



Closing the Gap Between Climate Prediction and Health Protection: ACMAD, WHO and WMO Launch first Africa Climate–Health Desk

Kigali, Rwanda, 13 March 2026 — To help countries in Africa turn climate and weather information into real, everyday health protection and action, the **African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD)**, in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) – World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Climate and Health Joint Programme, has officially launched the first [Africa Climate–Health Desk](#) hosted at ACMAD in Niamey, Niger. As extreme heat and other climate and health hazards intensify across the continent, the new Desk is designed to translate and transmit life-saving climate intelligence to reach health authorities, hospitals, communities and decision-makers who need it most.

The Africa Climate-Health Desk, a specialized unit hosted within a climate and meteorological Centre, is the first of its kind at the regional level in Africa, and [second launched globally](#) as part of a comprehensive effort led by the WHO-WMO Joint Programme with funding from Wellcome and The Rockefeller Foundation. It will help close the long-standing gap between climate science and public health decision-making by supporting health-relevant climate and weather advisories and bulletins, developing data-driven thresholds that reflect risks to people, and fostering true **co-production between meteorological and health institutions**. The Desk will strengthen know-how and build skills across sectors by offering practical training, fellowships, and hands-on support for both national and regional partners; and facilitate closer collaboration between ACMAD and its regional and international partners, such as the World Health Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, and the African Centers for Disease Control, and the Weather and Climate Information Services Programme (WISER) under the UK Met Office.

The Africa Climate–Health Desk is launched during the **Continental Knowledge-Sharing Workshop**, under the **Africa Continental Climate Outlook Forum (ACCOF)**. The ACCOF is a quarterly event which brings together climate scientists from WMO-designated and emerging Regional Climate Centres, National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs), with sectoral partners from across Africa.

Tailoring climate–health services for Africa

Africa is experiencing increasingly frequent and intense climate extremes. Heatwaves, floods, and droughts are placing growing pressure on health systems, food and water security, and national economies. These environmental extremes are also changing the distribution and timing of vector-borne diseases including malaria and dengue, and triggering compound risks such as dust and heat, increasing the risk of meningitis.

To date, the availability, access, and use of information about the weather and climate -- and how it can be used to inform health planning and prevention – has been limited in Africa. Scaling up capacity, partnerships, and tailored climate information—like **impact-based early warnings** that signal when heat or other hazards begin to threaten people’s health—is essential for earlier and more effective prevention and response. The Africa Climate–Health Desk will address this gap by providing new services which:

- **Translate climate information into health intelligence by producing tailored climate–health information and advisories** such as heatwave bulletins and malaria-climate risk



outlooks to support health authorities anticipate and respond to health risks related to climate conditions.

- **Strengthen Meningitis Early Warning System**, through collaboration with partners such as WISER and the University of Reading, integrating climate forecasts with epidemiological and environmental data to anticipate disease outbreaks and emergencies response plans.
- **Foster collaboration between climate and health communities** – meteorological services, health officers, researchers, and regional partners – to collaboratively design and deploy climate services that meet **urgent** health-decision needs, and put in place lasting systems that will keep these services running for the long term. The desk will also support the integration of climate information into health adaptation planning and preparedness strategies.
- **Support capacity building, research and knowledge brokering** through on-the-job training, a visiting scientist program, e-courses, convening of national focal points for health at National Meteorological Services in Africa, along with health partner engagement,
- **Promote information sharing, knowledge exchange and innovation by developing a data portal and climate-health dashboards** to facilitate access to climate products, tools, and resources that support climate-resilient health systems across Africa.

“Climate change is reshaping health risks across Africa, challenging countries to stay one step ahead. Our real opportunity lies in anticipation: Africa cannot afford to wait for emergencies to unfold. Our desk will build and strengthen collaboration with WMO and WHO, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) - and partners such as WISER, Clim-Health Africa, and many others, to support integrating climate information into health decisions so leaders can act earlier, reduce risks, and strengthen resilience where it matters most”, said **Dr Ousmane Ndiaye, Director-General of ACMAD**. “With our Climate Services Expert **Sandrine Wendlasida Combéré** leading the Desk, we now have a dedicated point of connection building bridges between the meteorological and health community across the region, so that climate information directly supports prevention, preparedness, and protection of people’s lives and livelihoods.”

The Africa Climate–Health Desk is part of a broader global rollout of **Climate–Health Desks** across Africa, Asia, and the Americas, designed to build capacity, support research, and turn climate intelligence into practical health action. Supported by **Wellcome** and **The Rockefeller Foundation**, as part of the [Climate and Health Science and Service Accelerator](#), the Desks will help health systems receive the climate intelligence they need to better safeguard and protect health.

“The launch of the Africa Climate–Health Desk marks an important milestone creating, for the first time, a regional multi-disciplinary team who can innovate, consolidate, and strengthen authoritative information on climate risks to health,” said **Joy Shumake-Guillemot, Head of the WHO–WMO Climate and Health Joint Programme**. “Following the launch of the South Asia Climate–Health Desk based in India last month, today we take another step toward ensuring that climate and health communities are better connected, better informed, speak the same language, and are equipped to better work together on concrete analytics and decision-support tools. Ultimately, this means local leaders know what to do when severe weather warnings are issued; families know how to protect themselves from extreme heat and when to seek care; and health workers receive the right alerts so they can respond effectively. In short: earlier warnings, better planning, clearer advice, and faster local response”, said Shumake-Guillemot.

About the Partners and Funders



African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD)

Based in Niamey and designated by WMO as Africa's Regional Climate Centre, ACMAD provides continent-wide climate monitoring, seasonal outlooks, and early warnings, and builds capacity for national meteorological and hydrological services across Africa. Its mandate is to improve the understanding, use, and dissemination of meteorological and hydrological information in support of sustainable development and risk reduction. As part of this mission, ACMAD will host the first Africa Climate–Health Desk, connecting climate science with public-health action to support earlier warnings and better preparedness for heat and other climate-sensitive health risks.

[African Center of Meteorological Applications for Development \(ACMAD\)](#)

WHO-WMO Climate and Health Joint Programme

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) work together to help countries protect health in a changing climate. The Joint Programme, based in Geneva Switzerland at the World Meteorological Organization supports Member States and partners to improve the application of climate, weather, and environmental information in public health decision-making. Activities focus on strengthening collaboration to generate evidence, building awareness and technical capacity, and promote the use of climate and environmental data to protect health and save lives. www.climahealth.info

The Rockefeller Foundation

Investing \$30 billion over the last 113 years to promote the well-being of humanity, The Rockefeller Foundation is a pioneering philanthropy built on unlikely partnerships and innovative solutions that deliver measurable results for people in the United States and around the world. We leverage scientific breakthroughs, artificial intelligence, and new technologies to make big bets across energy, food, health, and finance, including through our public charity, RF Catalytic Capital (RFCC). <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/>

Wellcome Trust

Wellcome Trust is a global charitable foundation that supports science and innovation to tackle the world's most urgent health challenges facing everyone. They support discovery research into life, health and wellbeing, and are taking on three worldwide health challenges: mental health, infectious disease and climate and health. Its climate and health work puts people's health at the centre of climate action—building research networks, advancing science on risks like extreme heat, and partnering globally to ensure communities benefit from robust, health focused climate solutions. <https://wellcome.org/>

Weather and Climate Information Services (WISER): The WISER programme has delivered transformational improvements in the quality, accessibility, and use of weather and climate information services since 2015, supporting sustainable development at all levels. Funded by UK International Development and led by the UK Met Office, WISER works through partnerships, collaboration, and capacity building to deliver value for money and ensure the long-term, sustainable improvement of weather and climate services.

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/services/government/international-development/weather-and-climate-information-services-wiser/index>

University of Reading: The University of Reading is a top-30 UK research-intensive university (ranked 194th globally in the QS 2026 rankings), known for its beautiful, award-winning green



campuses. Established in 1892 and granted its Royal Charter in 1926, it offers a wide range of programs, with particular strengths in climate science, agriculture, and business. Since 2017, the National Centre for Atmospheric Science (NCAS) at the University of Reading has been working collaboratively with ACMAD to deploy and improve a Meningitis Early Warning System across Africa.

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/>

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