

A review of the perspectives presented at OceanOps04

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The Joint WMO/IOC Technical Commission for Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) of the World Meteorological Organization and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (of UNESCO) has been established as an intergovernmental technical body to coordinate operational oceanography and marine meteorology. JCOMM already coordinates a number of important operational products and services activities that cover the global ocean, including the Marine Pollution Emergency Response Support System (MPERSS), the JCOMM Electronic Products Bulletin (JEB) and the preparation and distribution of maritime safety services under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In addition, in providing a link between the marine research, operational and user communities, JCOMM seeks to develop new and innovative operational ocean products to support developing user requirements.

Ocean Ops 04 – Operational metocean products and services in support of maritime safety and environmental management – had taken place in Toulouse, 10-15 May 2004. The symposium was attended by some 150 participants from 30 countries. The programme included 30 keynote and 65 contributed papers, covering topics such as user requirements, observing systems, environmental management, climate forecasting, ocean modelling and forecasting, and various aspects of marine pollution emergencies. The objectives of the symposium covered themes such as: users' needs, implementation of products, and issues relevant to MPERSS. This was then followed, on 17-21 May, by sessions of different JCOMM groups.

In view of the growing requirements for meteorological and oceanographic information and services to support search and rescue at sea, and the similarity of much of this information to that required for MPERSS, the JCOMM Services Coordination Group (SCG) agreed that the operational MPERSS should in the future include Search and Rescue Support.