

CAS-TWAS-WMO Forum: 12 Years On



Prof. ZHU Jiang

In 2000, with the joint efforts of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), the Academy of Science for the Developing World (TWAS) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a regular international forum (known as CTWF) for physico-mathematical problems related to climate modeling and prediction was founded. Twelve years later, *BCAS* interviews Prof. ZHU Jiang, deputy director of the CAS Institute of Atmospheric Physics (IAP/CAS), about the development of the Forum.

BCAS: Would you please tell us the objectives for holding such a Forum?

Prof. Zhu: Climate problems such as global warming, decadal climate variabilities, short-term climate anomalies and their predictions, as well as disastrous weather events and their predictions exert a great influence on the world and national economical development and human life, and has become more and more a public concern in the world. Developing countries are more vulnerable to climate change due to the lack of capability. The aim of CTWF is to bring together high-level and experienced mathematicians, physicists, atmospheric and oceanic scientists to exchange ideas, discuss scientific problems in depth, and develop suitable solving methods by joint efforts. The forum also wants to provide a venue to hear the voices from the

developing world and to train its young scientists.

BCAS: How many symposia have been organized altogether? In what way?

Prof. Zhu: We have organized 10 symposia and workshops so far. In this coming October we will organize the 11th one.

The Organization of CTWF consists of chairmen or executive directors from CAS, TWAS and WMO respectively. There is also an international scientific advisory committee for CTWF, and the CTWF secretariat is set up in the International Center for Climate and Environment Sciences (ICCES), one of the centers of excellence for the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS),



A group photo of participants of the 2010 CTWF Forum held from Nov.17 to 19 in Beijing. CAS President Prof. BAI Chunli, China Meteorology Administrator Prof. ZHENG Guoguang, ICSU Executive Director Prof. CHEN Deliang, and TWAS Fellows Prof. Virulh Sa-yakanit and Prof. Mohan Munasinghe are among the 150 participants from more than 20 countries.



which is located in (IAP/CAS).

At present, CTWF is co-chaired by CAS President BAI Chunli, TWAS Executive Director Romain Murenzi and WMO Secretary-general Michel Jarraud. On behalf of CAS, TWAS and WMO respectively, Prof. ZENG Qingcun, Academician of CAS, Prof. WANG Huijun from IAP, Dr. Filippo Giorgi from the International Center for Theoretical Physics, TWAS, and Dr. David Carson from WCRP and WMO serve as its co-executive directors.

CAS provides regular funding for its activities, including an annual international symposium and some short-term academic visits by scientists from developing countries.

BCAS: *Could you give us a picture about its participants?*

Prof. Zhu: I would like to use the 2010 Symposium as an example. During that symposium we had 150 participants from more than 20 countries. Of them, 45 were from developing countries such as Ethiopia, Pakistan, Brazil, the Philippines, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sudan, Thailand, Tunisia, Iran and India. They came from very different of fields such as meteorology, oceanography, hydrology, environment, agriculture and economics, because the theme of the symposium is quite board. The meeting was also attended by high-caliber officials and prestigious scientists, including Prof. BAI Chunli, China Meteorology Administrator ZHENG Guoguang, ICSU Executive Director CHEN Deliang, and TWAS Fellows Prof. Virulh Sa-yakanit and Mohan Munasinghe.

BCAS: *Major Achievements of the Forum so far?*

Prof. Zhu: With the continuous support from CAS since its establishment in 2000, CTWF has significantly strengthened the relationships among CAS, TWAS, and WMO. For example, Prof. Obasi, former secretary-general of WMO, actively attended the 2nd CTWF international conference held in Shanghai in 2002, showing the WMO's support to the Forum. On the other hand, CTWF activities have also been regarded as one of the China's contribution to TWAS.

CTWF is of particular benefit to participants from developing countries, because it provides them with an opportunity to discuss important issues of common interest face-to-face with established international scientists. Every year, CTWF provides financial support (including funding international travel) for some young scientists from developing countries, especially from Asian and African countries. In the 3rd CTWF conference



The 2010 Forum is in session.

held in Beijing, Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad, advisor to Prime Minister of Pakistan attended the symposium and gave a plenary talk. After the conference, Prof. ZENG Qingcun and Dr. Ishfaq signed the MOU for the further collaboration.

On the other hand, the CTWF international symposia have also provided an excellent opportunity to bring together international renowned research scientists from diverse fields: mathematics, physics and climate research, etc. This is the unique feature of the Forum, and has significantly contributed to climate science. For example, during the CTWF symposium held in Beijing in 2006, Dr. Conrad Lautenbacher, the Administrator of the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, attended the symposium and gave a key-note presentation on the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS).

Climate change is indeed one of the most challenging issues facing humanity, as it can affect all sectors of the economy and the environment, including human health and well-being.

Fully recognizing its importance, in 2010, CTWF organized the 9th CTWF workshop on "Climate and Environmental Change: Challenges for Developing Countries" in Beijing. Prof. BAI Chunli attended the forum and gave a speech in the inauguration ceremony. Prof. ZHENG Guoguang also participated in the workshop and made a speech.

BCAS: *What is the future plan for the Forum?*

Prof. Zhu: Due to the forum's increasing influence and visibility in the academic community, we have gained more support from CAS and other international organizations. We will further enhance the activities of the Forum. In addition to continuously organizing high-level symposia and workshops, we will also plan to host more visiting scientists from developing countries.