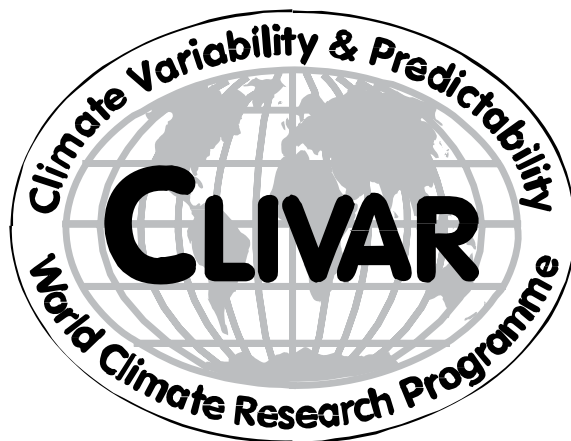


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Report of the 4th Meeting of the CLIVAR Variability of the African Climate System (VACS) Panel

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1. Introduction

The 4th meeting of the VACS panel was held during and after the VACS Southern and Eastern African Climate Predictability Workshop (see workshop report no. XXXXX). The first day was held jointly with the workshop at the Dar es Salaam International Conference Centre. The rest of the meeting was kindly hosted at the Tanzania Meteorological Agency in Dar.

In all thirteen panel members and invited experts attended the meeting held at TMA (see Appendix B). The participants were welcomed by the Director General of TMA and President RA1, Dr Mhita. The meeting agenda is given in Appendix B. The main actions and outcomes from the meeting are summarised here. The meeting raised various VACS-related issues which are outlined in the *CLIVAR FOCUS on Africa* e-zine (*details..*) Presentations from the meeting are available from: <http://www.clivar.org/organization/vacs/VACSmeeting.htm>.

Thanks must go to Mr Matitu and the staff at TMA for excellently organised local logistics.

2. Meeting Outcomes and Agreed Actions

i) VACS priorities and directions over the next few years

There was discussion both at the beginning and towards the end of the meeting as to what the main priorities and directions of the panel should be over the next few years. It was felt that this panel, as well as having a science steering role, should help bridge the gap between the science community and end users. This could be summarised as:

CLIVAR VACS panel priorities:

- *Capacity Building/Recognition and Education*
- *Research Programmes (East & Southern initiatives and links to AMMA)*
- *Scientific Steering*

ii) The VACS training workshop – outcomes and future priorities

It was felt both by the workshop participants and those involved with the teaching/organization that some kind of follow up to the successful training workshop was a necessity (see workshop report for further details). The panel felt that the priority should be on a series of workshops to “train the trainers” i.e. so that certain individuals from different countries in Africa could be trained to a high standard in the use of the Climate Prediction Tool (CPT) and act as trainers for their region. In addition the panel should make use of the discussions held in the workshop to enhance the Southern and East African research programmes.

Actions:

- *Input lessons/feedback from the National Meteorological and Marine Agencies gained during the workshop into Southern (SAGRADEX) and East African Research Programmes, depending on funding agencies approached (Chris R/Fred S/Laban O)*
- *Develop long-term plan proposal to train trainers in CPT. Should be circulated to the panel but also those involved in operational forecasting. Panel to work closely with Dr Mhita (RA1 president and director of TMA). Richard Washington to put together first draft (Richard W, Willem L, all)*
- *Use part of the funds from the workshop for follow-up activities to put together a CPT internet discussion forum, hosted at TMA. This will allow users to share experiences and predictions and to facilitate a network of users (Chris R, Mike S, Mpeteta)*

iii) Developments in African Climate issues since G8 and mainstreaming climate into African development

The recent focus on Africa, especially with regards African development through the G8 and the Millennium Development Goals is an important opportunity that will not last more than a few years. Importantly, climate information is still not being used optimally in development, climate risk management etc. It's important the panel is involved as much as possible and takes advantage of any funding opportunities as they arise. (see also related FOCUS article).

Actions:

- *Richard to be contact with Canadian IDRC/UK DFID (Richard W, all)*
- *Write letter to introduce VACS panel to African Academy of Sciences (Chris R/Dan O)*
- *Panel should keep RAI (Dr Mhita/TMA) updated on VACS activities (Laban O)*

iv) Updates on AFRICANNESS and various workshops and meetings both past and future (see Appendix B and reports available from <http://www.clivar.org/organization/vacs/VACSmeeting.htm>)

Actions:

- *Circulate draft AFRICANNESS plan to panel – panel needs to comment especially with respect to climate change and variability (Dan O, all)*
- *Report back on seventh workshop on the applicability of env. Physics and met. In Africa (impacts on society) (Fred S)*
- *Include Chris R, Richard W, Mike S and Dan O in discussion on what should be done for VACS/START etc. for next JSC meeting. Laban to forward most relevant emails received so far (Laban O, all)*

v) Eastern and Southern Research Programmes

Updates were given on the status of the Southern and East Africa research programmes.

Action:

- *Observational campaign part of the East African initiative should be circulated around the panel for comment (Fred S)*

vi) The VACS Africa Climate Atlas

The main topic of discussion was about the best way to expand this already popular resource. It was felt that, in accordance with the VACS emphasis on capacity building and education, that a FAQ section about African Climate would be useful. As a starting point the panel and various experts would be asked to contribute questions and short text answers. The first paragraph or so should be as simple as possible and then expand to include more hard science.

Action:

- *Panel to put together FAQ section for VACS atlas. Richard W to put together example and other members to add submissions. (Richard W, all)*

vii) Links to AMMA, Indian Ocean panel, WGSIP etc.

The panel was concerned that the capacity building component of AMMA was languishing. Links to other projects/panels etc. were discussed. In particular there are obvious links with the Indian Ocean Panel and the Working Group on Seasonal to Interannual Prediction. For example, WGSIP and VACS can collaborate in producing targeted applications oriented predictions.

Actions:

- *Draft a letter of concern about lack of capacity building in AMMA (Kerry to draft and then circulate around panel)*
- *Chris to send around TORs of IOP for comment (Chris R)*
- *Write letter to promote GFCSA (Global Forecast Centre for southern Africa) usage by regional institutions helping to facilitate CPT usage in region (Chris to write letter)*
- *Encourage diagnostic subprojects for different African regions in conjunction with WGSIP (Chris R, Richard W, all)*

viii) Decadal Scale issues

The concept of the original review paper was discussed. A target date of the end of September was proposed for a first draft.

Action:

- *Chris R. to put together outline for Decadal review paper & then send to interested panel members (Chris R, all)*

ix) ICPO related matters, website etc.

Actions:

- *Put together CLIVAR FOCUS on Africa e-zine (hard copies for Africa edition) (Mike, all)*
- *Update VACS panel website with panel suggestions. Encourage submissions of details of appropriate publications (Mike S)*
- *Post on VACS website important upcoming meetings (Mike S, all)*
- *Add capacity building (& education) page to VACS website (Mike S)*
- *Submission of Climate News article (Kerry C/Ale G)*

x) Membership issues and next meeting

Kerry Cook and Thierry Lebel rotated off the panel at this meeting. Chris Thorncroft stood down as co-chair, although agreed to stay on the panel as the AMMA contact for another year. The panel recommend that Richard Washington be the new co-chair. Replacements for Kerry, Thierry (and later Chris T) were discussed and a list of potential members drawn up. This will be further discussed by email.

The next panel meeting should be no later than late 2007/early 2008. West or central Africa were seen to be good locations, though it was agreed that the panel would look into different options. It is very important that another full meeting be held to keep the momentum of the panel.

Action:

- *Mike to send around list of potential panel members for comment by the panel (Mike S)*

Appendix A: Attendees

Chris Reason (co-chair)	cjr@egs.uct.ac.za
Kerry Cook (panel)	khc6@cornell.edu
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Dr Mpeteta (TMA/expert)	empeta@meteo.go.tz

Appendix B: Agenda

(Note that the first afternoon was joint with the VACS workshop at the Dar es Salaam International Conference Centre)

Friday, July 14th (at TMA)

08.45-09.00 Welcome etc. (TMA rep)

09.00-09.15 Meeting Outline (Chris R)

09.15-09.45 VACS priorities and directions over the next few years. Links to CLIVAR roadmap and SSG report etc. To be revisited at end of meeting...(Richard W)

09.45-10.40 Discussion of outcomes from workshop (Part 1 Southern Africa: Chris/Richard; Part 2 Eastern Africa: Fred/Laban)

10.40-11.10 Tea/coffee

11.10-11.45 Discussion on workshop concept, e.g.

(a) should we have more VACS run workshops? Broad decision in principle needed.

b) which regions should we target and when should they be?

c) who should lead the effort for each?

d) what funding sources can we target?

e) how should the content match the need/funders etc

11.45-12.00 ICPO support + other matters, e.g. new CLIVAR FOCUS magazine (Mike S)

12.00-1.00 Lunch

13.00-13.55 Developments with African Climate since G8, including GCOS GAP analysis, Addis meeting and mainstreaming climate into African development (Laban O & Richard W.)

13.55-14.20 AFRICANNESS and links to VACS (Dan O)

14.20-14.50 - Report on the Workshop for Enhancing Collaborative Research on the Environment in Sub-Saharan Africa – link to VACS priorities. Discussion on submitted document (Fred S)

14.50-15.20 – East African Initiative – update and relevance to VACS (Fred S/ Laban O)

15.20-15.35 VACS Africa Climate Atlas (Richard W)

15.35-15.55 Tea/coffee

15.55-16.35 AMMA: update and VACS role within AMMA (e.g. bridging links with rest of continent; capacity building; African participation; sustained obs. System etc.) (Richard W)

16.35-17.20 Links with Indian (and other basin) panels (e.g. there are several issues including the proposal to have next panel meetings back-to-back or to have the IOP meeting in Africa with a workshop attached). VACS interaction with WGSIP, AAMP, IOP, AIP, WCRP seasonal prediction experiment (Chris R/Andy M/Willem L)

17.20-17.40 Decadal Scale issues – discuss review paper and ask for volunteers to contribute (all)

17.40-18.10 Recent research on eastern Africa (Laban O)

Saturday, July 15th

08.45-09.10 Report on workshop on Health and Climate – (comment on submitted document?)(Wassila T)

09.10-09.50 Update on the plans for the conference on African Climate: Past, Present and Future (Kerry C)

09.50-10.15 Next WCRP (JSC) meeting in Africa – what role should VACS play? (Laban O)

10.15-10.40 Coffee/Tea

10.40-11.10 Developing Decision Support Systems for the sustainable management of water resources (Joseph I)

11.10-11.30 Revisit VACS priorities and directions over the next few years taking into account meeting outcomes (Richard W/Chris R)

11.30-11.50-Membership issues (new chair; membership rotation etc.)

11.50-12.05 Next Meeting? Location/Time etc. (all)

12.05-12.45 Review of actions, close (Chris R/Mike S)

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