

## Highlights of the WCRP Conference for Latin America and Caribbean, 17-21 March 2014, Montevideo, Uruguay

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About 220 scientists attended the WCRP Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (WCRP-LAC) in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 17-21 March 2014. The conference was organized under the auspices of the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) and the Universidad de la Republica de Uruguay, with support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), and a number of regional and local organizations.

The subtitle of the conference "Developing, Linking and Applying Climate Knowledge" was suggested to emphasize the main goal of this event that is to define the research agenda needed to contribute to the provision of effective climate services in the LAC region. The climate research community is facing a complex challenge: to build or strengthen knowledge networks between climate research and decision making in order to inform development and adaptation decisions. During the conference the climate research experts coming from 19 countries of the Americas and around the world discussed strategies and provided suggestions on translating climate information knowledge to areas such as health, water, energy, agriculture, ecosystems and urban and coastal environments.

Several components of the LAC's climate exhibit sub-seasonal to decadal predictability, thus revealing potential for the establishment of climate services. However the region has not yet taken full advantage of the current understanding of its climate variability and change. Some good practices were shown as example on how to use climate information developed by the scientific community to meet the users needs. Different sectors have different requirements and in order to tailor the information improved knowledge of the climate system is needed at regional level. The importance of monitoring atmospheric variables at higher temporal and spatial resolution, as well as other variables like soil moisture was highlighted.

Different "actors" (researchers, services providers and decision makers) attending the Conference expressed enthusiasm in working together for building the capacity for climate services. Numerous examples were given on the role of the social sciences in the establishment of climate services for the LAC region. The need to work on developing capacities at interdisciplinary level and the importance of institutional innovations to channel new challenges was recognized. WCRP can play a key role in coordinating regional activities that will accelerate the development of scientific knowledge needed to underpin climate services.



Lively discussions were facilitated by keynote and invited talks, oral and poster sessions, and round tables. The posters presented by students and early career scientists (ECS) were evaluated by a group of senior experts, and 10 of them were selected to receive the WCRP best poster award.

The winners are:

Humberto Catuzzo (Brazil)  
Juan Ignacio Deza (Spain)  
Antonio Joyette (Barbados)  
Marisol Osman (Argentina)  
Cristina G. Recalde (Ecuador)  
Sukarni Sallons-Mitro (Suriname)  
Christian Salvadeo (Mexico)  
Kathleen Schiro (USA)  
Fourmet Mercedes (Uruguay)

During the conference the students and ECS met at lunch to discuss how to contribute to then main objectives of the conference while continuing developing their own careers. Their views articulated in front of the entire audience contained interesting points to be taken into consideration as outcomes of the conference:

- 1) The need to organize activities to foster communication and discussion among the different components of the decision-making process
- 2) The need to involve social scientists to fill the existent gap between the scientific community and the users
- 3) The need to better communicate uncertainties and the limitation of the climate information as well as to help managing the risks
- 4) The need to create a network of ECS to support professional development activities in delivering climate services

