

## **Webinar on EO Africa – Satellite support to Weather, Hydrological and Climate Services**

### **Opening Remarks by Alain Ratier, EUMETSAT Director General**

Dear colleagues from the African Development Bank, from the African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities,

Dear colleagues from the WMO Regional Association 1 and its Regional Climate Centres

Dear colleagues and friends from Africa,

It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to address all of you with these opening remarks.

As you know, EUMETSAT planned to host its 14<sup>th</sup> User Forum in Africa last week in Tanzania. Meeting with you in person every second year to discuss the current and future use of satellite data has always been mutually rewarding. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has decided otherwise and we need to postpone this Forum to 2021.

The pandemic had large impacts worldwide, but it had no impact on the operations of our satellites and services to users from Europe and Africa.

We know how important this is for Africa, because your continent is the most affected by weather and climate, across all space and time scales, from severe convection and dust storms, tropical cyclones, seasonal droughts and inter-annual variations. Weather and climate are terms of the same equation in Africa

We are therefore proud to continue to serve you the best we can.

Although this Webinar does not replace our User Forum, it is an excellent opportunity to hear and learn more about the benefits that satellite data brings to various economic sectors in Africa. The presentations from the five WMO African Regional Climate Centres on the products and services and they deliver will be the best possible illustrations

As you know, the cooperation between the European Union and the African Union has been instrumental for strengthening the capacities of the Regional Climate Centres and several national institutions. Indeed, this Europe-Africa cooperation has enabled 20 years of continuous access and use of satellite data. It has also supported the sustained development of services to an ever-growing user community, across the continent and across various socio-economic sectors.

In particular, investments in infrastructure and human skills have been essential to deliver Weather, Hydrological and Climate services in Africa

In this regard, the cooperation established with the African Development Bank four 4 years ago, through the CLIMDEV initiative and the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF disaster resilience programme has amplified these investments.

Indeed, the four ground stations deployed in Africa will acquire data from polar orbiting meteorological satellites and will thus expand the benefits of Earth observation to early warning and disaster resilience services.

I would like to thank the African Development Bank for its commitment to this innovative SAWIDRA project

What I want to tell you now is that the return on investment will be substantial. This is because EUMETSAT has invested in the development of even more capable satellite systems, which will provide more and better data to Africa over the next two decades.

We will launch one next generation satellite every year in the period 2022-2025, including two Metop second generation satellites dumping new data to the SAWIDRA ground stations

EUMETSAT and its 30 Member States are committed to cooperate with the European Commission, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the Regional Economic Communities and the WMO RCCs to support the African user community to extract the highest possible benefits of these new data, further expanding your portfolio of early warning and disaster resilience services

I am sure that the products and services presented by the RCCs during this Webinar will further convince the Donor community that investing in the access and use of Earth observation in Africa is decisive for the sustainable development of this weather and climate sensitive continent.

I wish you all an excellent Webinar and continued good health in these difficult times.