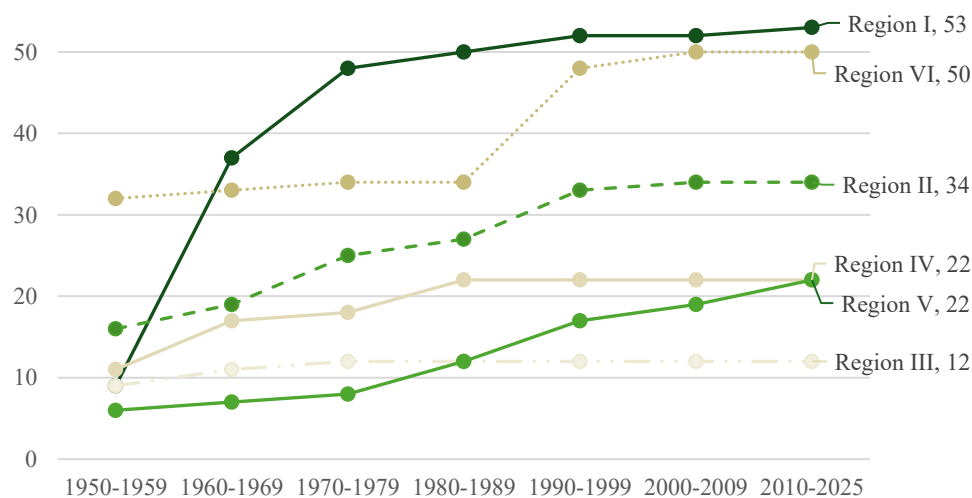
**Congress should, no later than its twenty-second ordinary session, consider assigning intergovernmental status to the Executive Council.**

**Debates surrounding the number of seats in the Executive Council and their regional distribution**

100. Concerns raised in interviews and the JIU survey highlight that the 27 elected Members serving in the Executive Council may not adequately reflect the interests of the full WMO membership, especially given that all Members meet together only at Congress sessions held every four years. These concerns relate to both the limited number of elected seats and to how those seats are distributed across regions.

101. The number of Council seats has been increased six times, most recently in 2003,<sup>59</sup> and such increases typically occurred when at least 10 new Members joined WMO. Since the last expansion, only six new Members have joined, offering no clear basis for another increase (see figure V below) of the number of seats.

Figure V  
**Evolution of the number of Members by Region in WMO**



Source: Prepared by JIU, based on a desk review (2026).

<sup>59</sup> Increases in the number of seats in Executive Council were made through Congress resolutions adopted in: 1959 through resolution 2 of the third session of Congress (see document WMO-No. 88), 1963 through resolution 1 of the fourth session of Congress (see document WMO-No. 142), 1967 through resolution 1 of the fifth session of Congress (see document WMO-No. 213), 1979 through resolution 50 of the eighth session of Congress (see document WMO-No. 533), 1983 through resolution 41 of the ninth session of Congress (see document WMO-No. 615) and 2003 through resolution 39 of the fourteenth session of Congress (see document WMO-No. 960). The first four increases were mostly driven by new members joining from Regions I and II. The fifth increase was linked predominantly with new Members in Regions II and V. The latest increase was associated with new Members joining from Region VI.

102. A comparative analysis shows that the WMO Executive Council is not unusually small – the respective bodies of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have fewer seats – but WMO allocates the fewest seats for election by Members for the specific purpose of serving on the Executive Council as 10 seats are held ex officio by the President, three Vice-Presidents and six regional association presidents. The total number of seats could remain unchanged while increasing Member representation by removing voting rights from the ex officio positions and assigning them observer status, as is already the case for the presidents of technical commissions. This approach aligns with the intergovernmental nature of executive bodies across all other United Nations specialized agencies, where all voting seats are held by Member States and no ex officio voting arrangements exist. Such a change would address Member concerns about representation and bring WMO into line with United Nations system-wide governance practices. Changes in the membership of the Executive Council would entail an amendment to article 13 of the Convention.

103. The implementation of the following recommendation is intended to complement recommendation 1 in chapter II and is expected to enhance the effectiveness, coherence and harmonization of the governance arrangements of the Organization:

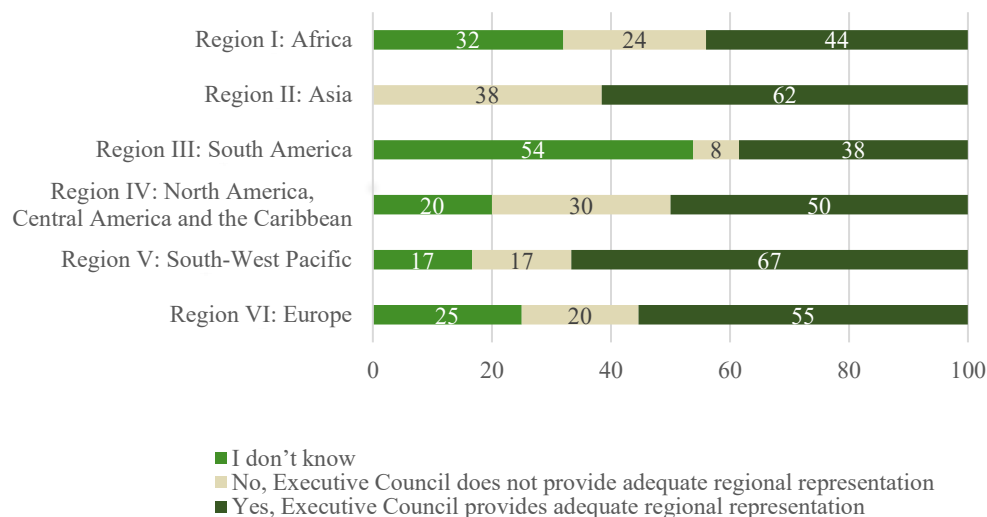
**Recommendation 6**

**Congress should, no later than its twenty-second ordinary session, consider assigning all seats with voting rights in the Executive Council to representatives of Members of the Organization.**

104. The Convention stipulates that no Region may hold fewer than four or more than nine Executive Council seats, and the General Regulations specify the exact distribution: Region I (Africa) has nine seats; Region II (Asia) has six; Region III (South America) has four; Region IV (North America, Central America and the Caribbean) has five; Region V (South-West Pacific) has four; and Region VI (Europe) has nine. Although this distribution appears to reflect the number of countries per Region and the Convention's thresholds, the methodology is not documented. Revisiting the seat allocation, particularly if 10 extra seats become available for election by Members for the specific purpose of serving on the Executive Council, as proposed above, would allow WMO to clarify the underlying distribution criteria and potentially consider additional factors. Survey results show notable dissatisfaction with the current distribution, especially in Regions II and IV (see figure VI below). **The Inspector therefore recommends updating the General Regulations to clearly explain the methodology for the regional distribution of seats in the Executive Council.**

Figure VI  
**Perception of survey respondents regarding the adequacy of the regional distribution of seats in the Executive Council**

(Percentage)



Source: JIU survey of members of WMO governing bodies (2025).

Note: The survey was completed by 129 respondents.

### Debates concerning the focus of the Executive Council

105. Stakeholders expressed differing views on the Executive Council's expected focus. Survey respondents suggested an ideal distribution of time in its debates, on average, at 25 per cent for scientific and technical matters, 30 per cent for strategic direction, 25 per cent for financial management and operations, and 20 per cent for oversight and accountability issues. Compared with expectations for Congress, the Council is expected to devote more attention to financial and oversight issues. Interviews reinforced the need to shift the Council's emphasis away from technical debates and toward oversight and accountability. Across the last eight sessions of the Executive Council, more than half of the resolutions, decisions and recommendations that it issued concerned scientific and technical matters, while only 15 per cent addressed oversight and 5 per cent financial management.

106. The Executive Council's oversight role remains insufficiently defined, as already mentioned in chapter II. In most United Nations entities, executive bodies oversee the secretariat between sessions of the supreme governing body, take corrective action when needed and report back to the supreme governing body. Their effectiveness is typically supported by their intergovernmental status, delegations that include financial and oversight expertise and subsidiary bodies – such as programme and budget committees – with authority to advise and act. In WMO, these conditions are only partially met: Council members act as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members, delegations often lack financial or oversight advisers, and the Financial Advisory Committee is purely advisory and structured differently from comparable bodies in other agencies (see chapter VII for additional analysis of the Financial Advisory Committee).

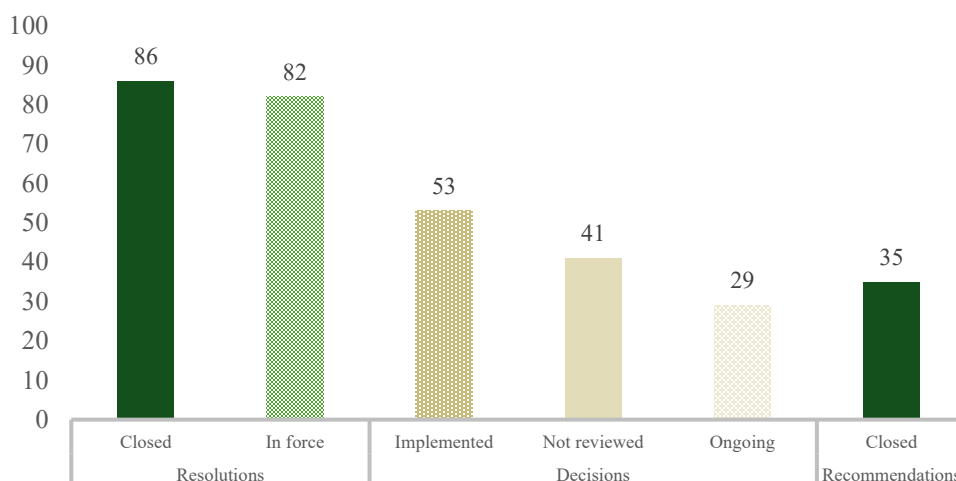
107. While a technical focus is understandable under the current model, shifting the Executive Council to an intergovernmental status would create the conditions for a stronger oversight role, consistent with stakeholder expectations and United Nations system practice. **The Inspector therefore recommends rebalancing Executive**

**Council deliberations towards oversight and financial matters and also introducing a new function in article 14 of the Convention that explicitly assigns the Executive Council the responsibility for oversight and accountability matters.**

**Risk of overwhelming Members**

108. Since 2020, the Executive Council has had 326 outputs (168 resolutions, 123 decisions and 35 recommendations). The distinction between resolutions and decisions has been a recurring point of debate. The Executive Council reviewed the status of its decisions between its seventieth and seventy-seventh sessions (2018–2023) but stopped doing so since its seventy-eighth session, in 2024, assuming that they are implemented during the intersessional period, an approach that creates a monitoring and oversight gap. Resolutions, however, continue to be reviewed at each session and, as at November 2025, 112 resolutions and decisions remain in force (see figure VII below).

Figure VII  
**Status of resolutions, decisions and recommendations issued by the Executive Council since its seventy-second session (2020), as at November 2025**



Source: Prepared by JIU, based on data provided in the corporate questionnaire (2025).

109. Over the past six years, the Executive Council has issued slightly more resolutions (168) than Congress (164) and continues to adopt more resolutions annually than decisions or recommendations. Many resolutions, particularly those related to scientific and technical matters, require multi-year implementation, and, with every session further obligations are created for Members. In fact, the rate of adopting new resolutions is approaching the rate at which older ones are closed. Although survey respondents currently view the overall volume as manageable, this may reflect a recent decline in total outputs over the last three Executive Council sessions. Given its narrower membership, the Executive Council would not be expected to issue more resolutions than Congress. For technical issues, the Executive Council could instead provide recommendations to Congress.

## V. Constituent bodies: regional associations, technical commissions and cross-cutting issues

110. Technical commissions were the primary focus of the governance reforms from 2019, while regional associations have been the topic of recent discussions in the Executive Council and Congress regarding possible changes in the governance framework. Coordination challenges between technical commissions and regional associations have emerged as their respective roles have evolved, without a comprehensive review of the impact of these changes. As a result, WMO now faces overlapping mandates between its governing bodies, vague accountability lines and limited coordination between central and regional levels. Addressing these issues calls for a pragmatic analysis of where duplications occur and the identification of straightforward ways to ensure that regional perspectives are effectively integrated into the decision-making process at the central level.

### A. Regional associations

#### Summary of the section

Over time, regional associations have been increasingly tasked with more responsibilities, drifting further away from their original purpose foreseen in the Convention. More impactful results would require a narrower focus of their mandates. This would also entail more engagement with Congress through recommendations addressed to the latter and a more direct involvement in the selection of experts active in subsidiary bodies of technical commissions. Finally, reassessing regional office resources and governance support mechanisms would help ensure a consistent, harmonized approach across all regions.

#### Findings

- The role of regional associations has shifted from a body holding mostly promotion, coordination and advisory functions, to one with operational governance responsibilities.
- Defining regions by geographical proximity aligns with the practice in other United Nations agencies, though subgroupings could help refine priority setting within and across regions.
- Regional association functions were developed and defined in various instances, each offering another interpretation of their role.
- The bottom-up strategic planning approach involving regional associations is a positive development.
- Regional associations issue few recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council, opting instead to adopt their own resolutions, mostly on scientific and technical matters.
- Regional associations often replicate structures of the two technical commissions, which Members view as potentially necessary due to challenges in applying the centrally defined technical requirements or due to limited representation of Members in sessions of technical commissions.

- Engagement of different experts between regional associations and technical commissions contributes to duplicative workstreams.
- Regional associations consistently request stronger support and closer engagement from regional offices.

#### **Convention article discussed**

- Article 18

#### **Formal recommendation**

- Reassess the functions of regional associations with a view to focusing them where the most added value can be gained.

### **Geographical delimitation of regions and practical arrangements of their associations**

111. Regional associations are WMO governing bodies composed of Members from defined geographical areas. Only four other United Nations specialized agencies maintain regional governing bodies,<sup>60</sup> also using six regions and treating Europe and Africa as unified areas. The regional geographical delimitation of WMO is considered broadly adequate by nearly 90 per cent of surveyed governing body respondents, with dissatisfaction being most common among those from Regions IV, V and VI. Several stakeholders suggested that, without altering the current regional map, subgroupings could help refine strategic planning and better prioritize Members' needs, including through cross-regional clusters based on shared meteorological or hydrological conditions or small island developing State or least developed country status. As the use of regional subgroupings for governance purposes is not common in United Nations specialized agencies,<sup>61</sup> if WMO were to implement it in practice for a future strategic planning cycle, it would be piloting this approach in the United Nations system.

### **Repositioning of regional associations from promotion, coordination and advisory functions to operational governance**

112. Article 18 (d) of the Convention defines the functions of regional associations.<sup>62</sup> In 2021, at its extraordinary session, Congress adopted resolution 8, launching a comprehensive review of the WMO regional concept, which led to the update of annex II to the General Regulations, detailing the expected functions of regional associations.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> WHO, FAO, ILO and UN Tourism.

<sup>61</sup> It was only identified in WHO for its Europe region, which is split into three subgroups.

<sup>62</sup> Those functions are: "(i) to promote the execution of the resolutions of Congress and the Executive Council in their respective Regions; (ii) to consider matters brought to their attention by the Executive Council; (iii) to discuss matters of general interest and to coordinate meteorological and related activities in their respective Regions; (vi) to make recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council on matters within the purposes of the Organization; (v) to perform such other functions as may be conferred on them by Congress".

<sup>63</sup> The updated functions can be summarized as follows: (a) coordinate planning, implementation and evaluation activities of Members for agreed programmes, strategies and activities; (b) promote visibility of WMO and exchange of best practices among its Members; (c) identify priorities of Members and technical gaps; (d) collaborate with other governing bodies to support, monitor and review the activity of regional centres; (e) in consultation with the technical commissions, Research Board and other bodies, identify common experts to assist in sharing regional priorities and requirements, and in implementing technical priorities and related capacity-building activities; (f) promote cooperation among Members and establish regional networks based on identified needs; (g) contribute to the WMO strategic plan with identified regional priorities; and (h) build and promote cooperation with other United Nations entities and other associations and organizations.

The resolution added a different layer of operational detail and expanded regional associations' responsibilities for stakeholder coordination. In reality, it has shifted regional associations from promotion, coordination and advisory functions, as described in the Convention, towards operational governance, meaning that regional associations have been delegated the authority to decide on and review certain elements of the WMO portfolio implemented in their Regions. This blurs their accountability to Congress and the Executive Council and creates new operational accountability links among regional associations, regional centres and Members. The added responsibilities also give regional associations greater independence from Congress and the Executive Council, particularly in their external-facing roles with regional United Nations entities and partners.

113. As currently structured, the WMO regional associations most closely resemble the WHO regional governance model, despite the far more limited resources of WMO. Among United Nations specialized agencies with comparable resources, only UN Tourism has a regional governing structure, but its mandate is narrower, focused mainly on contributions to strategic planning. Most other specialized agencies maintain only regional secretariat offices rather than regional governing bodies.

#### **Duplication of technical structures at the central and regional levels should be minimized**

114. Over time, each regional association has created its own governing structure, often adding multiple layers of subsidiary bodies.<sup>64</sup> Many first-level subsidiary bodies mirror current or former WMO technical commissions, supported by expert teams and focal points. As stakeholders confirmed, regional associations now conduct their own technical and scientific work, including by tailoring centrally adopted resolutions to their own regional capacities. This frequently duplicates work between the central and the regional levels and reflects weak coordination. Among United Nations specialized agencies, only WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have regional governing bodies with their own technical committees. Maintaining such complex regional structures leaves less time for deliberations on strategic focus, identifying Member needs and monitoring implementation of technical standards.

115. Although Members recognize the overlap, they do not view it as duplication, arguing that centrally defined technical requirements cannot be applied across all Members in the same manner. This perception likely stems from limited Member representation and participation in technical commissions, as discussed in chapter III and below. Stakeholders also noted that experts active in regional task teams are often absent from the discussions on the same topics at the central level within technical commissions. Resolution 8 adopted at the extraordinary session of Congress held in 2021 also called on regional associations and their presidents to promote the participation of regional experts in technical commissions, even though the structure of expert teams is ultimately decided by the presidents of those commissions. Further details and suggestions on regional representation are covered below.

#### **Broadly defined functions and limited resources**

116. The functions set out in resolution 8 of the extraordinary session of Congress held in 2021 have shifted regional associations beyond the role originally envisioned in the

<sup>64</sup> Each with their own management group (a subgroup of Members of each regional association, including its president and vice-president and a variable number of Directors of National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services, that is expected to coordinate all activities of the respective association through a work programme), and several layers of subsidiary bodies, such as standing committees and expert teams.

Convention. The bottom-up approach to strategic planning applied by WMO for the next programming period is a positive development given the regional associations' close engagement with Members, but stakeholders noted that their role should be continuous throughout the planning cycle rather than limited to drafting the four-year strategic plans. With a more systematic process for identifying regional needs, regional associations would be expected to devote more attention to monitoring and reporting on implementation of technical standards by Members to Congress and the Executive Council, drawing on their regular engagement with Members.

117. Regional associations are essential to Members and often serve as their primary link to WMO between Congress sessions. Since all experts participate voluntarily and Directors of National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services must balance their national duties with WMO work, the responsibilities of regional associations should be focused and manageable. Regional associations would benefit from reducing the replication of technical commission structures and concentrating instead on identifying and prioritizing regional needs, facilitating knowledge exchange, monitoring implementation of standards and reporting on challenges faced by Members to Congress and the Executive Council. Nearly half of respondents to the JIU survey indicated that monitoring resolutions and decisions is not currently carried out effectively at the regional level.

118. The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the governance arrangements of the Organization:

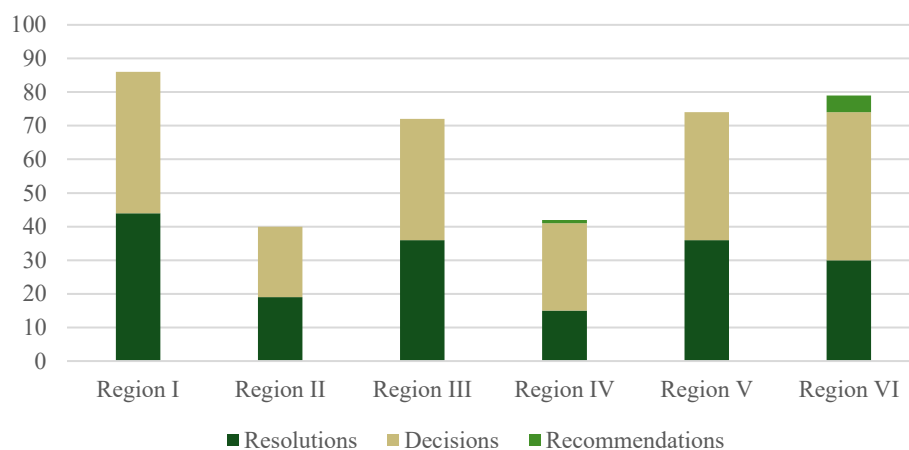
**Recommendation 7**

**Congress should, by its twenty-first ordinary session, consider amending annex II to the General Regulations regarding the functions of regional associations, with a view to focusing them on fewer tasks and prioritizing where the most added value can be provided.**

**Outputs of regional associations and support provided by regional offices**

119. Regional associations currently focus heavily on producing scientific and technical content and issuing their own resolutions and decisions. As shown in figure VIII, they have generated a substantial number of such outputs since 2019, yet recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council – one of their core functions under the Convention – are minimal. About 60 per cent of their resolutions address scientific and technical matters, and roughly 25 per cent concern internal governance. Since 2019, the six regional associations have issued 180 resolutions, 207 decisions and only 3 recommendations – more resolutions than Congress itself over the same period. By November 2025, around 60 per cent of resolutions and 50 per cent of decisions remained in force, indicating lengthy implementation timelines and a risk of overburdening Members if such a pace continues.

Figure VIII  
**Number of resolutions, decisions and recommendations issued by regional associations since 2019**



Source: Prepared by JIU, based on data from the corporate questionnaire (2025).

120. The rules of procedure<sup>65</sup> require regional associations to include a standing agenda item to review Executive Council resolutions relevant to their Members, yet this item was absent from their sessions in 2024 and 2025. According to responses in the corporate questionnaire, associations instead reference Congress and Executive Council outcomes in the preambular sections of their own resolutions. In other United Nations specialized agencies, regional bodies rarely issue resolutions and, if they do so, typically limit them to one or two per session; their work results mainly in decisions and recommendations to the organization's executive or supreme governing body. To align with the functions of regional associations listed in the Convention, and in accordance with United Nations system practices, **the Inspector recommends that regional associations should shift towards issuing more recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council and limit their use of resolutions.**

#### **Regional associations seen as key interlocutors and facilitators for WMO governance and a crucial link for many Members but lacking a formal link to the regional offices of WMO**

121. Regional offices serve as the main secretariat entities supporting regional associations. Many Members noted the need for stronger linkages with these offices to ensure more direct support for associations, their Members and their officers. Several regional association presidents reported that offices are understaffed and unable to provide sufficient assistance – an issue amplified by the extensive responsibilities of the presidents across multiple governance structures and their national civil service roles. While requests for closer ties are understandable, they must be balanced with proper reporting lines for United Nations staff.<sup>66</sup> Greater clarity on the support provided by regional offices could be achieved through the use of key performance indicators to track the progress in implementing resolutions and decisions of Congress and the Executive Council, relevant to the region, as called for in resolution 8 of the extraordinary session of Congress in 2021. In the same resolution, Congress also requested a reassessment of the structure, location and functions of regional offices. A

<sup>65</sup> See sect. 6.11.1 of the *Rules of Procedure for Regional Associations*, 2021 ed., document WMO-No. 1241.

<sup>66</sup> See article 1.3 of the Staff Regulations.

task force on the comprehensive review of WMO regional mechanisms created for this purpose was active until 2025,<sup>67</sup> with Congress expected to consider its recommendations in 2027.<sup>68</sup>

122. Regional offices were included in the 2025 secretariat restructuring and, since January 2026, report to the Secretary-General through the Regional Coordination Office.<sup>69</sup> As coordination with regional associations becomes a priority, aligning regional office staffing with regional association needs should be central. At the same time, internal structures must ensure that regional office staff are not treated as extensions of regional associations or as assistants to presidents of regional associations; they remain secretariat personnel bound by the WMO Staff Rules and Code of Ethics. Additional supervision and coordination may be required to balance support for regional associations with consistent practices across regions. **The Inspector recommends that the Secretary-General better define linkages between regional associations and regional offices while maintaining appropriate reporting lines and accountability, taking into account office coverage, regional complexity and their geographical delimitation pursuant to annex II to the General Regulations.** These adjustments should complement the broader reforms to regional associations outlined above.

## B. Technical commissions

### Summary of the section

In accordance with the WMO Convention, technical commissions would be expected to engage more on technical matters with Congress rather than the Executive Council. At the same time the involvement of multiple governing bodies on similar scientific and technical issues increases the risk of duplication and unnecessary debate.

### Findings

- The 2019 reform reduced eight technical commissions to two, but most eliminated bodies were effectively recreated as substructures or other entities.
- Fewer than half of WMO Members were represented in the most recent ordinary sessions of the technical commissions.
- Coordination between technical commissions and regional associations is not functioning as intended.
- Technical commission subsidiary bodies lack minimum requirements for regional representation.
- The secretariat does not sufficiently monitor the activities and outputs of second and lower-level subsidiary bodies.
- Two thirds of technical commission recommendations since their creation have been directed to the Executive Council.

<sup>67</sup> Created by the Executive Council at its seventy-second session, in 2020, through resolution 2, see *Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventy-second Session, Videoconference, 28 September–2 October 2020*, document WMO-No. 1255.

<sup>68</sup> See *Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventy-ninth Session, Geneva, 16–20 June 2025*, document WMO-No. 1378, resolution 12.

<sup>69</sup> Previously they were reporting to the Deputy Secretary-General.

- Scientific and technical debates remain siloed across multiple governance bodies.

#### **Formal recommendation**

- Examine the structure of subsidiary bodies outside the technical commissions and propose options for integrating these into the workstreams of the technical commissions.

#### **Outcomes from the 2019 reform**

123. WMO now has two intergovernmental technical commissions, INFCOM and SERCOM, replacing the eight that existed before 2019.<sup>70</sup> Each commission is supported by a management group and operates through several layers of subsidiary bodies, including standing committees, study groups, expert teams, advisory groups, and task teams. The 2019 reform consolidated the eight former areas of expertise into five SERCOM standing committees, two INFCOM committees, and one transferred to the Research Board, a subsidiary body of Congress. A direct consequence of the reorganization of technical commissions from eight to two was that Members were required to re-enrol in the new commissions, but full representation of Members in the two technical commissions had still not been achieved at the time of this review. While all Members have a right to be represented on the technical commissions, it remains a choice, not an obligation. As at 2025, SERCOM and INFCOM have nearly identical membership levels (136 and 135 represented Members), with a few exceptions.

#### **Integrating regional perspectives into the work of the technical commissions**

124. Each commission is composed of technical experts nominated by Members, but only some are further selected to serve on subsidiary bodies. These selections are made or confirmed by the president of each technical commission in consultation with the Management Group and the Secretary-General. As noted earlier, regional input in these selections should be strengthened. Survey responses and stakeholder interviews indicate that regional perspectives are not sufficiently integrated into the work of the commissions, with Region V expressing the lowest satisfaction.

125. Stakeholders proposed several ways to improve coordination between regional and technical bodies, including consulting regional associations when developing technical commission workplans and sharing prospective session topics with them. They also noted limited overlap between experts serving in regional association subsidiary bodies and those in technical commission bodies. **Currently, regional technical coordinators (secretariat staff active in regional offices) are responsible for providing inputs for expert selection in technical commissions, but the Inspector considers this a Member-driven function that should rest with regional association presidents.** The implementation of such consultations should be monitored and reflected in the report of technical commission presidents to Congress, and minimum regional representation thresholds should be established in the terms of reference of all subsidiary bodies of technical commissions.

<sup>70</sup> Established in 2019 through resolution 7 of the eighteenth session of Congress, following the conclusion of the reform of WMO governance, which was initiated in 2015. See *World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Final Report of the Eighteenth Session, Geneva, 2–14 June 2019*, document WMO-No. 1236.

### Future decision-making considerations

126. The comparative analysis across United Nations specialized agencies shows that, in about half of them, technical bodies report to both the supreme governing body and the executive body; in the others, reporting is directed to only one or split across committees. In WMO, the technical commissions, though established by Congress, report to both Congress and the Executive Council. Since 2019, they have issued 58 resolutions, 146 decisions and 112 recommendations. By November 2025, roughly 40 per cent of resolutions and 50 per cent of decisions remained in force, while all recommendations had been acted upon. Two thirds of these recommendations were addressed to the Executive Council. **The Inspector recommends that technical commissions direct a greater share of their recommendations to Congress since that is the body identified in the Convention as the main one responsible for determining the Technical Regulations.**<sup>71</sup>

### Subsidiary bodies of technical commissions

127. The number of subsidiary bodies of technical commissions (102 as at September 2025) has drawn scrutiny because of the secretariat resources required to support them. Under the General Regulations,<sup>72</sup> these bodies are meant to exist only for the intersessional period of their parent body. Stakeholder feedback suggests that maintaining certain subsidiary bodies may be driven more by institutional inertia rather than by a direct assessment of their functional necessity. In addition, their creation often proceeds without fully considering cost and staffing implications. In its analysis conducted in 2025, the Technical Coordination Committee<sup>73</sup> highlighted this issue, which has become more pressing given the financial constraints and cost containment measures introduced by the Secretary-General in 2025. At the time of this review, the secretariat was developing a standardized method for calculating the costs of establishing subsidiary bodies, in addition to the broader governance support costs, which are detailed in chapter VIII and annex VII. **The Inspector also calls for stronger oversight of subsidiary bodies' activities and outputs**, noting that such information requested for the corporate questionnaire was readily available only for first-level bodies (standing committees), not for those below them.

### Links between technical commissions and other bodies addressing scientific and technical matters within the WMO governance structure

128. Scientific and technical discussions in WMO extend beyond the technical commissions and regional associations. WMO has one of the most complex technical governance structures among United Nations specialized agencies, involving multiple bodies and practices. In addition to the two technical commissions, scientific and technical matters are also handled by two subsidiary bodies of Congress, three Executive Council panels and a joint body with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). All technical matters are expected to be dealt with through the Technical Coordination Committee before reaching the Executive Council. **The Inspector considers the current multilayered structure overly fragmented and suggests streamlining it, potentially by transforming the Executive Council's technical panels into joint subsidiary bodies of the technical commissions.** This would allow the commissions to oversee and be informed of the majority of the scientific and technical discussions.

<sup>71</sup> See article 8 (d) of the WMO Convention.

<sup>72</sup> See regulation 27 of the General Regulations.

<sup>73</sup> Technical Coordination Committee, "Subsidiary bodies of constituent and additional bodies", document TCC-2(2025)/Doc. 5.2.

129. Congress has two subsidiary bodies composed largely of academic experts: the Research Board and the Scientific Advisory Panel, with the Research Board having broader membership that includes representatives of regional associations, technical commissions and the Executive Council technical panels. Most interviewees and survey respondents noted overlap between these two bodies and recommended merging them – an option also raised in the governance reform evaluation from 2022. A review of recent sessions confirms that their agendas and discussions overlap substantially. **The Inspector therefore considers that the Scientific Advisory Panel and the Research Board should explore merging.**

130. The statute of the Research Board remains unclear to many governing body members. Although it evolved from a former technical commission, it no longer has intergovernmental status and instead serves as an advisory body of academic experts and representatives of WMO constituent bodies, tasked with producing forward-looking, research-based recommendations aligned with the strategic aims of WMO and the decisions of its governing bodies. Many stakeholders nonetheless perceive it as equivalent to a technical commission. **The Inspector recommends clarifying its statute and reaffirming that it is an advisory – not a constituent – body.**

131. The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance cooperation and coordination, as well as the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of the Organization:

#### **Recommendation 8**

**The Executive Council should, no later than its ordinary session in 2028, establish a task force to review subsidiary bodies with scientific and technical mandates and prepare recommendations to Congress on options for integrating them into the technical commissions' workstreams.**

### **C. Cross-cutting issues**

#### **Summary of the chapter**

Strategic planning processes should be further streamlined, and governing body sessions should be sequenced so that they inform one another in a timely and coordinated manner.

#### **Findings**

- Three strategic planning processes currently overlap.
- Stakeholders consistently highlighted poor sequencing of governing body sessions in interviews and survey responses.
- The governance pathway for the Early Warnings for All initiative illustrates the complexity of coordination and the burdensome procedures required to reach agreement among Members.

#### **A small organization with an overly complex governance structure**

132. A review of the WMO governance structure (see annex I) shows a level of complexity disproportionate to the size of its secretariat (approximately 340 staff members) and its annual assessed-contribution budget of about SwF 70 million. In terms

of its regional focus, the governance model of WMO mirrors that of WHO, and technically it resembles that of UNESCO – both organizations more than 10 times larger budget-wise than WMO.<sup>74</sup> The strategic planning processes also illustrate this complexity: the secretariat, technical commissions and regional associations each run their own planning cycles, producing multiple layers of strategic and operational documents. High-level guidance comes from the WMO strategic plan, regional workplans and technical commission programmes, while implementation is driven by the WMO operating plan, regional operating plans and technical commission workplans.

133. The WMO strategic plan, prepared by the secretariat and adopted by Congress, sets the Organization's overarching objectives. The WMO operating plan already identifies the contributions expected from technical commissions and regional associations. While the next strategic plan is expected to follow a bottom-up process beginning at the regional level, **the Inspector suggests reassessing the need for additional strategic documents for regional associations and technical commissions, and maintaining their respective operating plans aligned with the higher-level documents.**

134. The Early Warnings for All initiative provides an example of a remarkable achievement developed and approved in a fragmented, protracted and complex governance process. The complexity and machinations of the governance arrangements of WMO as they applied to this landmark initiative are detailed in annex VII. It took no fewer than three years and more than 10 deliberations across governing bodies before reaching a stable road map for implementation. **The Inspector calls for stronger coordination between governing bodies, achieved through clearer identification of the actors responsible for follow-up in the resolutions and decisions adopted by Congress and the Executive Council.**

#### **More coherent sequencing of sessions between governing bodies**

135. The sequencing and coordination of sessions across interlinked governing bodies requires close attention. The challenge stems from both the large number of bodies involved (see annex I) and the fact that different secretariat teams support different entities (see chapter VIII). At a minimum, sessions of the constituent bodies – the Executive Council, regional associations and technical commissions – should be scheduled to inform one another and align with preparations for Congress, while respecting the minimum time needed for document circulation.

136. Survey respondents and interviewees identified the sequencing of regional associations sessions in relation to other bodies as the greatest challenge. **The Inspector underscores the need for sufficient intervals between sessions to ensure that outcomes from earlier sessions can be properly reviewed and understood by participants in subsequent ones.**

<sup>74</sup> For example, the annual budget of WHO is US\$ 3.4 billion and it has more than 9,000 staff members. The UNESCO annual budget is around US\$ 900 million and it has more than 2,500 staff members.

## VI. Committees and task forces of the Executive Council

### Summary of the chapter

The overlaps in the membership of the Executive Council and most of its subsidiary bodies may limit the diversity of views. At the same time, overlaps also appear in the activity of certain subsidiary bodies, resulting in duplicated work that would benefit from further streamlining.

### Findings

- Over the last five intersessional periods of Congress, the Executive Council had between 11 and 13 active subsidiary bodies.
- Membership of these subsidiary bodies is drawn largely from the Executive Council itself, including members, Officers and observers.
- Many interviewees and survey respondents highlighted duplication and inefficiency between the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee, whose membership and agenda items substantially overlap.
- The mandate of the Task Force on Recommended Modifications to the Strategic and Operating Plans 2026–2027 of the Executive Council created in 2025 mirrors that of the Policy Advisory Committee.

### Formal recommendation

- Merge the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee into a single joint body with an overarching mandate over technical coordination and strategic planning.

137. As all constituent and additional bodies of WMO can create their own subsidiary bodies, the governance structure of the Organization is constantly changing. The Executive Council had, at the time of the review, the highest number of first-level subsidiary bodies across all constituent bodies.

### A steady increase in subsidiary bodies

138. The number of Executive Council subsidiary bodies has increased since 2000 (see figure IX below). Those active in 2025 covered administrative subjects (2),<sup>75</sup> oversight (1),<sup>76</sup> governance (2),<sup>77</sup> strategic planning (2)<sup>78</sup> and scientific and technical matters (4).<sup>79</sup> The Inspector welcomes the adoption of unified rules of procedure for the Executive Council and all its subsidiary bodies in 2023<sup>80</sup> and sees it as a good practice for streamlining the governance arrangements of multiple subsidiary bodies. With the exception of the Audit and Oversight Committee (see chapter VII for further details),

<sup>75</sup> Disciplinary Committee and Staff Pension Committee.

<sup>76</sup> Audit and Oversight Committee.

<sup>77</sup> Task Force on Elections and Appointments; and Task Force on the Comprehensive Review of the WMO Regional Concept.

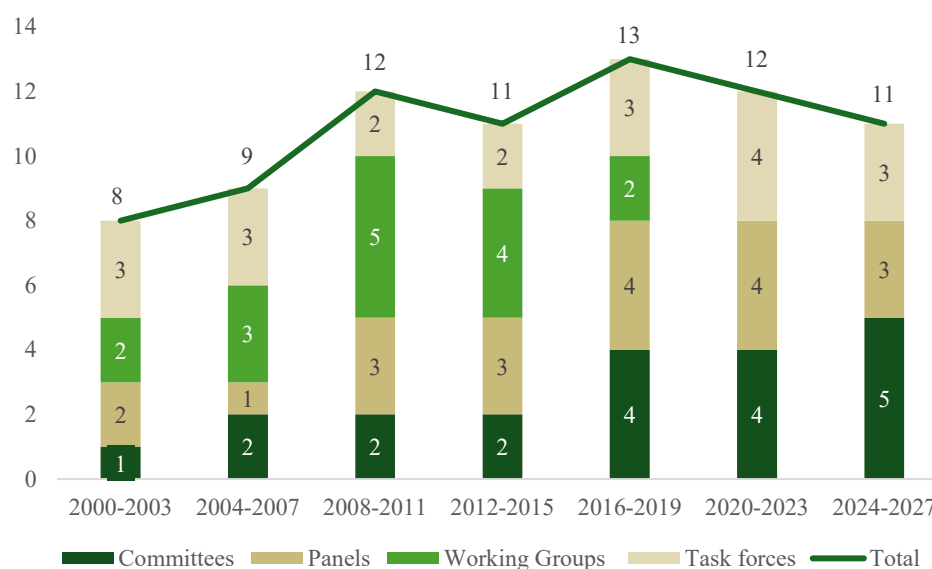
<sup>78</sup> Policy Advisory Committee; and Task Force on Recommended Modifications to the Strategic and Operating Plans 2026–2027.

<sup>79</sup> Technical Coordination Panel; Capacity Development Panel; Hydrological Coordination Panel; and Panel on Polar and High-mountain Observations, Research and Services.

<sup>80</sup> The Financial Advisory Committee is also covered by these rules of procedure as a body that reports to the Executive Council, even though it is subsidiary to Congress.

the core membership of every other subsidiary body under the Executive Council is drawn primarily from Executive Council members.

Figure IX  
Evolution of subsidiary bodies of the Executive Council



Source: WMO secretariat (2025).

139. The majority of stakeholders in interviews and respondents to the JIU survey expressed concerns about duplication of tasks between the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee. The Policy Advisory Committee was created<sup>81</sup> to advise on matters concerning strategy and policy, while the Technical Coordination Committee was intended to link the Executive Council with the technical bodies of the Organization. Both bodies were established in 2018 and their first sessions took place in 2020. While their mandates are distinctly defined on paper, only one third of survey respondents fully understood their mandates, and 40 per cent felt insufficiently informed about their membership.

140. Membership of the two committees overlaps significantly (see table 1 below). The duplication of the membership transforms into a duplication of the mandates, as the same members may be prone to raise the same issues. Around one quarter of respondents to the JIU survey viewed the membership of the Technical Coordination Committee as inadequate, and one-fifth said the same of the Policy Advisory Committee. In practice, both committees have addressed topics that appear to be outside their formal remits, according to the tasks assigned to them by the Executive Council: in 2025 the Policy Advisory Committee debated scientific and technical issues, while the Technical Coordination Committee addressed strategic planning issues. Since 2024, they have held joint sessions on shared topics – an approach that reflects the natural interdependence of science and strategy in a specialized agency.

<sup>81</sup> WMO, “Report of the Secretary-General”, document Cg-19/INF. 2.2, contained in *Progress Report: Background Information Supporting the Work of the Nineteenth Session of the World Meteorological Congress* (2023).

Table 1  
**Comparative analysis of membership and subjects of debate of the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee in 2025**

	<i>Policy Advisory Committee</i>	<i>Technical Coordination Committee</i>
<b>Membership</b>	Presidents of regional associations Presidents of technical commissions Chair of the Research Board Chair of the Technical Coordination Committee Up to 12 members of the Executive Council appointed by the Executive Council upon the proposal of the President	Presidents of regional associations Presidents of the technical commissions Chair of the Research Board Chair of any other body established by Congress or the Executive Council upon invitation from the Chair of the Technical Coordination Committee
<b>Points addressed during deliberations in 2025<sup>a</sup></b>	Approach to the strategic plan 2028–2031 Scientific and technical matters: Early Warnings for All initiative; Global Greenhouse Gas Watch; artificial intelligence Recommendations of the Task Force on Elections and Appointments Criteria for location and resourcing of the regional offices	Issues affecting implementation of the strategic plan Scientific and technical matters: Early Warnings for All initiative; Major Programmes Review of subsidiary bodies of technical commissions, regional associations and the Research Board

*Source:* Prepared by JIU (2026).

<sup>a</sup> WMO, “Report by the Chairs of committees reporting to the Executive Council”, document EC-79/INF. 2.3(4), in *Progress Report: Background Information Supporting the Work of the Seventy-ninth Session of the Executive Council (2025)*.

141. The Policy Advisory Committee, chaired by the President and composed of up to 12 Executive Council members appointed by Congress, may be perceived as too influential in shaping Executive Council decisions due to the large overlap in membership.

142. Merging the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee would consolidate scientific coordination and strategic planning and reduce duplication. Membership should extend beyond the Executive Council to ensure broad regional participation, including small island developing States and the least developed countries and low-income and lower-middle-income countries, while pursuing gender balance. To preserve separation of roles and diversify viewpoints, the joint body and the Executive Council should have different chairs. Its mandate could also include

monitoring organizational performance in delivering the strategic plan, an area currently not clearly assigned to any governing body.

143. The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance the effectiveness of the governance arrangements of the Organization:

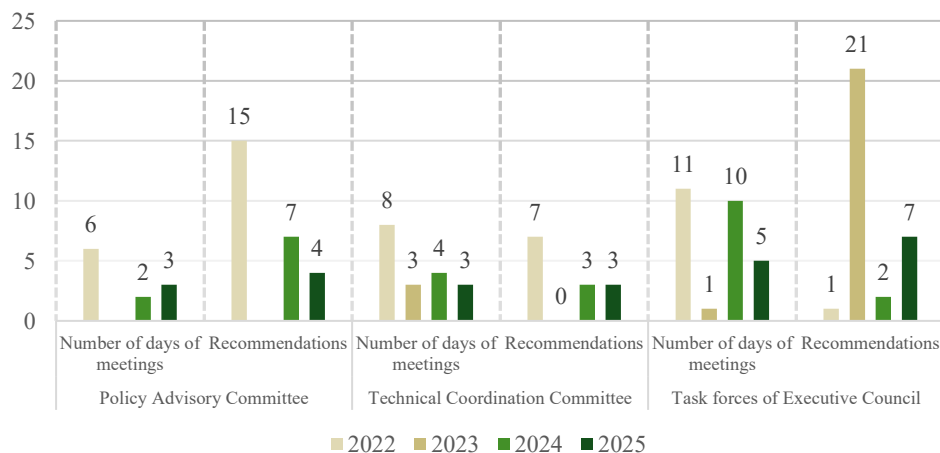
**Recommendation 9**

**The Executive Council should, no later than its ordinary session in 2028, explore merging the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee into a single joint body with an overarching mandate over technical coordination and strategic planning.**

144. Beyond the potential duplication between the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee, the Inspector draws attention to the use of Executive Council Task Forces which may be adding further duplication to an already crowded subsidiary body structure. As evident in figure X below, the yearly number of days of sessions and the outputs produced by these bodies, all directed to the Executive Council, are substantial.

Figure X

**Length of sessions and outputs produced by Executive Council subsidiary bodies: committees and task forces**



Source: Prepared by JIU, based on data from the corporate questionnaire (2025).

145. During the extraordinary session of the Executive Council in October 2025, a new task force was created to recommend adjustments to the strategic and operating plans for 2026–2027 in response to the liquidity challenges facing WMO. Although this work falls within the strategic planning remit of the Policy Advisory Committee, the task force differed notably in composition: it included six non-Executive Council members, five Executive Council members not on the Policy Advisory Committee, and it was not chaired by the President of WMO. Creating a new body rather than using an existing one has intensified questions about the continued relevance of the Policy Advisory Committee. **The Inspector recommends that, when future task force topics fall within the mandates of existing bodies, those bodies should be used instead of establishing new structures.**

## VII. Oversight in governance

### Summary of the chapter

With its open membership and advisory mandate, the Financial Advisory Committee cannot meet the full oversight needs of Congress and Executive Council. Its membership should be stable, geographically representative, and independently appointed by Congress. Key oversight functions, such as approving oversight charters and appointing or removing external auditors and oversight heads, should rest with intergovernmental bodies. Finally, the mandate and reporting lines of the two existing oversight committees (i.e. the Financial Advisory Committee and the Audit and Oversight Committee) should be aligned to reduce duplication and ensure a coherent oversight framework.

### Findings

- The Financial Advisory Committee lacks a mandate assigning it responsibility and accountability for oversight; it remains purely advisory.
- Independence and accountability concerns arise from the Financial Advisory Committee's composition, as core members hold conflicting governance roles, and open membership prevents assigning responsibilities and achieving geographical balance.
- Survey results show both the Financial Advisory Committee and the Audit and Oversight Committee are viewed as less effective in delivering their oversight and accountability responsibilities as compared to Congress or the Executive Council.
- The charter of the Internal Oversight Office is not approved by a governing body representing the Members.

### Formal recommendation

- Revise the terms of reference of the Financial Advisory Committee to transform it into a regionally balanced committee, consisting of elected Members, responsible for more comprehensive oversight of the technical and administrative work of the secretariat, on behalf of Congress and the Executive Council.

146. Oversight and accountability are core elements of governance in United Nations specialized agencies, which establish finance, budget and audit or oversight committees – supported by their general and financial regulations – to provide independent reviews of financial integrity, use of assessed contributions and programme performance.

147. Oversight is a central function of United Nations governing bodies to ensure accountability of the secretariat to Member States for their funding and for the achievement of the agreed upon mandate. This includes financial stewardship, review of oversight reports and audit results as well as a performance role in setting strategic plans and reviewing operational performance and programme results. Because supreme governing bodies meet less frequently, these committees, whose elected members are expected to bring relevant expertise, report regularly to the executive body to ensure timely and specialized guidance. Independent audit or oversight advisory committees,

composed of oversight experts, complement this structure by advising governing bodies and executive heads and by offering a comprehensive view of the Organization's oversight landscape.

148. As noted in chapter IV, the oversight function of Congress and the Executive Council is currently not sufficient or clear in the foundational documents of WMO. Moreover, the governance framework in which this function is delivered is complex, not always clearly delineated and often duplicative. In fact, Congress and the Executive Council are supported by two subsidiary bodies – namely, the Financial Advisory Committee (subsidiary body of Congress) and the Audit and Oversight Committee (subsidiary body of the Executive Council) – both advisory bodies in relation to oversight matters.

149. The general purpose of the Financial Advisory Committee is to provide advice to Congress and the Executive Council on the affordability, sustainability and implementation of results-based budgeting and on financial matters of the Organization. Its oversight function entails: (a) the review of reports of internal or external oversight bodies, (b) monitoring the progress of implementation of related recommendations and (c) the review of financial and human resources information.<sup>82</sup>

150. The purpose of the Audit and Oversight Committee is to provide advice and recommendations to the Executive Council and to the Secretary-General on matters related to financial management and reporting, systems of internal control and risk management, audit and evaluation processes, monitoring compliance with financial rules and regulations and policies on ethics. Its oversight function covers a broad range of responsibilities and duties, including: (a) review and advise on financial management and reporting, accounting, risk management, internal audit, investigation, evaluation, internal control and ethics policies; (b) assess the performance and effectiveness of both internal and external audit functions; (c) review organizational risks, including those related to information technology systems; (d) review all reports provided by external or internal oversight bodies and the related recommendation implementation plan; (e) provide support and advice in disciplinary investigations of the Secretary-General; and (f) review arrangements for fraud prevention.<sup>83</sup>

151. Several issues and risks emerge with the current arrangements in fulfilling governance oversight and accountability duties as discussed below.

## A. Financial Advisory Committee

### Positioning in the governance and decision-making structure of the Organization

152. The Financial Advisory Committee reports to both Congress and the Executive Council. However, it is with the latter that the Committee is most engaged – its reports are not presented in plenary sessions of Congress but are shared with the Members only for informational purposes. In the Executive Council, the Committee presents its recommendations for further action and decision by its members.

<sup>82</sup> Terms of reference first adopted in 1987, see *Tenth World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Report with Resolutions, Geneva, 4–28 May 1987*, document WMO-No. 681; most recent change dating from the nineteenth session of Congress, in 2023, see *World Meteorological Congress: Abridged Final Report of the Nineteenth Session, Geneva, 22 May–2 June 2023*, document WMO-No. 1326.

<sup>83</sup> Terms of reference first adopted in 2004, see *Executive Council: Fifty-sixth Session – Abridged Final Report with Resolutions, Geneva, 8–18 June 2004*, document WMO-No. 977; most recent change dating from the seventy-second session of the Executive Council in 2020, see *Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventy-second Session, Videoconference, 28 September–2 October 2020*, document WMO-No. 1255.

153. Acting in an advisory capacity means recommendations put forward by the Committee can potentially be redrafted by the Executive Council. This situation poses several concerns as the Financial Advisory Committee is an intergovernmental body with Member representatives, reporting to Executive Council members acting in their personal capacity. In addition, in certain United Nations specialized agencies, the equivalent bodies to the Financial Advisory Committee may issue recommendations addressed directly to the executive head of the organization, without having to submit them for endorsement to any other governing body (see annex III). This authority is conferred both through the intergovernmental status of the respective committee, which represents the views of its Members, and through the specific skills and experience on oversight and financial management matters of the members of such committees.

**Open membership of the Financial Advisory Committee: providing opportunities for diverse views but diluting Members' accountability**

154. The membership of the Financial Advisory Committee makes WMO an exception among similar bodies in other United Nations specialized agencies.<sup>84</sup> The Committee's structure consists of seven core members and an open membership with sessions open to all Members interested in attending them. The core members are the President of WMO and the six presidents of regional associations. This provides another governing body composed of Directors of National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services who are also tasked with serving on multiple other committees (see chapter III). Although open membership may promote a diversity of perspectives, it also reduces the sense of individual accountability of Members. This may also help explain why less than half of the respondents to the JIU survey view the Financial Advisory Committee as effectively addressing oversight and accountability of the WMO secretariat.

155. When analysing the participation in the various sessions of the Financial Advisory Committee (since its forty-first session, in 2022), an average of 28 Members were represented, among which 22 attended at least three of the last five sessions. Members attending the Financial Advisory Committee were predominantly from Regions II and VI, with Regions III and V being the least represented. This is an indication that, while participation is open and attendance is relatively stable; it lacks regional balance and diverse perspectives.

156. In a scenario in which additional responsibility is granted to the Financial Advisory Committee, its membership should be changed to a closed model in which Congress elects the Members serving on the Committee during the intersessional periods. In such a framework, it is crucial to have regional distribution of seats in order to ensure a balanced representation of the views of Members. Also, in order to limit the cross-representation in governing bodies as conveyed in chapter III, the presidents of regional associations should not be included as members in this Committee. Other United Nations specialized agencies have finance, budget and oversight committees with an equal number of regional representatives, at least two per region, plus a Chair and a Vice-Chair. They often hold office for one biennium, with an option to be re-elected for one additional term, providing continuity as well as an opportunity to stagger membership periods. As also suggested in an informal recommendation of the JIU review of budgeting in organizations of the United Nations system,<sup>85</sup> there should be an expectation that the elected Members would provide representatives to serve on the Financial Advisory Committee who have backgrounds in finance or oversight topics.

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<sup>84</sup> Among United Nations specialized agencies, only ITU has similar arrangements for its governing body that is the equivalent of the Financial Advisory Committee. See annex III for further details.

<sup>85</sup> See [JIU/REP/2024/3 \(Part I\)](#), para. 75.

### Responsibilities and practical arrangements for Committee sessions

157. The current terms of reference of the Financial Advisory Committee broadly cover budget, financial and resource allocation issues, as well as the review of reports from internal and external oversight bodies and related recommendation implementation plans, but they exclude organizational performance reporting and evaluation planning. Its oversight role does not formally include risk management, internal control, ethics or review of audit charters and plans, which are currently assigned as functions to the Audit and Oversight Committee. However, the latter is an independent advisory expert body, not an intergovernmental body representing the Members. At a minimum, the responsibilities of the Financial Advisory Committee should be expanded to include performance reporting, risk management and internal controls, especially given the integration since 2023 of oversight functions in its terms of reference, previously held solely by the Audit and Oversight Committee.

158. The current arrangement, under which the WMO President chairs the Financial Advisory Committee, undermines good governance. The President reports on oversight and accountability to bodies that he also chairs (i.e. Congress and the Executive Council), demonstrating the absence of a defined segregation of responsibilities within the governance of WMO. As suggested in chapter III, assigning the chairmanship to one of the Vice-Presidents would resolve this conflict.

159. The following recommendation is intended to strengthen and enhance oversight and accountability, as well as control and compliance, for the governance of the Organization:

#### Recommendation 10

**Congress should, no later than its twenty-first ordinary session, revise the terms of reference of the Financial Advisory Committee, to elect Members for an intergovernmental, regionally representative committee with a mandate to holistically oversee financial, budgetary and oversight matters on behalf of Congress and the Executive Council.**

### Approval of the oversight charter by governing bodies

160. There are certain aspects of oversight approvals that must be retained by Congress or delegated to the Executive Council or the Financial Advisory Committee during the intersessional periods, if need arises. The most important are the approval of oversight charters, as well as the concurrence for the appointment or termination of the head of internal oversight and the external auditor. For example, currently, the Audit and Oversight Committee is responsible for reviewing the Internal Oversight Office<sup>86</sup> charter, in accordance with its terms of reference, and the current charter is approved by the Secretary-General. However, governing body approval of such charter is also required pursuant to the professional standards of the Institute of Internal Auditors<sup>87</sup> and was requested in a previous JIU informal recommendation.<sup>88</sup> **The Inspector underscores the importance of clearly defining oversight responsibilities, including the approval of the Internal Oversight Office charter and the concurrence with the selection or**

<sup>86</sup> Covering internal audit, evaluation and investigation functions.

<sup>87</sup> Institute of Internal Auditors, *Global Internal Audit Standards* (2024), Standard 6.2 Internal Audit Charter.

<sup>88</sup> See [JIU/REP/2016/8](#), para. 56, indicating that the approval of the internal audit charter by the governing body is essential.

**discharge of the head of internal oversight by Congress or through delegation to the Executive Council or the Financial Advisory Committee, as appropriate.**

## **B. Audit and Oversight Committee**

161. Currently, the Executive Council, the Financial Advisory Committee and Congress receive the same report at their sessions detailing the work completed by the Audit and Oversight Committee along with its high-level observations. The Secretary-General receives a distinct and more detailed report with recommendations after every biannual session of the Audit and Oversight Committee. The responsibilities regarding advice on oversight matters assigned to the Financial Advisory Committee since 2023 should not result in duplicate reporting made to the Executive Council on such topics from both the Financial Advisory Committee and the Audit and Oversight Committee. **In order to streamline the reporting on oversight topics among governing bodies, the report of the Audit and Oversight Committee should be presented only to the Financial Advisory Committee, which should then provide the Executive Council and Congress with an integrated overview of the relevant issues.**

162. On review of the responsibilities and duties listed in the terms of reference of the Audit and Oversight Committee and reflected in its reporting, it is noted that it has been assigned a larger range and number of duties compared to similar bodies in other specialized agencies and, even more than should be expected from an external advisory body. For example, in addition to the subjects covered by similar committees across most of the other United Nations specialized agencies, the Audit and Oversight Committee of WMO analyses and provides advice on the external auditor workplan, disciplinary processes for handling misconduct allegations against the Secretary-General, information technology governance, compliance and fraud prevention. **The Inspector draws attention to the fact that members of the Audit and Oversight Committee are ultimately external experts who can dedicate a limited amount of voluntary time to WMO-related issues and their contribution should therefore be focused on the topics where most added value can be generated.**

## VIII. Interactions within the United Nations system and secretariat support to governance

### Summary of the chapter

Visible engagement by the secretariat in the United Nations system is vital for positioning WMO in future system-wide frameworks, and for developing stronger coordination with other United Nations system entities. Internally, WMO should keep its Members informed of its outreach efforts and results. In addition, the costs incurred in supporting the governance of the Organization should be transparent to Members to promote clearer ownership on decisions to create or terminate governing bodies, especially subsidiary ones, and these costs should be detailed and reported annually.

### Findings

- WMO maintains several institutional links with the United Nations Secretariat, including shared services for ethics, the Ombudsman and internal justice.
- WMO is not the lead custodian for any Sustainable Development Goals and is the co-custodian of only one, limiting its visibility and participation in system-wide processes and reporting to bodies such as the Economic and Social Council.
- Costs for governance activities are not transparent to Members nor are resource implications for creating new bodies.

### Formal recommendations

- The Secretary-General should develop a formal outreach plan to prepare for the next set of United Nations system-wide goals and aim to position the Organization as a leading United Nations agency in relevant areas.
- The Executive Council should request information on the number of created and terminated subsidiary bodies in the intersessional period by all constituent bodies as well as the costs of supporting governance activities.

163. Although the secretariat is not a focus of this review, it is important to examine how well it supports the governing bodies in the achievement of their mandates. Secretariat support is provided mainly in two ways, through external representation and advocacy for the Organization's mandate and priorities and through the direct administrative support provided to governing bodies.

### A. External representation and links with the United Nations system

164. In the United Nations system, executive heads serve as the public face and voice of the organizations. They advocate for their organization's mandate and priorities and represent it in international forums, including among United Nations system organizations and in the United Nations Secretariat. This includes promoting the adoption of international standards and norms within the Organization's mandate and raising its profile to attract attention to its impact. They also play important roles in resource mobilization and partnership development, areas particularly important in the

current environment. This requires the cultivation of relationships within the United Nations system as well as with Member States to respond to their concerns and interests and to strengthen their commitment to the Organization.

### **Visibility within and across the United Nations system should be pursued**

165. Historical documents examined by the Inspector indicated that WMO should provide a report to the Economic and Social Council annually.<sup>89</sup> In interviews conducted with officials from the United Nations Secretariat, it was subsequently clarified that this practice across specialized agencies was discontinued in the late 1990s, but other opportunities replaced it, including reports on system-wide goals, such as thematic coverage of the Sustainable Development Goals in the partnership forum of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.<sup>90</sup> A search of recent documents of the Economic and Social Council shows that WMO is mentioned only a few times in relation to the reporting on Goal 13, for which it is a co-custodian. Within this context, the Inspector notes the efforts made to increase the involvement of WMO in the high-level political forum on sustainable development and in the contributions since 2020 to thematic reviews in relation to Goals 6, 7, 11 and 17 and, more extensively, in relation to Goal 13. In light of these efforts, coupled with workstream 2 of the UN80 Initiative, enhancing coherence with other United Nations system organizations will be essential for WMO.<sup>91</sup> **The Inspector encourages senior staff to conduct outreach to the United Nations Secretariat entities to better position WMO for the next iteration of system-wide goals (i.e. after the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) and its leadership in relevant areas.**

166. WMO participation in the mechanisms and forums of the committees and bodies of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) has increased and become more stable since 2024. The Inspector notes that the seniority of the WMO representatives in the two committees of the CEB varies: for the High-level Committee on Programmes, it is at the P-5 level, while for the High-level Committee on Management, it is at the Assistant Secretary-General level. To improve the visibility of WMO in these forums, **the Inspector recommends that the Deputy Secretary-General represent the Organization in the High-level Committee on Programmes.**

### **High-level and coordinated engagement with United Nations diplomatic missions for visibility and synergy**

167. The visibility of WMO has historically been shaped by the level of national representation at Congress, where participation has largely come from Directors of National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services. This poses a challenge in relation to resource mobilization initiatives, as several stakeholders indicated that, as part of the meteorological services they have limited advocacy opportunities for WMO initiatives or are not at all attached to the decision-making mechanisms for funding United Nations entities.

168. Closer coordination with the United Nations Secretariat could strengthen the visibility of WMO within the diplomatic community and improve access to funding for both regular and extrabudgetary resources. High-level briefings, targeted outreach and engagement on United Nations initiatives where WMO can add value would help

<sup>89</sup> Economic and Social Council resolution 403 (XIII) of 22 August 1951.

<sup>90</sup> See the website of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, available at <https://sdgs.un.org/2026ECOSOCPartnershipForum>; and the website of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, available at <https://hlpf.un.org/>.

<sup>91</sup> Workstream 2 aims to improve how mandates are created, delivered and reviewed. See [www.un.org/un80-initiative/en/report-mandate-implementation-review](http://www.un.org/un80-initiative/en/report-mandate-implementation-review).

position the Organization more prominently. Presenting performance updates to the Economic and Social Council, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other Secretariat entities could open partnership opportunities not available through routine reporting. **The Inspector encourages expanded outreach to the United Nations Secretariat to raise the profile of WMO in system-wide initiatives.**

169. The Inspector acknowledges the recent strengthening of the engagement of WMO within multilateral processes led by the United Nations Secretariat but sees further potential to enhance its visibility. The Early Warnings for All initiative significantly elevated the leadership profile of WMO across the United Nations system (see annex VIII for details on its governance trajectory). Building on this momentum, the Secretary-General should pursue a structured plan for outreach and resource mobilization, particularly as the initiative is expected to conclude in 2027, the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals is in 2030, and new system-wide frameworks will be adopted. Annual updates on these outreach efforts should be provided to the Executive Council.

170. The following recommendation is intended to enhance coordination and cooperation:

**Recommendation 11**

**By the end of 2027, the Secretary-General should develop an outreach and engagement plan to enhance resource mobilization efforts and increase the visibility of WMO within the United Nations diplomatic community ahead of the next iteration of system-wide goals and other United Nations system-wide initiatives.**

## **B. Secretariat support provided to governing bodies**

171. The WMO secretariat has approximately 340 staff members and an annual assessed budget of around SwF 70 million to support the work of its governing bodies, which gathers 193 Members and Territories to advance the mandate of the Organization. Among United Nations specialized agencies, it is among the smallest secretariats in terms of available resources. While having its own set of scientific and technical programmes to implement, the WMO secretariat's ultimate role is to facilitate cooperation and coordination among the WMO Members.

172. In terms of direct support to governing bodies provided by the secretariat, this task is split between the Governing Bodies Secretariat (for Congress, the Executive Council, including the Policy Advisory Committee and Technical Coordination Committee, and the technical commissions), the Regional Offices (for regional associations), the Controller's Office (for the Financial Advisory Committee) and staff in various technical departments (for the different additional and subsidiary bodies working on scientific and normative matters). As responses to the JIU survey show, overall satisfaction with the secretariat function in supporting governance was adequate.

### **Support provided to the constituent bodies and the subsidiary bodies of the Executive Council**

173. Services provided by the various teams in the WMO secretariat to support the work of the governing bodies include:

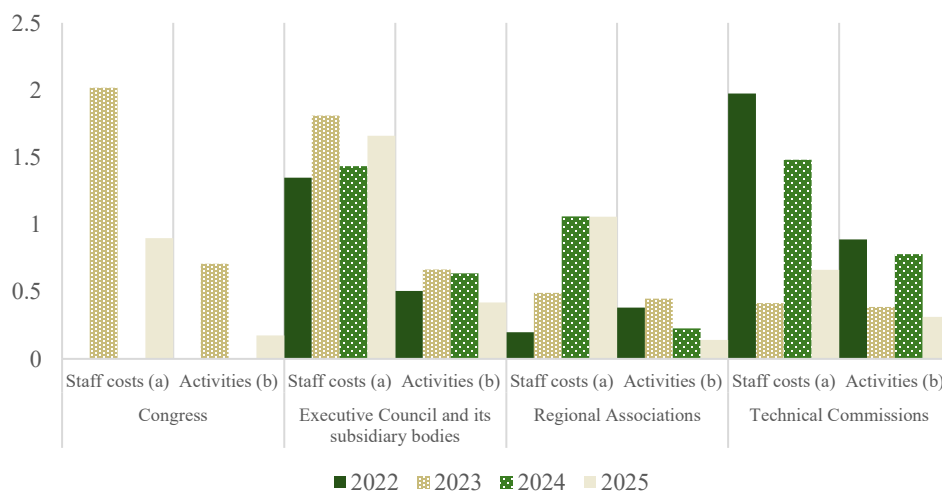
- (a) Organizing overall session and pre-session logistics for in-person and virtual meetings, as well as translation, interpretation and travel support;

- (b) Coordinating inputs from stakeholders for the preparation of information documents and draft resolutions, decisions and recommendations and circulation of such documents ahead of sessions;
- (c) Creating, managing and updating relevant databases (for the nomination of experts, for the monitoring of resolutions and decisions by governing bodies, etc.);
- (d) Maintaining a document management system to support WMO governance body sessions, official publications and training and induction materials;
- (e) Conducting regular analysis of governing body composition and attendance of sessions.

174. As part of the review, the Inspector was able to examine the cost of providing governing body support to Congress, the Executive Council (including its subsidiary bodies), regional associations (including their management groups), technical commissions (including their management groups and first-level subsidiary bodies), the Research Board and the Scientific Advisory Panel. This analysis did not include the support costs related to other subsidiary bodies, such as advisory groups, task teams and working groups. The costs analysed included the staff costs of the Governing Bodies Secretariat and other divisions directly involved in supporting the sessions of governing bodies as well as conference activity costs such as conference and linguistic services (see annex VII and figure XI below).

**Figure XI**  
**Annual costs for supporting governance**

(Millions of Swiss francs)



Source: Prepared by JIU, based on data provided by WMO (2025).

<sup>a</sup> The staff costs of the Governing Bodies Secretariat are not included in this chart and amount to an average yearly cost of SwF 410,000 over the analysed period.

<sup>b</sup> The cost of activities includes the aggregated cost of travel, consultants, external interpretation, external translation, etc.

175. The calculated costs are relative to several factors, the first being the number of annual sessions of the respective body. For example, the Executive Council and most of its subsidiary bodies have one session per year and the Audit and Oversight Committee meets twice per year. Technical commissions meet in ordinary sessions every two years, and the regional associations have a similar frequency of sessions. Costs are also associated with the logistics behind the type and number of participants, and if the

Organization supports the travel costs of participants. On the latter, the Inspector notes the provisions included in regulation 31 of the General Regulations calling for the establishment of a practice by which Members cover the costs of attendance of their experts in various WMO governing bodies. According to the information provided during interviews, this practice is not in place and the costs of the travel of experts are, in most cases, borne by WMO. In addition, WMO is also supporting the travel of certain Member representatives, upon their express request.

176. Staff costs generate most of the expenditures related to the support of governance. On average, 23 full-time equivalent staff members (7 per cent of the total staff of the secretariat) are engaged in supporting the various governing bodies throughout the year; most of them are outside the Governing Bodies Secretariat, which had three staff members up to 2025. While there is a general trend for decreasing staff costs supporting governing bodies in recent years, this has not been the case for regional associations. In fact, the staff costs for their governance support more than doubled in the last two years.

177. Over the four-year period from 2022 to 2025, the annual average total cost of support to governing bodies was SwF 6.3 million, representing 9.2 per cent of WMO total annual expenditure. During this period, Congress met twice, once in 2023 for an ordinary session and again in 2025 for an extraordinary session. The ordinary session of Congress in 2023 is estimated to have cost SwF 2.7 million and was 11 days long. The extraordinary session in 2025, by contrast, was only 4 days long but had a lower attendance; it cost an estimated SwF 1 million. This information may be useful for financial planning purposes, should the frequency of Congress be increased, as suggested in recommendation 4.

178. Transparent costs of governing body structures and activities provide awareness to WMO Members on the scope of its governance as well as the support necessary from a relatively small secretariat. These costs, which complement the analysis made in chapters IV, V and VI, may serve to provide a more disciplined approach to governance for WMO.

179. The following recommendation is intended to provide transparency and accountability regarding the costs associated with supporting WMO governance structures and activities:

**Recommendation 12**

**The Executive Council should request the Secretary-General to provide information on the number of created and terminated subsidiary bodies in the respective intersessional period by all constituent bodies, as well as the estimated secretariat costs associated with supporting governing bodies, to be included in the reports presented by the Secretary-General as from 2028, at the latest.**

## IX. Prioritizing a way forward

180. WMO Members have consistently demonstrated willingness to modernize the Organization's governance, from amending the Convention to updating the General Regulations and undertaking major reforms, such as the 2019 restructuring of technical commissions. Their request for an external and independent JIU review reflects continued interest in identifying areas for improvement and understanding where governance weaknesses pose reputational, strategic or functional risks. Addressing these risks will require political resolve, particularly as a meaningful reform may necessitate amendments to the Convention at a time of heightened political and financial sensitivity. Nonetheless, these challenges should not distract from issues that directly affect the operational effectiveness of WMO.

181. WMO remains atypical in its governance practices compared with other United Nations specialized agencies, largely due to legacies from its non-governmental origins. The lack of an intergovernmental model in its executive body was pointed out by JIU in 2007 and, in 2026, WMO remains the only United Nations specialized agency with an executive body that is not intergovernmental but takes decisions on the organization's budget and expenditures. A core United Nations governance principle is that Member States should have a voice in how their financial contributions are used, yet WMO Members exercise this authority only every four years in the ordinary sessions of Congress. Moreover, the Convention does not carve out a distinct role for its executive body in ensuring oversight of the Organization during the intersessional periods of Congress.

182. Oversight gaps are compounded by the advisory status and open membership of the Financial Advisory Committee, which limit ownership and accountability among Member representatives. While improvements have been made, the Committee's role must evolve to meet Members' oversight needs and align with practices in other United Nations specialized agencies.

183. An underdeveloped oversight role of governing bodies risks affecting the strategic direction of the Organization, while insufficient oversight may enable a suboptimal use of financial resources, causing credibility issues with WMO partners and stakeholders and delaying operational results and outputs.

184. Another anomaly in the WMO governance model concerns the accountability arrangements of the Secretary-General and the role of the President. Articles 4 and 22 of the Convention blur leadership responsibilities and undermine the fundamental United Nations principle that the Secretary-General is accountable to the Members who elect him or her. While the General Regulations attempted to soften this aspect of the Convention, amending and correcting the latter should be a high priority for sustainable and predictable governance going forward. Furthermore, the Convention also designates the President as Chair of both Congress and the Executive Council and, in practice, the President also chairs the Policy Advisory Committee and the Financial Advisory Committee. This concentration of roles creates an insufficient separation of governance responsibilities whereby the presidency effectively reports to itself in several forums.

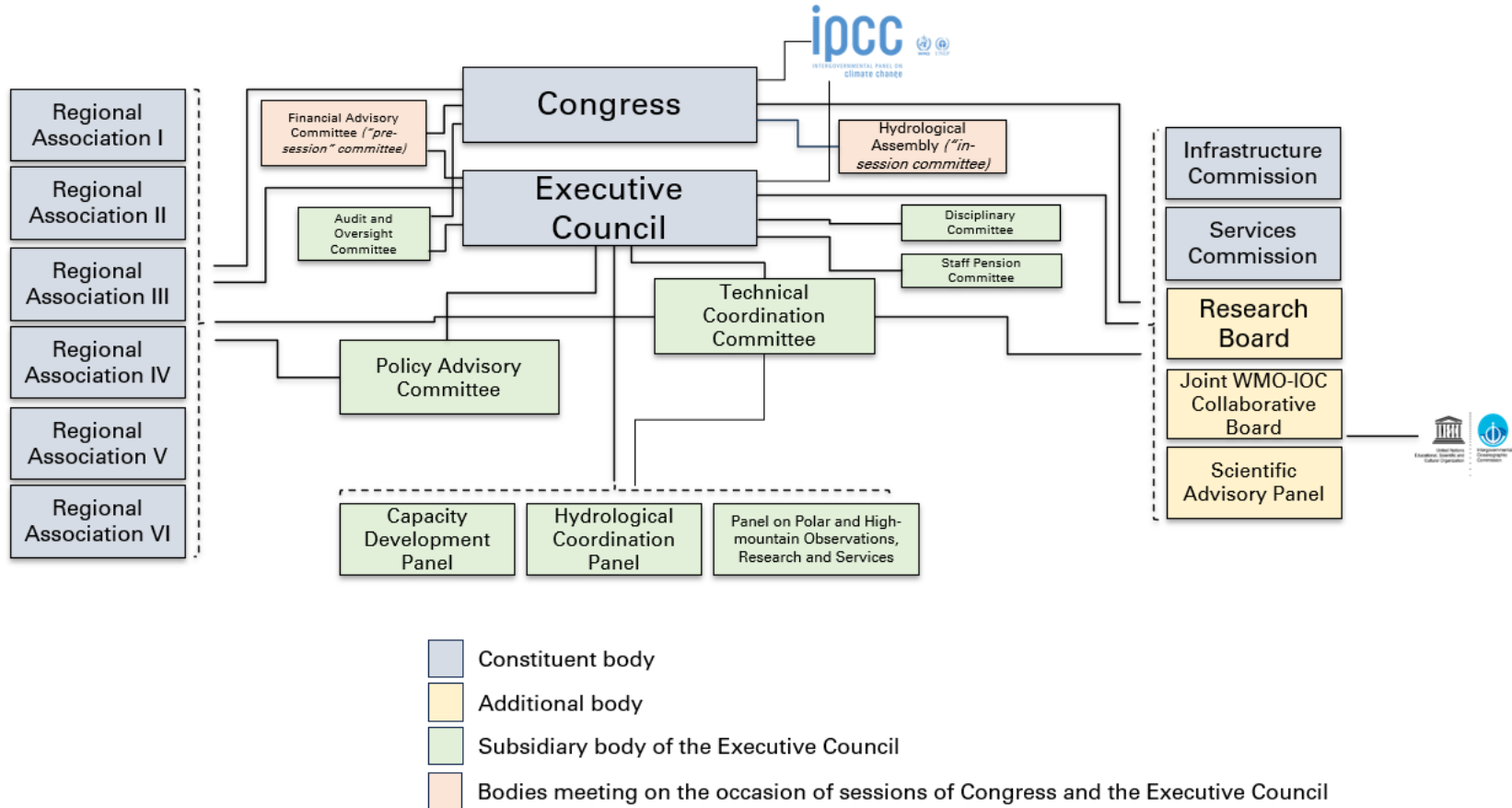
185. Segregation of duties is essential for sound governance, yet the WMO framework includes numerous ex officio roles that, while intended to support coordination, limit broader Member participation, reduce diversity of views and place excessive burdens on a small number of individuals who also deliver at the same time on their respective roles in their national Governments.

186. While this review contains 12 formal recommendations and 33 informal ones, the Inspector highlights the highest risks for the Organization as being the accountability arrangements for the Secretary-General alongside the role of the President, a systemic

lack of segregation of duties across governance structures and gaps in proper oversight. These should be top priorities for Congress and the Executive Council to strengthen the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the WMO governing structures.

187. Each of the formal recommendations in this report provides an action with a timeline based on the priority of the issue and the associated risk. Informal recommendations also support key reforms. A disciplined and transparent approach will be essential to address the recommendations made in this report and to take decisions on the necessary actions. **The Inspector urges Members, with guidance from the Executive Council, to create a road map for the consideration of and response to all recommendations, including the key milestones to be accomplished for approved actions.** Progress made on the road map should be reported and reviewed at each session of the Executive Council and Congress until the approved actions are fully implemented.

## Annex I. WMO governance structure



Note: Valid after the 19th session of the Congress (2023) and the 79th session of the Executive Council (2024).

## Annex II. Governance benchmarks and WMO assessment

1. JIU developed governance benchmarks tailored to the context of UN specialized agencies, drawing on recognized good-governance practices. The detailed benchmarks appear below and include the Inspector's assessment of how WMO's current practices align with each criterion.
2. It should be noted when considering how to implement improvements to roles, responsibilities, accountabilities of collective bodies,<sup>92</sup> that the Inspector recommends the use of the RACI (Responsible/Accountable/Consulted/Informed) model.

**Table 1**  
**RACI model**

RACI Element	Definitions	Considerations
R: Responsible	The body(ies) responsible for delivering the work and reporting to the accountable body.	There must be at least one body responsible to perform the task, otherwise it will not be delivered.
A: Accountable	The body who reviews, makes the final decision, and is held accountable for the results.	There can only be one body that is accountable, otherwise there is confusion about the ultimate authority and who is held accountable.
C: Consulted	The body, typically having subject matter expertise, that reviews the work and is required to provide advice and recommendations.	Consulting is a two-way communication and a reply is expected. Consulting too many bodies can slow down the process and delay decision making
I: Informed	Body(ies) who are kept up to date on progress and are notified of results.	Being informed is one way communication, with no expectation of a reply.

*Source:* Prepared by the JIU (2026).

3. In addition, good governance requires clear segregation of duties, meaning no individual should serve on multiple committees responsible for both advising on and overseeing the same issues. When these roles overlap, structural conflicts may arise, including: oversight loses independence, information becomes less objective, and decisions risk appearing routinely endorsed rather than substantively reviewed. Concentrating authority in one person also skews influence within the governance system and places excessive weight on a single viewpoint.

<sup>92</sup> Collective bodies include: governance committees, the Secretariat, and outside bodies such as the external auditor.

**Table 2**  
**Benchmark model and assessment results**

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
A. Governance and Leadership	A. 1. Representative and qualified membership	A.1.1. Appropriate representation of Members in constituent bodies	Constituent bodies appropriately represent Members including from geographical, diversity, technical, and fiduciary perspectives	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All Members are represented in Congress and regional associations</li> <li>- Executive Council and technical commissions should strive for enhancing geographic and gender balance in their constituency</li> <li>- 40 per cent of Members never held a seat on the Executive Council</li> <li>- Need to strengthen finance and oversight skills on Executive Council and the Financial Advisory Committee</li> </ul>	III, IV, VII
			Adequate membership size of constituent bodies.	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Executive council is appropriately sized</li> <li>- Technical commissions and, consequently their subsidiary bodies lack full Member representation</li> </ul>	IV, V
			Congress Member representatives have adequate decision-making capacity within their respective national governments	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congress representation could promote participation from line Ministers for high level segments</li> </ul>	IV
			Roles of members and experts are clearly defined and suited to the mandate of each constituent body	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Executive Council members acting as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members is not in alignment with their governance responsibilities</li> <li>- Regional associations and technical commissions could benefit from having a greater share of the same expert constituency in their subsidiary bodies</li> </ul>	IV, V
			Each constituent body promotes gender balance and ensures due consideration for diversity	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policies on gender representation in constituent bodies exist and statistics of participants in sessions by gender are available.</li> <li>- Other aspects of diversity including disability are not tracked</li> </ul>	III

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
		A.1.2. Term limits ensure sufficient continuity, fresh views and expertise	Governing bodies define member term limits, rotation requirements, and renewal options	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Term and renewal limits are defined for the officers of the Organization and presidents of technical commissions</li> <li>- Four-year terms limit opportunities for Members and providing fresh perspectives</li> <li>- There is no rotation requirement or consecutive renewal limit for Executive Council members</li> </ul>	III, IV
			Staggered terms are defined for governing bodies that support continuity and turnover	Not met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are no staggered arrangements for elections of presidents and vice-presidents in any of the constituent bodies</li> </ul>	III
	A.2. Alignment with UN governance practices	A.2.1. Alignment of governance roles and authorities with practices of other UN specialized agencies	Responsibilities of each constituent body are consistent with the expected mandate	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Executive Council lacks sufficient focus on oversight matters</li> <li>- Regional associations' mandates are extensive and duplicative</li> </ul>	IV, V
			Authority delegated to each constituent body is appropriately segregated according to the RACI model	Not met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multiple reporting lines and duplication of certain functions blur the lines between consulted, responsible and accountable governing bodies</li> </ul>	V, VI, VII
			Role of the President of the supreme body is clear and focused on <u>facilitating governance</u>	Not met, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conflicting functions are assigned to the President of WMO.</li> </ul>	III
			Secretary-General authorities are appropriate and aligned with expected duties for UN executive heads of organizations	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Authorities are clear</li> <li>- Direct reporting to the President and lack of a compact limits full accountability to Members</li> </ul>	II, III
		A.2.2. Appropriate reporting and representation to the UN, including for common initiatives	Reporting processes with other UN system organizations provide visibility for WMO	Partially met, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to increase WMO's role and visibility in flagship initiatives in the UN system</li> </ul>	VIII
	A.3. Leadership with regard to	A.3.1. Integration of ethics into the practices of	Constituent bodies have induction and training processes to ensure that members understand WMO ethical requirements	Not met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current induction trainings for new Permanent Representatives do not include an ethics component</li> </ul>	III

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
	values and ethics	governing bodies and alignment with UN expectations	Conflict-of-interest procedures require disclosure of actual or perceived conflicts, including financial disclosure	Partially met - Some conflict-of-interest procedures exist but are not comprehensive or complete	III
			The Executive Council receives appropriate reporting on organizational values and ethics	Partially met - Executive Council receives reporting from the UN Ethics office but not the Ombudsman	III
	A.4. Election processes for Presidents/Vice-Presidents	A.4.1. Clearly defined election process	The procedures and conduct for elections are clearly defined	Met - Included in the General Regulations	n/a <sup>93</sup>
		A.4.2. Effective term lengths and renewals	Terms and renewals are sufficient to achieve goals without stagnation or limiting opportunities, timing supports smooth transition and succession planning	Partially met - Officer term limits are too long and there is no succession planning	III
		A.4.3. Appropriate terms of reference for the President/Vice-President	President's terms of reference are appropriate (RACI) and include leadership and facilitation of governance roles	Partially met - Core responsibilities of the President should be revised	II, III
			Vice-President terms of reference include specific responsibilities and leadership roles	Not met - No terms of reference for Vice-Presidents'; the assigned thematic portfolio is not stable and is expected to be changed depending on the incumbent of the function	III
	A.5. Secretariat leadership appointments and performance reviews	A.5.1. Transparent multilateral process for the election of the Secretary-General	Clear and transparent procedures for submitting candidatures and electing the Secretary-General	Met - Procedures for electing the Secretary-General amended at the extraordinary Congress in 2025	n/a
		A.5.2. Process to set performance compacts and evaluate the	A compact is agreed between the Congress and the Secretary-General, outlining performance expectations and key initiatives during the intersessional period	Not met - The only document guiding the work of the Secretary-General is the 4-year Strategic Plan	III

<sup>93</sup> n/a is indicated for the cases in which the assessment has been made exclusively for the purpose of this annex and is not further developed in the content of the report.

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
		performance of the Secretary General	Structured process to review the performance of the Secretary-General allowing for adequate input from Members	Not met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No performance assessment process for the Secretary-General by Members</li> </ul>	II, III
B. Governing Body Effectiveness	B.1. Cohesive and aligned governance structure	B.1.1. Alignment of governance structure with multilateral, fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities	Each constituent body is designed to capture the full range of Members' perspectives	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technical commissions do not have full Member representation, potentially because Members have the right to be represented on the commissions, not the obligation.</li> <li>There is uneven involvement of regional experts in the work of subsidiary bodies</li> </ul>	III, V
			Each governing body serves a unique purpose with no gaps or overlaps in mandates	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are duplications in the mandates of the Policy Advisory Committee and the Technical Coordination Committee as well as the Financial Advisory Committee and the Audit Oversight Committee</li> <li>The work of the of the Scientific Research Panel and the work of the Research Board are not well integrated</li> <li>Technical subsidiary bodies with overlapping mandates are active in regional associations and in technical commissions</li> </ul>	V, VI, VII
			Eligibility to serve on multiple governing bodies provides proper separation of consultative, responsibility, and accountability roles	Not met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incompatible roles exist among officials who chair committees with conflicting RACI mandates, or officials participate in too many committees</li> </ul>	III
			Congress and Executive Council are responsible for overseeing financial matters, organizational performance and oversight functions	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles of Congress and the Executive Council are defined regarding approval and execution of the strategic plan and related budget; however oversight responsibilities are not sufficiently defined and emphasized.</li> </ul>	II, IV
			Regional associations are structured to address the distinct contextual needs of each region	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall geography of regions is appropriate, but regional sub-grouping could better identify and prioritize Member needs</li> </ul>	V

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
			Technical commissions and their subsidiary bodies provide unbiased scientific advice to Congress and Executive Council	Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Technical commissions include Member-nominated and independent experts to make recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council</li> </ul>	V
		B.1.2. Clear hierarchy that integrates the roles of various governing bodies and supports decision making	There is a clearly documented hierarchy for review and decision making between constituent bodies which defines delegations of authority and reporting lines to parent bodies	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overall decision-making processes are defined</li> <li>- The subjects for which resolutions and decisions can be adopted by regional associations and technical commissions may need further clarification</li> </ul>	IV, V
		B.1.3. Appropriate segregation of duties in leadership roles across governing bodies	Governing bodies with conflicting reporting lines (RACI model) are chaired by different individuals	Not met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The President of WMO chairs Congress (accountable) which is incompatible with chairing Executive Council, Financial Advisory Committee and the Policy Advisory Committee (bodies responsible and consulted)</li> </ul>	II, III, IV, VII
		B.1.4. Decisions and resolutions are tracked and monitored for implementation	Each governing body tracks the implementation of its decisions and resolutions. Congress receives a report on all resolutions and decisions in force and adopted in the intersessional periods.	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Governing bodies usually track the implementation of their resolutions but not of their decisions.</li> <li>- Regional associations should improve their current monitoring arrangements</li> <li>- Congress receives disparate reports on resolutions and decisions adopted by each constituent body</li> </ul>	IV, V
		B.1.5. Delegated authorities to the Secretary-General are clear, appropriate and support the execution of the	The Secretary-General is delegated appropriate authority over operating plans and budget decisions for the efficient and effective running of the organization	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Secretary-General has sufficient financial and operational authority to implement the strategic and operating plans</li> <li>- The reporting line to the President could limit ability to fully exercise accountability to Congress</li> </ul>	II
			Secretariat and governing bodies' roles in regional, technical, and regulatory work are clearly separated	Partially met, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The secretariat supports governing bodies' activities.</li> </ul>	III, VIII

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
		strategy and work plans		- The secretariat may carry too much responsibility for drafting the text of resolutions and decisions	
	B.2. Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure	B.2.1. Governing bodies have complete and up- to-date Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure that define roles and responsibilities and supporting procedures	Each body has a terms of reference and rules of procedure that define their specific roles in organizational governance and the rules to be followed in achieving their mandates	Partially met, - Congress is the only constituent body not having their own set of rules of procedure as a separate document, different from the General Regulations.	IV, V, VI, VII
Terms of reference clearly define for each governing body the roles and responsibilities (RACI) for decisions, resolutions, regulations, and other duties and approvals			Partially met, - Not all terms of reference clearly define roles, responsibilities and decision-making authorities (RACI) or the limits or boundaries to these roles	V, VI, VII	
Terms of reference of governing bodies clearly define processes and mechanisms for interactions with the secretariat, and the support to be provided by the secretariat			Not met, - There are no clearly defined processes and mechanisms for interactions between governing bodies' members and the secretariat staff, in particular for regional associations	V	
B.3. Governing body self-assessment of its performance	B.3.1. Processes are in place to regularly review the performance of the governing body through internal and external assessments	Each governing body regularly self-assesses its overall performance in fulfilling its mandate, roles, and responsibilities and shares its results transparently	Partially met, - From among the governing bodies, only the Audit and Oversight Committee assess its performance	VII	
		Regular assessments are performed on the structure and number of subsidiary bodies to confirm they continue to support delivery of the mandate	Partially met, - Relevance of subsidiary bodies is assessed at ordinary sessions - There is a reluctance of governing bodies to disband expert teams	IV, V	
		External assessments are periodically conducted by independent experts	Met - WMO has conducted six external reviews in the last decade that included governance	I	
		The results of all internal and external assessments are integrated into action plans and tracked to completion	Partially met - Oversight recommendations are addressed individually, without an overarching action plan	n/a	
B.4. Training and induction for governing body members	B.4.1. Governing body members receive induction	Induction training is provided to new constituent body members on the mandate and organizational governance model of the organization	Partially met - Induction training is provided to newly appointed Permanent Representatives. - No training is provided to nominated experts in technical commissions	III, VIII	

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
		support and training to support their governance roles	Training is provided on responsibilities and working procedures for presidents and vice-presidents of constituent bodies	Not met - No specialized training is provided to officers	VIII
C. Strategic Direction and Planning	C.1. Strategic direction	C.1.1. Governing bodies contribute to the strategic planning process	Each constituent body has responsibilities to contribute to the strategic plan	Partially met - A new strategic planning process starting with inputs from regional associations will be piloted for the strategic plan 2028–2031 - No governing body has a direct responsibility to oversee and review performance reports of the Secretary-General in delivering the strategic plan	II, III, V
		C.1.2. Strategic plans support the achievement of key UN priorities including the SDGs.	The strategic plan of WMO supports strategic initiatives of the UN system (including SDGs)	Partially met - SDGs are noted in relation to the objectives of the strategic plan, but the expected contributions are not specified	VIII
		C.1.3. Strategic plans have key performance indicators to evaluate progress and results	Constituent bodies approve key performance indicators included in the strategic plan	Not met - Key performance indicators are only included the operational plan which is an information document only	V
		C.1.4. Strategic plans provide an assessment of key risks and mitigation measures to the achievement of results	Constituent bodies review and make recommendations of the risks and mitigation strategies that may affect the implementation of the WMO Strategic Plan	Not met - Critical risks and associated mitigation measures are not included in the strategic plan	n/a
		C.1.5. Strategic plans are consistent with the overall funding	Governing bodies have clearly defined roles in considering and recommending what resources will be required to support the strategic plan	Partially met - Congress approves the four-year financial allocation and sets priorities for extrabudgetary resources, based on recommendation from the Executive Council and review by its subsidiary bodies.	IV, VI

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
		capacity of the organization		- This process does not work well – see the example of the new task force created at the extraordinary session of Congress for strategic reprioritization of funds	
	C.2. Operational plans support the achievement of the strategic plan	C.2.1. Operating plans breakdown the Strategic Plan into specific measurable activities	Operational plans describe activities and projects and define the measurable outputs and budgets to achieve the key performance indicators in the strategic plan	Partially met - The outputs and milestones included in the operational plan are in most cases not easily measurable or quantifiable	n/a
Technical commissions' and regional associations' operating plans are aligned to WMO's strategic and operational plans			Partially met - Operating plans for regional associations and technical commissions are not fully aligned with the WMO operational plan	n/a	
C.2.2. Operating plans, budgets and revisions are appropriately reviewed and approved		Each constituent body has a defined role (RACI) in the review and approval of the WMO operating plan and associated budget according to their terms of reference and mandate	Not met - The operational plan is presented as an information document to constituent bodies and is not adopted through a resolution or decision	V	
D. Review of organizational performance and financial results	D.1. Monitor and provide direction over regulatory and policy performance	D.1.1. Constituent bodies are presented with reports from corporate and decentralized evaluations	Corporate and decentralized evaluation functions present a synthesis of evaluations conducted in intersessional periods to Congress and Executive Council.	Not met - Although approved, there is no corporate evaluation officer function in the secretariat - Only decentralized evaluations of individual extra-budgetary funded projects are currently undertaken and no synthesis is presented to Congress or Executive Council	n/a
	D.2. Review and oversight of organizational and financial performance	D.2.1. Receive and review annual results reporting that shows achievements of the operating plan	The Executive Council receives annual updates on the progress in the implementation of the operational plan of WMO	Partially met - The annual report of the Secretary-General to the Executive Council provides an overview of the initiatives and actions undertaken over the intersessional period	n/a
		D.2.2. Receive and review mid-term reports on the	Congress and Executive Council have the opportunity to make a mid-term review of the strategic plan based on the results achieved	Partially met - Executive Council receives mid-term progress reports on key performance indicators from the Secretary General	n/a

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
		strategic plan performance		- Congress meets every four years and cannot review mid-term reports	
		D.2.3. Review results from the risk management processes	Constituent bodies regularly review reports on risk management and provide comments	Partially met - Technical commissions consider the potential impact of technical risks in their work - Congress, Executive Council and regional associations do not discuss risk management related topics in their sessions	n/a
		D.2.4. Approve financial statements and review management's attestation to the effectiveness of the internal control framework	Executive Council reviews and approves financial statements and accompanying reports	Met - Executive Council receives reporting from the External Auditor on the financial results. - Executive Council receives comments and recommendations from the Financial Advisory Committee and the Audit and Oversight Committee and approves the financial statements	VII
		D.2.5. Member state appropriations are appropriately approved, collected and managed	Congress and Executive Council approve member state appropriations and review reports on collection of contributions and fund balances	Met - Congress determines the proportions of funding by Members. - Executive Council, with review and inputs from the Financial Advisory Committee, reports to Congress on status of Member contributions	n/a
		D.2.6. Review human resources reporting	Congress and Executive Council review workforce analytics providing comments and recommendations	Met - Human resources statistics and information is included in the reports of the Secretary-General presented to Congress and to the Executive Council - Financial Advisory Committee receives and reviews human resources reports	n/a
E. Accountability, oversight, and integrity functions	E.1. Governance of internal and external oversight functions of	E.1.1. Approve charters and terms of reference of internal oversight and	The internal audit charter is approved by Congress or the Executive Council after recommendation by the Financial Advisory Committee	Not met - The Audit and Oversight Committee reviews the internal audit charter - There is no review by the Financial Advisory Committee or approval at the level of Congress or Executive Council	VII

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
	the organization	advisory functions			
		E.1.2. Approve selection/renewal/termination of the heads of internal and the external auditor	Congress or Executive Council approve the appointment/renewal/termination of the head of internal audit and the external auditor, based on review by the Financial Advisory Committee of the selection procedures and approval by the appropriate governing body	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The external auditor is selected by the Executive Council, following the proposal of a selection committee and review by the Financial Advisory Committee</li> <li>- The internal auditor is appointed by the Secretary General on the advice of the Audit Oversight Committee and following the approval of the President, on behalf of Executive Council.</li> </ul>	n/a
		E.1.3. Receive direct reporting and <i>in camera</i> meetings with the heads of internal and external oversight	Congress and Executive Council receive regular reporting from the heads of oversight, risk, and the external auditor	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congress and the Executive Council receive reporting on oversight through the Financial Advisory Committee and the Audit Oversight Committee</li> </ul>	VII
			The Financial Advisory Committee and the Audit and Oversight Committee hold regular <i>in camera</i> meetings with the heads of internal oversight, risk, and external audit	Partially met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Only the Audit and Oversight Committee holds regular <i>in camera</i> sessions with the heads of oversight</li> </ul>	n/a
	E.2. Review results from the internal and external oversight functions	E.2.1. Review all major internal and external oversight reports	Congress and Executive Council review and comment on the oversight report of the Financial Advisory Committee	Partially Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congress and Executive Council, receive duplicative reports from both the Advisory Oversight Committee and the Financial Advisory Committee on the topic of oversight</li> <li>- Congress only receives the reports as an information document, not for review</li> </ul>	VII
			The Financial Advisory Committee is responsible to review annual internal oversight, advisory reports and quality assessment reports as those of the external auditor and the JIU	Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Included in the terms of reference</li> </ul>	VII
			The AOC is responsible for reviewing annual as well as all major internal oversight and advisory reports	Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Included in the terms of reference</li> </ul>	VII
		E.2.2. Review reports on actions taken in response to	The Audit and Oversight Committee reviews reports on management responses to all oversight recommendations and advises the	Met <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Included in the terms of reference of both committees</li> </ul>	VII

Theme	Sub-theme	General Criterion	Application of Criterion to WMO (theoretical)	WMO Assessment	Relevant chapters of the report with supporting analysis
		internal and external oversight recommendations	Financial Advisory Committee which provides recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council		

## Annex III. Comparisons of governance across UN specialized agencies

1. A comparative analysis of key governance areas was carried out across all UN specialized agencies that have accepted the JIU statute. This includes: a) supreme bodies, b) function of the President and presence of a rapporteur role, c) executive bodies, d) regional structures in the governance framework and regional offices, e) technical structures in the governance framework, and f) governing body committees handling finance, budget, programme, oversight and accountability. Within the tables below “Y” stands for “Yes” and “N” for “No/none”.

### (a) Supreme bodies

Body	Frequency of the ordinary sessions	Number of extraordinary sessions	Level of seniority of members
<b>WMO</b> Congress	Every 4 years	3	Directors of National Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services <sup>94</sup>
<b>FAO</b> Conference	Every 2 years	1	Line Ministers
<b>ICAO</b> Assembly	Every 3 years	9	Line Ministers Directors of aviation agencies
<b>ILO</b> International Labour Conference	Annual	None	Line Ministers Heads of Missions
<b>IMO</b> Assembly	Every 2 years	Data not available	Line Ministers
<b>ITU</b> Plenipotentiary Conference	Every 4 years	1	Data not available
<b>UNESCO</b> General Conference	Every 2 years	5	Line Ministers
<b>UNIDO</b> General Conference	Every 2 years	3	Line Ministers Heads of Missions
<b>UN Tourism</b> General Assembly	Every 2 years	1	Line Ministers Heads of Missions
<b>UPU</b> Congress	Every 4 years	4	Data not available
<b>WHO</b> World Health Assembly	Annual	2	Line Ministers
<b>WIPO</b> General Assembly	Annual	31	Heads of Missions Directors in relevant national services

<sup>94</sup> At the extraordinary session of Congress held in October 2025 and in previous ordinary sessions of Congress, certain plenary discussions were attended by line Ministers.

## (b) Function of the President and presence of a Rapporteur role

Body	Highest officer function in the supreme body	Term of office	Roles of the highest officer of the supreme body	Different individuals chairing supreme and executive bodies	Rapporteur function defined for the work of the supreme body	Drafting committee procedures in place for the work of the supreme body
WMO	President	4-year	Facilitating governance processes Issuing directives to the Secretary-General with respect to the fulfilment of the duties Guiding and coordinating the activities of constituent bodies	N	N	N
FAO	Chairperson	2-year	Facilitating governance processes, such as:  - declaring the opening and closing of each plenary session - directing the discussions at plenary sessions - granting the right to speak - putting questions to the vote and announcing the decisions - ruling on points of order and - ensuring the orderly conduct of business at each session as per existing Rules of Procedure - proposing limitation of the time allowed to each speaker - closing of the list of speakers - deciding on the suspension of the debates, as needed	Y	Y	Y
ICAO	President	3-year		Y	Data not available	N
ILO	President	1-year		Y	Y	Y
IMO	President	2-year		Y	Data not available	N
ITU	Chairperson	4-year		Y	Data not available	N
UNESCO	President	2-year		Y	Y	Y
UNIDO	President	2-year		Y	Y	Y
UN Tourism	President	2-year		Y	Y	N
UPU	Chairperson	4-year		Y	Data not available	N
WHO	President	1-year		Y	Y	N
WIPO	Chairperson	1-year		Y	N	N

**(c) Executive bodies**

<b>Body</b>	<b>Total number of seats/seats assigned to Members</b>	<b>Frequency of sessions</b>	<b>Regional distribution of seats</b>	<b>Representation of Members</b>
<b>WMO</b> Executive Council	37 / 27	Annual	Y Region I: Africa (9 countries) Region II: Asia (6 countries) Region III: South America (4 countries) Region IV: North America, Central America, the Caribbean (5 countries) Region V: South-West Pacific (4 countries) Region VI: Europe (9 countries)	Non-intergovernmental
<b>FAO</b> Council	49 / 49	5 per year	Y Africa (12 countries) Asia (9 countries) Europe (10 countries) Latin American and the Caribbean (9 countries) Near East (6 countries) North America (2 countries) Southwest Pacific (1 country)	Intergovernmental
<b>ICAO</b> Council	36 / 36	Annual	N Seats are not distributed in terms of regions, only based on the outcome of elections	Intergovernmental
<b>ILO</b> Governing Body	56 / 56	3 per year	Y Africa (15 countries) Americas (12 countries) Asia (15 countries) Europe (15 countries)	Intergovernmental Multilateral
<b>IMO</b> Council	40 / 40	2 per year	N Seats are not distributed in terms of region, only based on the outcome of elections	Intergovernmental
<b>ITU</b> Council	48 / 48	Annual	Y Region A: Americas (9 countries) Region B: Western Europe (8 countries) Region C: Eastern Europe and Northern Asia (5 countries) Region D: Africa (13 countries) Region E: Asia and Australia (13 countries)	Intergovernmental
<b>UNESCO</b> Executive Board	58 / 58	2 per year	Y Subject to the diversity of cultures and a balanced geographical distribution	Intergovernmental
<b>UNIDO</b> Industrial Development Board	53 / 53	Annual	Y List A et C (33 countries) List B (15 countries) List D (5 countries)	Intergovernmental
<b>UN Tourism</b> Executive Council	35 / 35	2 per year	Y Subject to fair and equitable distribution	Intergovernmental Non-governmental

<b>Body</b>	<b>Total number of seats/seats assigned to Members</b>	<b>Frequency of sessions</b>	<b>Regional distribution of seats</b>	<b>Representation of Members</b>
<b>UPU</b> Council of Administration	41 / 41	Annual	Y Subject to the qualified geographical distribution	Intergovernmental
<b>WHO</b> Executive Board	34 / 34	2 per year	Y At least 3 Members from each regional organization	Intergovernmental
<b>WIPO</b> Coordination Committee	83 / 83	Annual	N Seats are not distributed in terms of region, only based on the outcome of elections	Intergovernmental

**(d) Regional structures in the governance framework and regional offices**

Body	Nº of regional structures	Regional coverage of governing bodies	Chair or President	Term of office	Decision-making capacity	Regional offices	Regional coverage of offices	Other regional structures
<b>WMO</b>	6	Region I: Africa (53 Countries) Region II: Asia (34 Countries) Region III: South America (12 Countries) Region IV: North America, Central America, the Caribbean (22 Countries) Region V: South-West Pacific (22 Countries) Region VI: Europe (50 Countries)	President	4-year	Resolutions Decisions Recommendations	Y	4 (Africa, Asia and South-West Pacific, Americas, Europe)	Y
<b>FAO</b>	5	Africa (54 countries) Asia and the Pacific (46 countries) Europe (54 countries) Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries) Near East (30 countries)	Chairperson	2-year	Decisions Recommendations	Y	5 (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Near East)	Y
<b>ICAO</b>	0	/	/	/	/	Y	7 (Asia and the Pacific, Middle East, Western and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, South America, North America, Europe and the North Atlantic)	Y
<b>ILO</b>	4	Asia and the Pacific and Arab States (47 countries) Americas (35 countries) Africa (54 countries) Europe (51 countries)	Chairperson	4-year	Resolutions Decisions	Y	5 (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean)	Y
<b>IMO</b>	0	/	/	/	/	Y	7 (West and Central Africa (2), Eastern and Southern Asia, East Asia, the Caribbean, the Pacific, Middle East, North Africa)	Y
<b>ITU</b>	0	/	/	/	/	Y	6 (Africa, Americas, Arab States, Asia and the	Y

Body	Nº of regional structures	Regional coverage of governing bodies	Chair or President	Term of office	Decision-making capacity	Regional offices	Regional coverage of offices	Other regional structures
							Pacific, Commonwealth of Independent States, Europe)	
<b>UNESCO</b>	0	/	/	/	/	Y	5 (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America)	Y
<b>UNIDO</b>	0	/	/	/	/	Y	5 (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean)	Y
<b>UN Tourism</b>	6	Africa (49 countries) Americas (24 countries, 2 territories) East Asia and the Pacific (20 countries, 2 territories) Europe (42 countries, 2 territories) Middle East (10 countries) South Asia (9 countries)	Chairperson	2-year	Decisions Recommendations	Y	3 (Asia and the Pacific, Middle East, the Americas)	Y
<b>UPU</b>	0	/	/	/	/	Y	6 (Africa, Latin America, Asia-Pacific, The Caribbean, Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States, Arab Region)	Y
<b>WHO</b>	6	Africa (47 countries) Americas (35 countries) Europe (53 countries) Eastern Mediterranean (21 countries) South-East Asia (10 countries) Western Pacific (38 countries)	President	1-year	Resolutions <sup>95</sup> Decisions	Y	6 (same regional coverage as governing bodies)	Y
<b>WIPO</b>	0	/	/	/	/	N	/	Y

<sup>95</sup> Generally, not more than one or two per session.

## (e) Technical structures in the governance framework

Body	Technical structures as part of the governing bodies	Provisions for regional representation	Chair or President	Term of office	Decision-making capacity	Reporting line to supreme body and/or executive body <sup>96</sup>
<b>WMO</b>	2 technical commissions 3 panels 3 additional bodies	Open to all Member States N Members are mostly from among Executive Council members All members shall be appointed by the Executive Council	President Chairperson	4-year	Resolutions within mandate Decisions Recommendations	Both (2) Executive body (3) Supreme body (3)
<b>FAO</b>	5 technical commissions	N for 4 out of 5: open to all Member States Y for 1 out of 5: 12 member countries (2 per region)	Chairperson	2-year	Decisions Recommendations	Both
<b>ICAO</b>	1 technical commission structured in 19 panels	N 19 members nominated by Member States, appointed by the Council	President	1-year	N	Executive body
<b>ILO</b>	3 technical committees	N Open to all Member States	Chairperson	2-year	Recommendations	Supreme body
<b>IMO</b>	5 technical commissions	N Open to all Member States	Chairperson	2-year	Decisions	Executive body (4) Supreme body (1)
<b>ITU</b>	3 specialized sectors	N Open to all Member States	Chairperson	4-year	Resolutions within mandate	Both
<b>UNESCO</b>	4 technical commissions of the General Conference 4 technical committees of the Executive Board	N Open to all Member States Open to Committee Members	Chairperson	2-year	Decisions	Supreme body (4) Executive body (4)
<b>UNIDO</b>	N	/	/	/	/	/
<b>UN Tourism</b>	6 technical commissions	Y Except the Interinstitutional Working Group and the World Committee	Chairperson	4-year	Recommendations	Both
<b>UPU</b>	1 council supported by standing groups and task forces	N 48 elected countries	Chairperson	4-year	Resolutions Decisions	Both
<b>WHO</b>	1 technical committee	Y 14 members from the Executive Board (2 per region)	Chairperson	1-year	N	Executive body
<b>WIPO</b>	3 technical committees	N Open to all Member States	Chairperson	1-year	Decisions	Supreme body

<sup>96</sup> When the reporting line varies depending on the body, the number of technical bodies to which the respective reporting line is applicable is written in brackets.

**(f) Governing body committees handling finance, budget, programme, oversight and accountability  
(Financial Advisory Committee equivalent bodies)**

Body	Frequency of sessions	Membership	Term of members	Decision-making capacity	Chair elected by the members of the body	Term of chair	Reporting line to supreme body and/or executive body	Programmatic issues covered
<b>WMO</b> Financial Advisory Committee	Annual + extraordinary sessions	Open membership: 7 ex officio members All interested Member States	4-years  n/a	Recommendations to the governing body	N	4-year	Both	N
<b>FAO</b> Finance Committee	2 per year + joint sessions	Closed membership: 12 Member States delegates	2-year	Recommendations to the governing body Requests addressed to the management of the secretariat	Y	Not indicated in its rules of procedure	Executive body	N
<b>ICAO</b> Finance Committee	Data not available	Closed membership: Elected from among the Council Members	Minimum 1-year	Decisions Recommendations to the governing body	Y	1-year	Executive body	N
<b>ILO</b> Finance Committee	During Conference sessions	Closed membership: 1 government delegate from each Member State (up to 187)	Not indicated in the rules of procedure	Recommendations to the governing body	Y	Not indicated in its rules of procedure	Supreme body	N
<b>IMO</b>	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
<b>ITU</b> Council Working Group on Financial and Human Resources	from 1 to 3 per year + informal meetings	Open membership: All Member States and Sector Members	n/a	Recommendations to the governing body		4-year	Executive body	N
<b>UNESCO</b> Commission for Financial,	During Board sessions + joint session	Closed membership:	2-year	Recommendations to the governing body	Y	2-year	Executive body	Y

Body	Frequency of sessions	Membership	Term of members	Decision-making capacity	Chair elected by the members of the body	Term of chair	Reporting line to supreme body and/or executive body	Programmatic issues covered
Administrative and General Questions, Programme Support and External Relations		1 delegate from each Member State (58)						
<b>UNIDO</b> Programme and Budget Committee	Annual	Closed membership: 27 Member States delegates	Not indicated in its rules of procedure	Recommendations to the governing body	Y	1-year	Executive body	Y
<b>UN Tourism</b> Programme and Budget Committee	2 per year	Closed membership: 12 Member States delegates	2-year	Recommendations to the governing body	Y	2-year	Executive body	Y
<b>UPU</b> Finance Committee <sup>974</sup>	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available
<b>WHO</b> Programme, Budget and Administration Committee	2 per year + extraordinary sessions	Closed membership: 12 Member States delegates	2-year	Recommendations to the governing bodies Guidance to the secretariat	Y	1-year	Both	Y
<b>WIPO</b> Programme and Budget Committee	Annual (off-budget years) 2 per year (budget years)	Closed membership: 56 Member States delegates	2-year	Recommendations to the governing body Decisions addressed to the executive head of the secretariat	Y	2-year	Supreme body	Y

<sup>97</sup> See Article 16 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council of Administration: The Council of Administration shall establish a Finance Committee so that any proposal with financial implications for the Union is reviewed before the Council examines it. However, no publicly available information appears to describe this committee's structure or activities.

## Annex IV: Survey methodology

1. The survey aimed to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of WMO's governance structure, with a focus on: i) the coordination between bodies across the existing governance framework; ii) the activity of Congress and the Executive Council; iii) the functioning of regional associations and of technical commissions; and iv) the support provided by the WMO secretariat. More specifically, the questions aimed to assess the roles of WMO governing bodies and their subsidiaries, examine potential overlaps in mandates, and evaluate the effectiveness of discussions held throughout the various sessions.
2. A total of 641 recipients were contacted, and 129 responses were received. The respondents were from three primary stakeholder groups: (a) Permanent Representatives, Alternates and Advisors with a response rate of 66 per cent; (b) Experts nominated by a WMO Member (19 per cent); and (c) other stakeholders<sup>98</sup> (15 per cent). This was followed by Region I (Africa) with 19 per cent; Regions II (Asia) and III (South America), each contributing 10 per cent; and Region V (South-West Pacific) and Region IV (North America, Central America and the Caribbean), with 8 and 9 per cent respectively. Most respondents had over 15 years of engagement with WMO governing bodies. In addition, over the past five years, respondents have actively participated in sessions of Congress, Executive Council, regional associations and technical commissions. Regarding time dedicated to WMO activities, most respondents generally dedicated around 10 per cent (36 per cent) or up to a quarter (29 per cent) of their regular working hours to these.
3. The open-ended responses highlighted several issues observed across WMO's governance framework and its functioning. These included: a) unclear roles and mandates (including suggestions to merge bodies and implement structural reforms); b) limited diversity and representation in the membership of governing bodies; c) the need for stronger coordination between bodies; and d) the need for improved communication. Regarding the secretariat, the main concerns relate to its ongoing reform and transformation process and its potential impact, as well as issues related to budget planning and financial management.

**Table 1**  
**Overview of response rates for the surveys**

	<i>Recipients</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Overall response rate (percentage)</i>
Permanent Representatives, Alternates and Advisors of WMO Member		85	
Expert nominated by WMO Member participating in the work of the subsidiary bodies	641	25	20.1
Other		19	
<b>Total</b>	<b>641<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>129</b>	<b>20.1<sup>b</sup></b>

<sup>a</sup> The number of recipients does not include the returned e-mails at the time of the survey distribution.

<sup>b</sup> The overall response rate is indicative, as a single reply was submitted in several cases on behalf of multiple respondents.

<sup>98</sup> Other participants include elected officers; members of delegations; representatives of the Permanent Missions or Permanent Representatives of WMO Member States in Geneva; members of committees or focal points of the Regional Associations; and Hydrological Advisers.

## Annex V: Summary of suggested amendments to the WMO Convention

Article of Convention	Issue(s)	Risk/Opportunity	Suggested revision(s)	Related texts and documents for consideration
<p><b>Article 4</b> (b) <i>There shall be a President and three Vice-Presidents of the Organization who shall also be President and Vice-Presidents of Congress and of the Executive Council.</i></p>	<p><i>Structural deficiency</i> Duties of the President and three Vice-Presidents in the Organization are not sufficiently precise, and no segregation of duties is indicated, (i.e. different functions having designated responsibility to chair different governing bodies).</p>	<p>1. See chapter III for the analysis concerning segregation of duties and the terms of officers.</p>	<p><b>Article 4</b> (b) <i>There shall be a President and three Vice-Presidents of the Organization to oversee its governance and represent its Members. <u>The President will chair the Congress and one of the Vice-Presidents will chair the Executive Council, with due regard to segregation of duties within constituent bodies.</u></i></p>	<p>1. The caveat from Regulation 7 of the General Regulations can be removed with the suggested change of Article 4 of the Convention 2. See Articles 10 and 22 of the Convention</p>
<p><b>Article 6</b> (b) <i>In the performance of their duties, all officers of the Organization and members of the Executive Council shall act as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members thereof.</i></p>	<p><i>Outdated provision</i> WMO is an outlier in the UN system as the only organization with governing body members serving as representatives of the Organization and not as representatives of particular Members; all other UN specialized agencies have executive bodies with an intergovernmental status. Decisions with regards to budget and expenditures made by the Executive Council would require intergovernmental deliberation rather than in acting in one's personal capacity. The Financial Advisory Committee and technical commissions, both intergovernmental bodies, are sending recommendations to the Executive Council to make final decisions that may have financial impacts on Members and, consequently, would be handled more adequately in an intergovernmental forum.</p>	<p>Decisions with regards to financial management and resulting from the oversight of the organizations which can ultimately have a financial impact on Members are deliberated in a body whose members are serving in their personal capacity.</p>	<p>Delete point (b).</p>	<p>See Article 13 of the Convention for the suggested changes concerning an intergovernmental status of the Executive Council.</p>

Article of Convention	Issue(s)	Risk/Opportunity	Suggested revision(s)	Related texts and documents for consideration
<p><b>Article 8</b>  <i>In addition to the functions set out in other Articles of the Convention, the primary duties of Congress shall be:</i>  <i>(e) To consider the reports and activities of the Executive Council and to take appropriate action in regard thereto;</i>  <i>(j) To elect the President and Vice Presidents of the Organization and members of the Executive Council other than the presidents of regional associations.</i></p>	<p><i>Structural deficiency</i>            (e) There is no mention of an obligation by the Secretary-General to report to Congress.            (j) By having the Executive Council transition to an intergovernmental status, Congress should elect Members (i.e. countries) to hold the seats on the Executive Council.</p>	<p>(e) The Secretary-General is appointed by Congress and is, in practice, providing a report to Congress on the activities of the secretariat. To further accountability of the executive head's function this reporting relationship should be formally acknowledged in the Convention.            (j) Congress would elect the Members holding seats on the Executive Council, to reflect intergovernmental principle.</p>	<p><b>Article 8</b>  <i>(e) To consider the reports and activities of the Executive Council, <u>the Secretary-General</u>, and to take appropriate action in regard thereto;</i>  <i>(j) To elect the President and Vice Presidents of the Organization and <u>Members represented in the Executive Council</u>.</i></p>	<p>See Articles 6 and 22 of the Convention.</p>
<p><b>Article 10</b>  <i>(a) Congress shall normally be convened at intervals as near as possible to four years, at a place and on a date to be decided by the Executive Council.</i></p>	<p><i>Outdated provision</i>            Fast-moving global development call for a more agile decision-making at the level of Congress, which can be achieved with more frequent sessions. WMO differs from the standard practices of most other UN specialized agencies regarding the frequency with which its supreme body meets; a workaround that has been implemented in the past has been to organize extraordinary sessions of Congress – however this is not a sustainable solution as these attract fewer Members, have less regional balance across participants, and focus on narrow issues rather than the full range of the functions of Congress.</p>	<p>Having Congress meet every 2 years would provide for better coordination, more agile decision-making and provide for potentially shorter terms and wider participation of Members for the functions of officers of the Organization.</p>	<p><b>Article 10</b>  <i>(a) Congress shall normally be convened at intervals as near as possible to <u>two years</u>, at a place and on a date to be decided by the Executive Council.</i></p>	<p>See Article 4 of the Convention.</p>
<p><b>Article 13</b>            Composition of the Executive Council</p>	<p><i>Structural deficiency</i>            The arrangement, by which the President and Vice-Presidents of WMO and the presidents of regional associations have voting rights in the Executive Council, would not be compatible with an</p>	<p>The number of seats allocated to Members can be increased from 27 to 37 if the voting rights are shifted from officers of the Organization to representatives of Members.</p>	<p><b>Article 13</b>  <i>The Executive Council shall consist of <u>thirty-seven Principal Delegates of Members who can be replaced at sessions by alternates, as provided for in the General Regulations</u>.</i></p>	<p>For coherence purposes, Article 6 of the Convention would need be amended. The officers of the Organization would be expected to attend</p>

Article of Convention	Issue(s)	Risk/Opportunity	Suggested revision(s)	Related texts and documents for consideration
	intergovernmental stature of the Executive Council. These functions could attend the sessions of the Executive Council and provide statements as observers.			the Executive Council sessions as observers.
<b>Article 14</b> In addition to functions set out in other Articles of the Convention, the primary functions of the Executive Council shall be: ...	<i>Structural deficiency</i> The Article does not explicitly state that the Executive Council holds an oversight role in governance structure.	A critical role of executive bodies in UN system organizations is to ensure oversight over the secretariat on behalf of the Members. Stating this function in the Convention would provide alignment with the actual practices of the Executive Council and would allow for the formal recognition of such responsibility.	New function of the Executive Council: <i>To provide oversight and accountability of the Organization through consideration of reports by independent functions and committees and to make decisions and recommendations to further accountability.</i>	Other functions in Article 14 of the Convention should be re-lettered.
<b>Article 22</b> (a) <i>The Secretary-General is responsible to the President of the Organization for the technical and administrative work of the Secretariat;</i>	<i>Structural deficiency</i> The Secretary-General is appointed by Congress (Article 21(a)), yet is not responsible to Congress, which effectively circumvents collective accountability by a governing body; overstates the appropriate scope and role of a President. Both of these points are distinct outliers in the UN system.	The risk of Article 22 cannot be overstated in terms of a governing body official and an individual directing a UN executive head rather than collective accountability from the body that appointed the executive head. The roles and responsibilities of WMO governing body officials should be, as in other UN system organizations, centred on facilitating governance and representation of its members.	<b>Article 22</b> (a) <i>The Secretary-General is responsible to Congress for the technical and administrative work of the Secretariat.</i>	See Articles 4 and 8 of the Convention. For consideration of further administrative matters related to the roles and responsibilities of the Secretary-General, see Articles 21(b) and 26(a) of the Convention.

*Note:* Any amendment to the Convention should be reflected in an updated version of the General Regulations. For a non-exhaustive list of potential changes to the General Regulations, consult Annex VI.

## Annex VI: Summary of suggested amendments to the General Regulations

Regulation	Issue	Risk/Opportunity	Suggested revision(s)
Regulation 3	Rules of procedure of the Executive Council to also be used by Congress	Congress would benefit from having its own rules of procedure. As such the Executive Council would no longer be able to modify unilaterally its rule of procedure and have them applied subsequently by Congress as well.	(a) Each constituent body <i>that otherwise does not have its own rules of procedure</i> shall use the rules of procedure adopted by the Executive Council [...].
Regulation 8	Duties of the President	The proposed changes are meant to ensure coherence with annex V and chapter III of the report: (i) the accountability arrangements for the Secretary-General; (ii) focus on facilitating governance; (iii) ensuring a separation of duties between the chairs of Congress and of the Executive Council.	(1) To preside over the sessions of Congress <del>and sessions of the Executive Council</del> held during the term of office (2) <del>To guide and coordinate the activities of the Organization and its various bodies as specified in Article 4 (a), (1) to (4) inclusive of the Convention;</del> (3) <del>To issue directives to the Secretary-General with respect to the fulfilment of the duties;</del>
Regulation 10	Term of office of President and Vice-Presidents of WMO and regional associations	The term of office for the President and Vice-Presidents of WMO (four years between ordinary sessions of Congress, renewable once for a total of up to eight years) may be perceived as limiting opportunities to broaden Member representation in these roles.	If maintained in alignment with the frequency of ordinary sessions of Congress, should the latter change, these terms could shift to two years. Another option would also be to specify the term limits rather than keeping them linked to the organization of a session of a constituent body.
Regulation 16	Distribution of seats on the Executive Council	There is no mention of term-renewal limits for Executive Council Members (for example no more than 3 terms over a 5 terms period) or, alternatively, an obligation to have a minimum number of new Executive Council Members appointed at each election. There is also no mention of country rotation obligations among the seats allocated to each region. This might explain the fact that 40 per cent of Members of WMO have never held a seat on the Executive Council to date.	A limitation for successive terms of Executive Council Members could be introduced as part of this regulation or, alternatively, staggered rotation arrangements could be included. Requirements could be implemented for having a minimum number of countries to rotate within their assigned regional grouping at each election for seats on the Executive Council.
Regulation 24	Committees of governing bodies	The chair of such committees, which could also play the role of rapporteur for the work of the committee, is currently elected on the spot during the plenary session, which may cause delays in the agenda and may pose a risk of politicization of the debate around the topic.	A procedure for selecting the chairs of such committees should be drafted, as referenced in chapter III of the report addressing the Rapporteur function. The text of the regulation could be revised as follows: The chair of each committee will be designated <i>as per the relevant procedures in place</i> . <del>or elected by the committee, as decided by the plenary.</del>

Regulation	Issue	Risk/Opportunity	Suggested revision(s)
Regulation 27	Establishment of subsidiary bodies	The creation of subsidiary bodies could be linked to an analysis of existing resources and existing bodies with similar mandates.	A paragraph could be added to explain that the decision to create a subsidiary body would be accompanied by an analysis of resources needed for its functioning, and by a justification as to why other existing bodies cannot deliver those activities.
Regulation 29	Designation of experts in subsidiary bodies	Currently this is a function of the President/Chair of the parent body, in consultation with the Secretary-General. Presidents of regional associations could also be consulted in order to contribute to a balanced regional representation of experts. This would also be in line with the responsibilities of presidents of regional associations, as defined in the Rules of Procedure of Regional Associations.	The president of the constituent body (chair of additional body), after consultation <i>with the presidents of regional associations and</i> with the Secretary-General.
Regulation 94	Decision-making capacity of Regional Associations	In order to deliver on their function, regional associations would be expected to focus on recommendations to Congress and the Executive Council, as opposed to issuing their own resolutions.	Potentially add in (a) a limitation on the number of resolutions that can be issued by regional associations during each of their sessions.
Regulation 97	Working languages of the Executive Council Committees	For good governance purposes and to ensure an adequate separation of powers among governing bodies, the President of WMO should not serve concurrently as Chair of the Executive Council.	Replace “the President” with “the Chair of the Executive Council”.
Regulation 126	Preparation of agenda of Executive Council sessions	For good governance purposes and to ensure an adequate separation of powers among governing bodies, the President should not serve concurrently as the Chair of the Executive Council.	Replace “the President” with “the Chair of the Executive Council”.
Regulation 134	Role of the presidents or regional associations	There is no explicit reporting function of presidents of regional associations to Congress and the Executive Council, even if in practice their reports are being presented to both of these bodies in practice.	The functions of the presidents of regional associations could be complemented with a bullet point: “To monitor and report on the implementation of resolutions and decisions of Congress, Executive Council and Technical Commissions by the Members of the Regional Association” This regulation could be merged with the section regarding specific functions of the presidents of regional associations, which is listed in the Rules of Procedure of Regional Associations. For transparency and coherence, the comprehensive set of functions should be listed in only one source document.

Regulation	Issue	Risk/Opportunity	Suggested revision(s)
Regulation 153	Duties of the Secretary-General	The proposed changes are meant to ensure coherence with annex V and chapter III of the report: (i) the reference to the accountability of the Secretary-General towards the President should be deleted. (ii) The Secretary-General should be accountable to the Congress as the body that elected the incumbent of the function.	In carrying out the duties specified in this Regulation, the Secretary-General shall comply with any directives issued by the <i>Congress or the Executive Council</i> . <del>or, in accordance with Regulation 8, by the President of the Organization.</del>

*Note:* The proposed amendments to the General Regulations are related to the proposed amendments to the Convention as well as other revisions suggested in this review. The proposed changes should not be seen as exhaustive – ensuring consistency between the Convention and the General Regulation should be the primary objective.

## Annex VII: Cost of secretariat support to governing bodies

1. The costs included below are related to the support provided by the secretariat for the decision-making process in the various WMO governing bodies.
2. There are two types of costs considered:
  - a. Staff costs – for secretariat staff members
  - b. Activity costs – all costs incurred beyond staff costs, such as the travel of participants, consultants, external interpretation, external translation, etc.
3. For technical commissions, the costs below include the deliberations of the management groups and first-level subsidiary bodies. For regional associations, the costs below include the deliberations of the management groups.

**Table 1**  
**Overview of staff costs for support to governance**

Year	Staff cost (CHF)				Number of staff (full-time employee equivalent)			
	Departments <sup>99</sup>	Conference Services	Linguistic Services	Total	Departments	Conference Services	Linguistic Services	Total
2025	2,932,121	1,171,039	751,212	4,854,372	13	7	4	24
2024	2,358,272	1,111,701	865,163	4,335,136	11	6	5	22
2023	2,438,572	1,620,452	1,124,486	5,183,510	10	9	7	26
2022	2,018,602	757,166	1,156,820	3,932,588	9	4	7	20

Source: WMO secretariat (2025).

**Table 2**  
**Overall costs for support to governance (CHF)**

Year	Staff costs	Activity costs	Total	Annual budget of WMO	Percentage of costs for support to governance from annual budget
2025	4,854,372	1,108,690	5,963,062	69,953,800	8.5 %
2024	4,335,136	1,717,101	6,052,237	69,371,400	8.7 %
2023	5,183,510	2,248,510	7,432,020	67,916,100	10.9 %
2022	3,932,588	1,818,138	5,750,726	67,856,100	8.5 %

Source: WMO secretariat (2025).

<sup>99</sup> Includes all relevant secretariat offices and departments with the exception of conference and linguistic services.

**Table 3**  
**Breakdown of costs for support to governance (CHF)**

Governing body/entity	Year	Type of costs		Total
		Staff costs	Activity costs	
Congress	2025	898,162	175,527	1,073,689
	2024	-	-	-
	2023	2,017,735	708,136	2,725,871
	2022	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>3,799,560</b>
Executive Council and its subsidiary bodies	2025	1,660,352	419,336	2,079,688
	2024	1,433,244	635,073	2,068,317
	2023	1,810,508	663,888	2,474,396
	2022	1,348,913	505,284	1,854,197
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>8,476,598</b>
Technical commissions	2025	662,945	311,348	974,293
	2024	1,481,346	779,730	2,261,076
	2023	414,128	385,547	799,675
	2022	1,974,135	889,281	2,863,416
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>6,898,460</b>
Regional associations	2025	1,057,221	141,713	1,198,934
	2024	1,060,939	227,868	1,288,807
	2023	491,682	447,865	939,547
	2022	197,554	380,520	578,074
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>4,005,362</b>
Research Board and Scientific Advisory Panel	2025	63,338	60,765	124,103
	2024	40,079	74,430	114,509
	2023	-	43,074	43,074
	2022	49,937	43,053	92,990
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>374,676</b>
Governing Bodies Secretariat	2025	512,354	-	512,354
	2024	319,528	-	319,528
	2023	449,457	-	449,457
	2022	362,048	-	362,048
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>1,643,387</b>

Source: WMO secretariat (2025).

**Table 4**  
**Average cost for support to governance by governing body<sup>100</sup> between 2022–2025 (CHF)**

Governing body	Average annual cost
Congress	1,899,780
Executive Council and its subsidiary bodies	2,119,150
Technical commissions	1,724,615
Regional associations	1,001,341
Research Board and Scientific Advisory Panel	93,669

Source: WMO secretariat (2025).

<sup>100</sup> Excluding staff costs of the Governing Body Secretariat which have transversal contribution across the activity of WMO constituent bodies.

## Annex VIII: Governance trajectory for the Early Warnings for All initiative

1. The Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative, launched by the UN Secretary-General on World Meteorological Day in March 2022, is a UN-mandated global effort, jointly led by WMO, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, ITU, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which seeks to ensure that every person on Earth is protected by multi-hazard early warning systems by the end of 2027. A visual representation of the EW4All governance trajectory can be found in figure XII. The initiative is structured around four pillars: i) disaster risk knowledge; ii) detection, observation, monitoring, analysis and forecasting; iii) warning dissemination and communication; iv) preparedness and response capabilities.
2. The WMO Roadmap for the EW4All was adopted in June 2022 through Resolution 3 of the 75<sup>th</sup> Executive Council, based on recommendations from the Policy Advisory Committee and its alignment with the WMO Strategic Plan 2020–2023<sup>101</sup>. However, it was not until June 2023, and Resolution 4 of the 19<sup>th</sup> session of Congress, that Members formally endorsed the initiative and took ownership of it. In between these sessions, an Executive Action Plan of the initiative for the period 2024–2027<sup>102</sup> was presented and endorsed at the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
3. In June 2023, Congress requested the Executive Council to oversee progress in the implementation of the EW4All initiative<sup>103</sup>, following which the Executive Council, through Resolution 1 at its 77<sup>th</sup> session, requested contributions to the initiative from the technical commissions, regional associations and the Research Board. In the same 2023 session the Executive Council issued another resolution targeting the initiative (Resolution 7) which acknowledged its importance for the WMO Strategic Plan 2024–2027, called for stronger engagement of all WMO subsidiary bodies,<sup>104</sup> and assigned to the Technical Coordination Committee a reinforced coordination role for the advancement of EW4All<sup>105</sup>. The 2024–2027 roadmap for EW4All was adopted by the Executive Council in its 78<sup>th</sup> session (Resolution 1) in June 2024<sup>106</sup>.
4. As a result of the 77<sup>th</sup> and 78<sup>th</sup> Executive Council sessions, the EW4All initiative was discussed and decided upon in various WMO governing forums, from technical commissions to regional associations. Each governing body articulated its own perspective on how best to approach the initiative, which resulted in a siloed approach among them:
  - a) SERCOM amended technical regulations<sup>107</sup> and highlighted priority activities<sup>108</sup> for the initiative;

<sup>101</sup> WMO, “WMO Strategic Plan 2020–2023”, document WMO-No. 1225.

<sup>102</sup> WMO, *The UN Global Early Warning Initiative for the Implementation of Climate Action* (2022), Executive Action Plan 2023–2027.

<sup>103</sup> See resolution 4 in document WMO-No. 1236.

<sup>104</sup> *Executive Council: Abridged Final Report of the Seventy-seventh Session, Geneva, 5–6 June 2023*, document WMO-No.1327, resolution 1.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, resolution 7.

<sup>106</sup> See resolutions 1 and 2 in document WMO-No. 1358.

<sup>107</sup> *SERCOM: Abridged Final Report of the Third Session, Bali, Indonesia, 4–9 March 2024*, document WMO-No. 1352, decision 3.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* decision 5.

- b) INFCOM proposed priority activities for the initiative<sup>109</sup> and recommended a subsequent action plan of EW4All<sup>110</sup>;
  - c) One regional association developed their own roadmap for the initiative<sup>111</sup> three others decided to develop regional plans,<sup>112</sup> and two decided to use the roadmap provided by the Executive Council.<sup>113</sup>
5. In September 2024, the General Assembly adopted the Pact for the Future, outlining 56 actions for sustainable development, which included a reference to the EW4All initiative, acknowledging once again its global importance<sup>114</sup>.
  6. In 2025, in its 79<sup>th</sup> session, the Executive Council adopted Resolution 1 on progress under the roadmap which was addressed to the technical commissions and the Secretary-General and which resulted in a call to all Members to achieve measurable results within two years, and which was eventually endorsed in the extraordinary Congress in 2025<sup>115</sup>. The governing bodies have yet to receive a progress report on the implementation of the adopted roadmap of the EW4All initiative.

<sup>109</sup> INFCOM: *Abridged Final Report of the Third Session, Geneva, 15–19 April 2024*, document WMO-No. 1353, decision 6.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, recommendation 2.

<sup>111</sup> *Regional Association I (Africa): Abridged Final Report of the Nineteenth Session, Phase I, 13–15 May 2024 (Virtual Session)*, document WMO-No. 1357, decision 4.

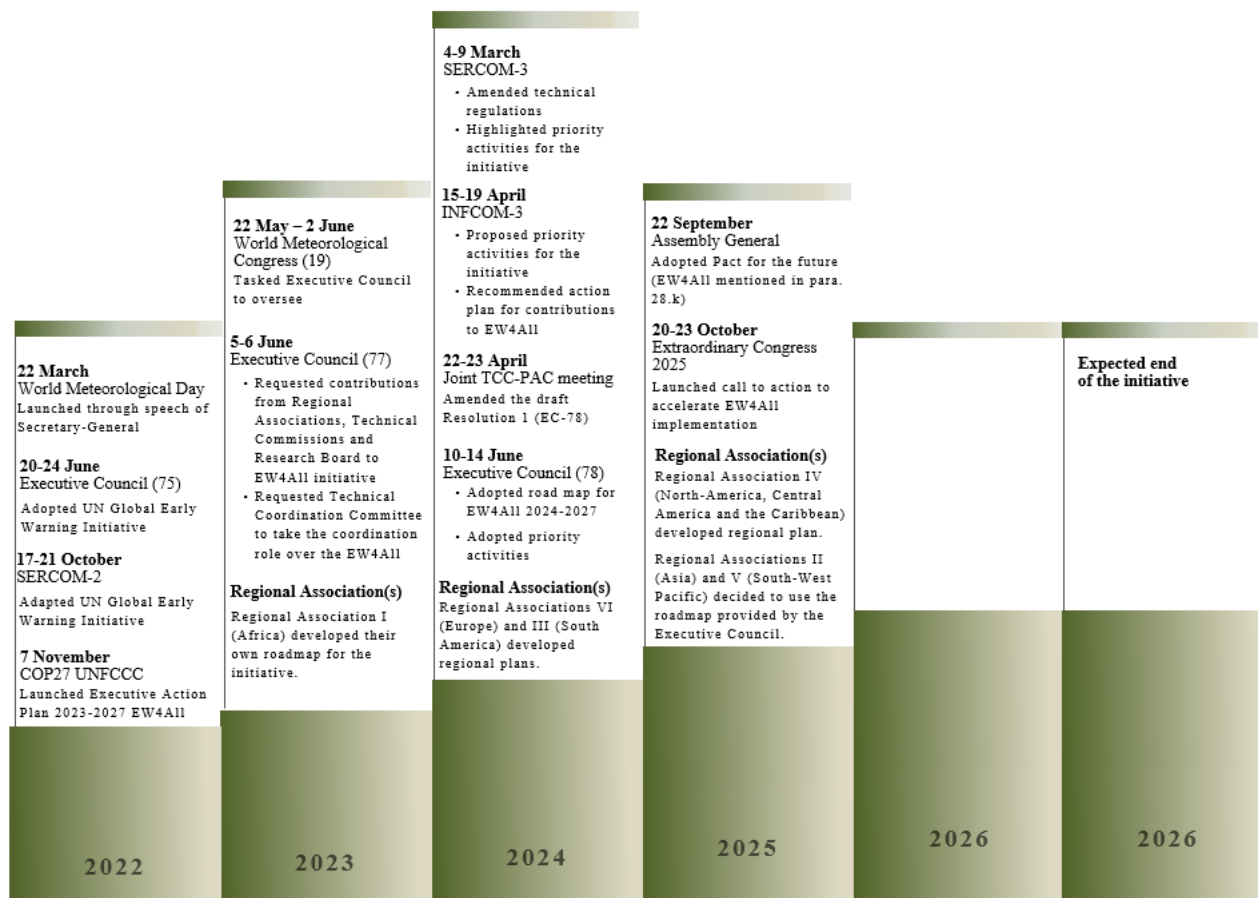
<sup>112</sup> *Regional Association VI (Europe): Abridged Final Report of the Nineteenth Session, Phase I, 15–16 October 2024 (Virtual Session)*, document WMO-No. 1366, resolution 3; *Regional Association III (South America): Abridged Final Report of the Nineteenth Session, Phase I, Virtual Session, 27–29 November 2024*, document WMO-No. 1369, resolution 3; and *Regional Association IV (North America, Central America and the Caribbean): Nineteenth Session (Phase I), 27–29 March 2025, San Salvador, El Salvador*, document WMO-No. 1372, resolution 1.

<sup>113</sup> *Regional Association II (Asia): Abridged Final Report of the Eighteenth Session (Phase I), 22 to 25 April 2025 (Virtual Session)*, document WMO-No. 1375, resolution 3; and *Regional Association V (South-West Pacific), Nineteenth Session (Phase I), 9–11 September 2025, virtual session*, document RA V-19(I)/Doc. 4.1, draft resolution 4.1/1.

<sup>114</sup> General Assembly resolution 79/1.

<sup>115</sup> WMO, “Call to action by the WMO Secretary-General: accelerating implementation of Early Warnings for All – safeguarding humanity through science-based early warning systems”, 20 October 2025.

**Figure XII**  
**Overview of the Early Warnings for All initiative for the period 2022–2027**



Source: Prepared by JIU (2026).

## Annex IX: Overview of actions to be taken by the participating organizations on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

		Intended impact	Participating organizations of the Joint Inspection Unit																											
			United Nations*	UNAIDS	UNCTAD	ITC	UNDP	UNEP	UNFPA	UN-Habitat	UNHCR	UNICEF	UNODC	UNOPS	UNRWA	UN-Women	WFP	FAO	IAEA	ICAO	ILO	IMO	ITU	UNESCO	UNIDO	UN Tourism	UPU	WHO	WIPO	WMO
Report	For action	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	For information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendation 1	f, h																													L
Recommendation 2	a, d																													L
Recommendation 3	f, h																													L
Recommendation 4	f, h																													L
Recommendation 5	a, f																													L
Recommendation 6	d, f																													L
Recommendation 7	f, h																													L
Recommendation 8	c, f																													L
Recommendation 9	f																													L
Recommendation 10	a, e																													L
Recommendation 11	c																													E
Recommendation 12	a																													L

**Legend:**

- L:** Recommendation for decision by legislative organ and/or governing bodies
- E:** Recommendation for action by executive head
- Recommendation does not require action by this organization

**Intended impact:**

**a:** enhanced transparency and accountability **b:** dissemination of good/best practices **c:** enhanced coordination and cooperation **d:** strengthened coherence and harmonization

**e:** enhanced control and compliance **f:** enhanced effectiveness **g:** significant financial savings **h:** enhanced efficiency **i:** other

<sup>a</sup> As described in [ST/SGB/2015/3](#).

