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MEDIA RELEASE

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Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service at 19th World Meteorological Congress

Calls for Greater Focus on Downstream Impacts Affecting SIDS Communities from Melting Ice

Mr. Shakeer Baig, Trinidad and Tobago's Permanent Representative with the World Meteorological Organization and Acting Director of the Trinidad and Tobago Meteorological Service made interventions at the 19th World Meteorological Congress, during the session on Strategic Initiatives on priorities to address global and regional impacts of changes in the Cryosphere, which was held on 31 May 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Mr. Baig stressed that communities in low-lying coastal zone and in close connection with coastal environments, as is the case for Caribbean Small Island Developing States (CSIDS) are particularly exposed to a shrinking cryosphere and related downstream impacts and projected changes and risks on the ocean, such as sea level rise and extreme sea level. He pointed out that there was a need to strengthen and increase focus on the downstream impacts, from a shrinking cryosphere, particularly with respect to resources for monitoring of sea-level rise and extreme weather events that affect SIDSs coastal communities. He urged the WMO to emphasize the need for enhanced governance, monitoring, and context-specific and integrated responses that will enable improved delivery of services in line with priorities to mitigate the downstream impacts from a shrinking Cryosphere.

Mr. Baig also intervened in support of statements during the session on Capacity Development, which took into account the increasing demand for services and training, emanating from new WMO initiatives such as the UN Early Warnings for All Initiative (EW4ALL) and other strategic WMO initiatives. Mr. Baig highlighted the challenges that National Meteorological Services of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are facing with retaining appropriately qualified staff and supported the proposal for further expansion of the current WMO fellowship system to include more participants from SIDS, especially given the expectations of the Early Warning for All Initiative being led by the WMO.

The World Meteorological Organization voted Thursday 01st June 2023 for Argentina's Professor Celeste Saulo to become its first woman leader and steer the WMO's critical global role in tracking climate change.

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Saulo, a WMO vice-president who has headed Argentina's weather service since 2014, won a landslide vote at the UN climate agency's congress in Geneva to be elected as the WMO Secretary General.

The WMO's role in climate change has become increasingly prominent and Saulo, 59, will likely become a well-known advocate on this pressing world issue. "In these times when inequality and climate change are the greatest global threats, the WMO must contribute to strengthening the meteorological and hydrological services to protect populations and their economies, providing timely and effective services and early warning systems," Saulo said following her election.

"My ambition is to lead the WMO towards a scenario in which the voice of all members is heard equally, prioritizing those most vulnerable and in which the actions it undertakes are aligned with the needs and particularities of each one of them."

Argentina's Celeste Saulo poses with Mr. Shakeer Baig, Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago with the World Meteorological Organization after she was elected as Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in Geneva, Switzerland, Thursday 01st June 2023.