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*MEDIA RELEASE*

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23 March 2018

**WORLD METEOROLOGICAL DAY CELEBRATED ON 23 MARCH 2018 – SAWS LAUNCHES EXCITING UPGRADED WEATHERSMART APP**

On 23 March, the global meteorological community celebrates World Meteorological Day. The day marks the coming into force of the United Nations Convention that created the World Meteorological Organization in 1950. As a member of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the South African Weather Service (SAWS) has taken pride in these celebrations by ensuring that the importance of meteorology and the role that it plays in the lives of the country's citizens is recognized.

In our quest to ensure South Africa is indeed a weather smart nation, today SAWS is launching its free WEATHERSMART APP, with many more functionalities. The WEATHERSMART APP is available for Android in the APP store. It will also be available on Apple store soon.

This year's World Meteorological Day theme is "Weather-ready, climate smart". In the recent past South Africa has experienced a number of weather and climate extremes and the theme ties in well with SAWS' knowledge-driven campaign to create "A WeatherSMART nation", which endeavours to empower the nation to use the information provided by SAWS to become resilient and knowledgeable in what steps to take during adverse weather conditions.

Growing populations all over the world face a wide range of hazards such as tropical cyclones, storm surges, heavy rains, heatwaves, droughts and many more. Long-term climate change is increasing the intensity and frequency of extreme weather and climate events, causing sea level rise and ocean acidification. Urbanization

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Bolepi House, 442 Rigel Avenue South, Erasmusrand, 0181 Private Bag X097, Pretoria, 0001

Tel: + 27 (0) 12 367 6000 USSD: \*120\*7297#

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and the spread of megacities means that more people all over the world are exposed and vulnerable. Now, more than ever, we need to be weather-ready, climate-smart and water-wise.

South Africa, as a member of the WMO, supports the top priorities of meteorological services world-wide, namely to protect life and property from the risks related to weather and climate, the global agenda on sustainable development, and climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

SAWS' operational services range from daily weather forecasts to long-term climate predictions that help society to be weather-ready and climate-smart. Our information enable the Water Management practitioners to make sound decisions in terms of fresh water resources for agriculture, industry, energy and human consumption, so that we can be water-wise.

Early Warning systems and other disaster risk reduction measures are vital for boosting the resilience of our communities. In this respect SAWS plays a pivotal role to ensure that Disaster Management is kept informed of imminent weather events. Our climate services can inform decisions on both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

This year SAWS hosted its 1<sup>st</sup> WeatherSMART Science Symposium on 14 and 15 March 2018, in close association with World Meteorological Day. The aim of the symposium was to bring weather science, climate, research and applications to the public. An educational poster, useful for educators and depicting synoptic charts for summer and winter as well as an exceptional chart of storms, was developed and is available on the website of the South African Weather Service, [www.weathersa.co.za](http://www.weathersa.co.za)

**Issued by the South African Weather Service.**

**Media enquiries:** MS Hannelee Doubell: Manager, External Communications; Tel: (012) 367 6104; Cell: 072 222 6305; E-mail: [hannelee.doubell@weathersa.co.za](mailto:hannelee.doubell@weathersa.co.za)