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The 30 years of GEWEX

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Abstract

The Global Energy and Water Cycle EXchanges (GEWEX) project was created more than thirty years ago within the framework of the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP). The aim of this initiative was to address major gaps in our understanding of Earth's energy and water cycles as there was a lack of information about the basic fluxes and associated reservoirs of these cycles. GEWEX sought to acquire and set standards for climatological data on variables essential for quantifying water and energy fluxes and for closing budgets at the regional and global scales. In so doing, GEWEX activities led to a greatly improved understanding of processes and our ability to predict them. Such understanding was viewed then, as it remains today, essential for advancing weather and climate prediction from global to regional scales. GEWEX has also demonstrated over time the importance of wider engagement of different communities and the necessity of international collaboration for making progress on understanding and on the monitoring of the changes in the energy and water cycles under ever increasing human pressures.

This paper reflects on the 30 years of evolution and progress that has occurred within GEWEX. This evolution is presented in terms of three main phases of activity. Progress toward the main goals of GEWEX is highlighted by calling out a few achievements from each phase. A vision of the path forward for the coming decade, including the goals of GEWEX for the future, are also described.

Capsule

Progress on advancing our understanding of and ability to predict Earth's water and energy cycles over the thirty years of the Global Energy and Water Cycle EXchanges (GEWEX) is reviewed.

1.0 Introduction

The presence of water in all three phases is fundamental to the Earth system. Water is essential to the operation of the Earth's heat engine, in the chemical and biological molding of the Earth's surface and, indeed, to life itself. As the key to all climate problems is the redistribution and storage of the sun's energy over the Earth's surface and its loss to space; it is through the coupling to energy that water exerts its fundamental influence on the physical climate system and on climate change. The meridional redistribution of heat by the atmospheric transport of water vapor, and by ocean gyres strongly constrains the atmospheric circulation and limits the strength of the winds and shapes the distribution of clouds around Earth. Clouds in turn control the planetary albedo and the amount of solar radiation reaching the surface. The inflow of fresh water at high latitudes seas is a major source of buoyancy, which modulates the deep ocean circulation. The ocean circulation, in turn, determines and modulates the climate of many regions of the world. The scavenging of chemicals by precipitation is a major cleansing process of the environment. For these and many other reasons, a quantitative understanding and clear appreciation of how water cycles through the Earth system are of fundamental importance for understanding environmental change on all scales, from global to local.

The global hydrological cycle is intimately involved in the most basic aspects of Earth system energetics. A realization emerged from the Global Atmosphere Research Programme (GARP, Bolin, 1969) in the latter part of the 1970s: qualitatively little was known about the global and regional aspects of water and energy budgets and even less was understood about the processes that connect these two major components of the Earth system. The acquisition of climatological data on these basic budgets was viewed then, as it remains viewed today, as essential to advance global weather and climate prediction. The existence of this major gap in weather and climate science at that time would not be remedied by the major programs being planned like the World Ocean Circulation Experiment (WOCE, WCRP, 1986) and the Tropical Ocean and Global Atmosphere Project (TOGA, WCRP, 1985) as they mainly addressed slower components of the climate system.

A new joint water and energy initiative germinated at the Memorial Symposium for Prof. Verner Suomi in honor of his retirement (Figure 1). That symposium was part of the Impacts of Satellites on Atmospheric and Ocean Science Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, in May 1986. At that conference, in part as a response to the presentation of the then-new NASA Earth Observing System (EOS) program by Shelby Tilford promoting satellite measurements for global change research, Verner Suomi, Lennart Bengtsson and Pierre Morel formulated a comprehensive research program focused on the 'fast' atmospheric and hydrologic processes. This initiative was the Global Energy and Water Cycle Experiment (GEWEX,), and was then launched within the framework of the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP). GEWEX was intended to address gaps in knowledge through the combination of promised new observing systems to augment the existing operational systems and advances to global atmosphere-ocean-land-ice models. This was deemed especially timely, given the potential to exploit technological advances expected to happen with the advent of the emerging NASA's Earth Observing System (EOS) era (e.g., Dozier, 1994) coupled with the introduction of ever-more powerful computers.

Figure 1 Professors Pierre Morel and Verner Suomi at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, 13 May 1994. Their earlier meeting in 1984 laid the foundation for GEWEX.

GEWEX became a core project of WCRP and its first scientific plan was published in December 1990. As was pointed out by GEWEX first Scientific Steering Group chair Moustafa Chahine: "*By virtue of its breadth, GEWEX is not an 'experiment' in the traditional sense; rather, it is an integrated 'program' of research, observations, and science activities ultimately leading to prediction of variations in the global and regional hydrological regimes.*" The plan from the outset was to implement this program as a series of phases that reflect evolution and progress on this broad topic.

Today, GEWEX is over thirty years old. While the vision of GEWEX has evolved over that time, common themes remain. GEWEX objectives evolved as progress was made and prospects were anticipated throughout its thirty years. GEWEX adopted throughout a methodology that reflected on the joint advances in observations and modeling that have occurred. The aspirational vision of GEWEX, however, has remained broadly similar since its inception as expressed by the goal:

> *To measure and predict global and regional energy and water variations, trends, and extremes (such as heat waves, floods and droughts), through improved observations and modeling of land, atmosphere and their interactions; thereby providing the scientific underpinnings of climate services.*

Using largely the same methodologies, GEWEX continues to actively engage field-based experimental research, with operational forecasting; involve global modeling centers towards advancing model development expressed through process models, hydrological models, large eddy resolving to the convection permitting climate models of today; and exploit observations from Earth orbiting satellites for understanding, modeling and predicting the Earth system.

The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the 30 years of evolution and progress that has occurred within GEWEX. This is presented as three main phases of activity that define GEWEX and its evolution over time. A set of selected achievements are highlighted and a vision of the path forward for the coming decade is offered.

2.0 Phase I – The formative period (1990–2002)

Phase I of GEWEX was intended to "*maximize the use of the operational and research satellite data of the period to address its stated goal*." It was also a phase that laid the groundwork for the second phase of GEWEX, which was aimed at exploiting new global observations expected to emerge later in the period. A principal part of the strategy for Phase I was to observe the key energy and water cycle elements globally; to move toward better understanding and improved parameterizations of land surface coupling and cloud processes within mesoscale models through regional process studies; to upscale to global models for prediction; and to downscale for local water resource applications. Phase I also inherited a number of important ongoing activities managed by the WCRP Joint Scientific Committee (JSC) Working Group on Radiative Fluxes (WGRF). This working group provided oversight for a number of developing satellite-based data projects including the surface radiation budget project with the supporting surface radiation networks (the Baseline Surface Radiation Network, BSRN), the International Satellite Cloud Climatology Project (ISCCP) that started in 1984 (e.g., Rossow and Schiffer, 1991), global precipitation climatology activities that became the Global Precipitation Climatology Project (GPCP, Huffman et al., 1997), general oversight of Earth Radiation budget observations, and the lead in the Global water Vapor Project (GVaP, Randel et al., 1996), among other efforts.

A programmatic structure was adopted part way through the phase-defining activities in three separate areas, namely radiation, hydrometeorology, modeling and prediction. The GEWEX Modeling and Prediction Projects (GMPP) consisted of the GEWEX Cloud System Study (GCSS) and the GEWEX Land Atmosphere System Studies (GLASS), which in turn was built on the success of the Project for Intercomparison of Land-Surface Parameterization Schemes (PILPS). The WGRF of the JSC transitioned to the GEWEX Radiation Project (GRP) midway through the decade. In some respects, this was a misnomer, as the GRP oversaw much more than just topics on radiation. The GEWEX Hydrometeorology Projects (GHP) were home to the Continental Scale Experiments (CSEs) as well as the International Satellite Land Surface Climatology Project (ISLSCP) and the Global Runoff Data Centre (GRDC).

Activities during Phase I were guided by four main objectives under the following themes:

2.1 Global fluxes of water and energy

Objective: Determine the Earth's hydrologic cycle and energy fluxes using global measurements (GRP)

Phase I activities under this objective were mostly framed around the stewardship of a number of global climate data records inherited from the WGRF. ISCCP was one of the earliest global data activities constructed using an existing global constellation of geostationary satellites. As such, ISCCP was a pathfinder activity at that time, facing many issues that arise in forming a data record from multiple sources, and the lessons learned from it remain relevant today. During Phase I, it was realized that these data would be more effectively used as a tool to assess global weather and climate models and to study the role of clouds in climate by first simulating the observations directly within the models and then mimicking the ISCCP analysis. This offered more direct and rigorous means of comparison. This was achieved with the development of the ISCCP simulator that has now been widely used by most major climate modeling centers since its creation over 20 years ago [e.g., Klein and Jakob (1999) among many others]. This simulator laid the foundation for a much wider development of satellite simulators that now serve as a major diagnostic tool for assessing present-day climate models (e.g., Bodas-Salcedo et al., 2011).

The GEWEX International Satellite Land Surface Climatology Project (ISLSCP) was also initiated during this same period. It initially produced a global 1° x 1° land surface dataset along with atmospheric forcing data for one year (Sellers et al., 1996). These data were then expanded to 10 years (1986–1995), and combined with a more comprehensive database of 50 datasets on vegetation, carbon cycle components, hydrological fluxes and stores, soils and topography, radiation and clouds, near-surface meteorology, snow and sea ice and socioeconomics relating to the water cycle. These data were designed to be used as driving input for land surface models and verification data for climate models.

2.2 Modeling the global hydrological cycle

Objective: Model the global hydrologic cycle and assess its impact on the atmosphere, oceans and land surfaces (GMPP)

To address this objective, the panel concentrated on three important elements relating to water and energy exchanges: (i) clouds, (ii) the atmospheric boundary layer (ABL) and (iii) land surface processes. It was realized from the outset that making advances in land surface models (LSMs) was needed (Sidebar 1). It was also understood that this meant

LSMs had to be compared to and assessed against observational data and then subsequently improved. GEWEX has been instrumental in evolving these land models (Figure SB1). GLASS continues to promote such improvement using both point observations, including those obtained from the continental scale experiments (CSEs) described below, as well as global datasets for a more global assessment of LSMs (Polcher et al. 2000). It was also recognized that model evaluation needed to be done within a common framework such as adopted for the Project for the Intercomparison of Land-Surface Parameterization Schemes (PILPS; Henderson-Sellers et al., 1993), co-sponsored by the World Meteorological Organization's Working Group on Numerical Experimentation (WGNE) and GEWEX. Figure 2 is one example from PILPS highlighting how analysis of point-like data identify shortcomings in land surface process parameterization (Chen et al., 1997). In this example, data from the atmospheric boundary layer research station at Cabauw in the Netherlands were used to assess different LSM representations of latent heat flux (i.e., evapotranspiration) from the surface. This was one of the most highly-cited papers in land surface modeling at that time, exposing the weaknesses inherent in the Manabe "bucket" (Manabe, 1969) scheme that was then widely-used (Fig B1). Increasingly well-constrained experiments then followed, focused mainly on mid- and high-latitude regions.

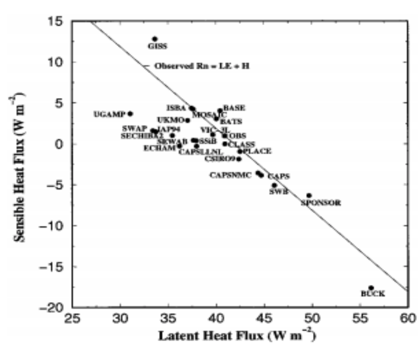

Figure 2 (from Chen et al., 1997) This figure highlights how point data were used to assess LSMs at that time. In this example the annually averaged surface sensible (H) versus latent heat (LE) fluxes (Wm^{-2}) are compared to observations. The observed annual net radiation (Rn) is 41 Wm^{-2} and the line shown is this net radiation value expressed as the sum of the two coordinates with any single point falling on the line being simply the surface energy balance relation Rn=LE+H. Although some

models simulate the annual net radiation close to that observed, the components of the balance differ markedly from observations and many models fail to conserve energy.

The Global Soil Wetness Project (GSWP, phase 1), a modeling activity of ISLSCP, also formed at the same time, but with a more global, rather than local, focus on LSM assessment (Dirmeyer et al., 1999) that encompassed all climate zones and captured some degree of interannual variability. A pilot phase of GSWP created a two-year global dataset of soil moisture, temperature, runoff and surface fluxes by integrating uncoupled land surface schemes using externally-specified surface forcings from observations and standardized soil and vegetation distributions (Dirmeyer et al., 1999).

A far-reaching modeling initiative of Phase I that laid the foundation for developments to come, including those of the current decade (Sidebar 2), was an initiative that developed around the concerted use of higher-resolution models to advance the parameterization of clouds in global models. This was the underlying motivation of the GEWEX Cloud System Study (GCSS, GEWEX Cloud System study team, 1993). GCSS aimed to develop better parameterizations of cloud systems for weather and climate models by seeking an improved understanding of cloud physical processes, including convection, leading to a better representation of these models. GCSS was an embodiment of the broader GEWEX methodology. It brought together the observational community and the disparate cloud modeling communities. It seeded the evolution of the convection-permitting regional and global models of today and applied their early versions to the development of parameterizations for global prediction systems. In so doing, GCSS transformed parameterizations with a philosophy that continues today in numerical weather prediction (NWP) and climate modeling centers. Although successful, there was a general over-reliance on models in shaping these parameterization developments and not enough emphasis on critical evaluation of them. Consequently, biases inherent to these process models, such as the bias of vertical motion in deep convection (e.g., Varble et al., 2014) or with respect to the microphysics properties of clouds and precipitation (Kay et al., 2018), persist today with important consequences to current climate change projections (e.g., Mülmenstadt et al., 2021). While some progress has occurred in using observations especially through the application of simulators noted above, much more needs to be done to exploit the ever-improving observational capabilities. Recognition of this need led to the Process Evaluation Study (PROES, Stephens et al., 2015) that was created in the latter phases of GEWEX to promote the development of observational-based diagnostic tools for studying important climate processes.

2.3 Regional hydrology and water resources

Objective: Develop the ability to predict variations in global and regional hydrologic processes and water resources as well as their responses to environmental change (GHP)

Although GEWEX provided the stewardship for a number of global data records, it was decided that addressing some of the important goals of GEWEX, including climate impacts on water resources, required a focus that is a scale-up from the traditional catchment-by-catchment studies traditionally adopted by the hydrology science community to a region or an entire continent. Addressing its hydrological objectives at scales of continental basins made it possible to deduce the main water and energy fluxes by combining meteorological, remote sensing and hydrological data using various methods to close the water and energy cycle as they have compatible footprints. What emerged was the formation of the CSEs, the first being the Continental-Scale International Project (GCIP, Coughlan and Avissar, 1996, Lawford 1999) centered around the Mississippi River basin. This basin was chosen because it was considered to be one of the better-instrumented basins in terms of in situ atmospheric and land-based observations. It would also be an ideal place to evaluate and exploit the new remotely-sensed observations coming on-line during that time. This regional effort was followed before the end of the decade by the introduction of other regional hydrometeorological projects, providing ways to explore other regional climate-related features of the water cycle not represented in the Mississippi River basin, such as permafrost and other cold processes (the Mackenzie GEWEX Study, MAGS; the Baltic Sea Experiment, BALTEX), seasonal high intensity rainfall during monsoons (the GEWEX Asian Monsoon Experiment, GAME), and high year-round evapotranspiration fluxes in tropical forests (the Large-Scale Biosphere-Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia, LBA). The five CSEs that emerged during Phase I are called out in Figure 3a.

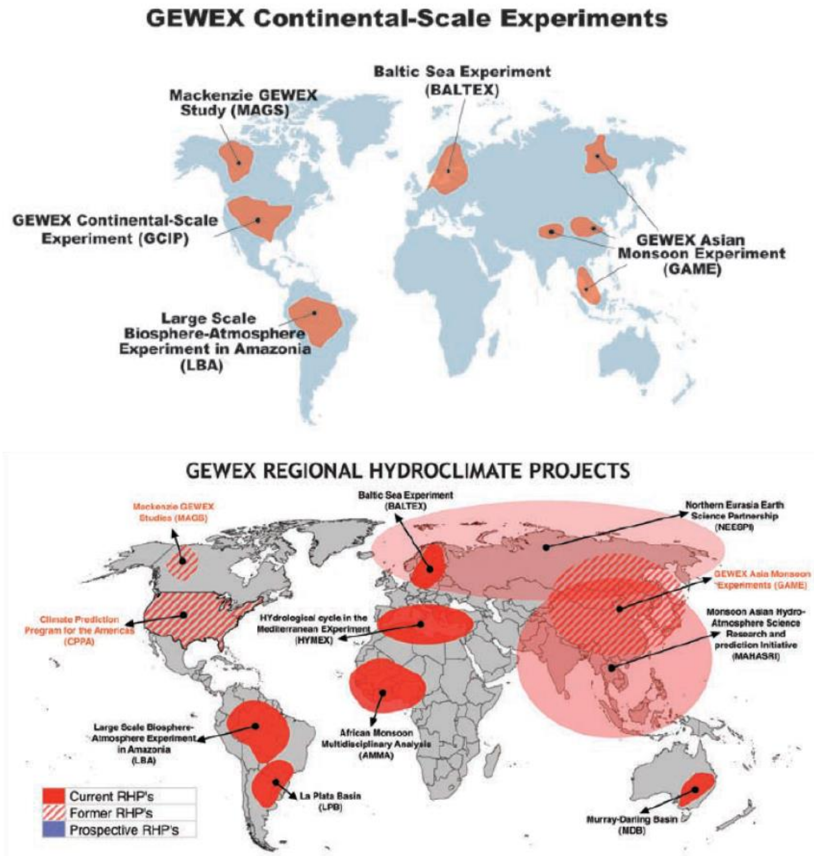

Figure 3 (a) The five original CSE’s of GEWEX, and (b) A summary of the RHPs created over the course of GEWEX including the initial 5 CSEs.

2.4 Observing systems

Objective: Foster the development of observing techniques, data management and assimilation systems for operational application to long-range weather forecasts, hydrology and climate predictions

During Phase I, and before the appearance of the decadal surveys conducted within the USA more than a decade later, the GEWEX community was an important voice in defining gaps in Earth observations, deemed a priority for the science of that community (e.g., Morel and Readings, 1989). These priorities, at that time, aligned in three areas: i) precipitation, ii) clouds and radiation and iii) winds. While some of these priorities have been addressed in part over time with measurements of winds from Aeolus, cloud vertical structure by CloudSat, measurement of the radiation budget from Clouds and the Earth's

Radiant Energy System (CERES), and precipitation provided by Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission (TRMM) and now the Global Precipitation Mission (GPM), major gaps in our global Earth observing system remain today (e.g., NAS, 2018). Strategies for sustained monitoring of the essential variables of the Earth system remain a work in progress.

3.0 Phase II – A period of consolidation (2003–2013)

Phase II was intended to utilize GEWEX *"prediction capabilities, datasets and tools for assessing the consequences of global change"*, particularly as they relate to water resources and the related applications communities. While the original objectives of Phase I remained, the transition from Phase I to Phase II was characterized by a greater emphasis on water resources and on the impact of a changing climate on the water cycle. This phase focused on the full exploitation of the tools developed for Phase I and the understanding that also resulted and benefited from expanding data records, along with increased reliance on upgraded models and assimilation systems and new environmental satellite systems that promised even greater contributions to climate science and large-scale hydrology. Notable were the long-awaited EOS satellites of NASA (e.g., Terra, Aqua) that were about to provide important data for the GEWEX community especially with the promise of more definitive precipitation measurements from TRMM, as well as the European Space Agency Environmental Satellite, ENVISAT, launched in 2002 (a precursor to the Sentinels of today), and the Advanced Earth Observation Satellite II (ADEOS II) of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency launched in 2002 after ADEOS I failed 10 months after launch in 1996.

Phase II of GEWEX set forth four principal scientific questions that were a refinement of the basic questions of Phase I. These were related to variability of the water and energy cycles and subsequent change to these cycles. This was a natural progression from Phase I, given that the growing length of data records offered potential to document Earth system change and improve methods to understand it. The questions motivating the activities of Phase II were:

- Are Earth's energy budget and water cycle changing?
- How do processes contribute to feedbacks and causes of natural variability?
- Can we predict these changes on seasonal to interannual time scales?
- What are the impacts of these changes on water resources?

Assessments were a common theme of phase II. These ranged from the evaluation and analysis of the lengthening observational data records with emphasis on uncertainty quantification, assessment of the degree to which water and energy budgets could be "closed" notably on a continental scale, and assessments of models of varying complexity.

3.1 Evaluation of Earth's energy budget and water cycle datasets

During this phase GEWEX's objective was to produce consistent research-quality datasets complete with error descriptions of the Earth's energy budget and water cycle deemed necessary for understanding the context of variability and trends on interannual to decadal time scales, for use in climate system analysis and for model development and validation. Consequently, the growing emphasis on assessment of data records during this period came with a sharper focus on understanding and quantifying uncertainties attached to the different GEWEX products. This included assessment and validation of a 20-plus year record of surface radiation balance (SRB, Zhang et al., 2009) which depended heavily on the continued oversight, stewardship and procedures of the Baseline Surface Radiation Network (BSRN, Ohmura et al., 1998). The BSRN continues to be a flagship data effort of GEWEX (Driemel et al., 2018) aimed at validating surface radiative flux methodologies of the type used to construct global balances described in Sidebar 3. This was one part of a larger concerted effort that revolved around quantifying the errors of individual energy and water cycle components that, from the energy balance perspective, were summarized for the first time in Stephens et al. (2012). The importance of the planetary Earth Energy Imbalance (EEI) and challenges associated in quantifying it also began to come into focus (e.g., Trenberth and Fasullo, 2010; and later von Schuckmann et al., 2016). The error characterization of Earth's energy budget that was being constructed during Phase II became an essential ingredient of the more integrative and objective water and energy balance assessments that emerged during Phase III, highlighted in Sidebar 3.

The cloud assessment of Stubenrauch et al. (2013) is a notable example of this important Phase II activity. This was a community-led assessment that found no clear evidence of changes in global cloudiness over the more than 20 years of different cloud records assessed.

3.2 *Continental scale water and energy balance closures*

Roads et al. (2002) presented a preliminary water and energy budget synthesis (WEBS) of the GCIP Mississippi basin for the period 1996–1999 using the ‘‘best available’’ observations and models of that time. They concluded that the observations available could not adequately characterize or ‘‘close’’ budgets since the contributions of too many fundamental processes were missing from the observations. They argued for a synthesis with models that properly represent the many complicated atmospheric and near-surface interactions to help close these budgets, an approach being the forerunner to more advanced analysis systems that would begin to develop later. The preliminary synthesis they provided included a representative global general circulation model, a regional climate model and a macroscale hydrologic model in addition to global reanalysis. A qualitative understanding of the water and energy budgets was then gleaned from this early synthesis of model and observations.

The GHP framed its activities around obtaining unique and concentrated observations from the five Continental Scale Experiments noted in Figure 3a. Phase II saw more efforts to integrate across the CSEs. A selected time period for simultaneous investigations of water and energy cycles was chosen that would draw upon and integrate the efforts of these individual CSEs. This initiative was the Coordinated Enhanced Observing Period (CEOP). The purpose was to provide data from a multitude of sources in a common format to address two main science themes: the simulation and prediction of the water and energy cycles, with a focus on monsoon systems.

3.3 Water resource impacts and the emergence of CORDEX

The CSEs also expanded their scope by going beyond just the observation of the physical processes associated with the water and energy cycle and began to connect both to other disciplines and stakeholder interests. The three CSEs that most illustrated this expanded reach were the Baltic Sea Experiment (BALTEX), the African Monsoon Multidisciplinary Analyses (AMMA) and CLARIS-LPB. Each in its way had a trans-disciplinary approach to the water cycle. In BALTEX, the understanding of the water cycle and its interaction with the biogeochemical cycles provided a way to perform in-depth assessments of how climate change would modify the ecological and marine system (Reckermann et al., 2012). Over West Africa, AMMA observations of the atmospheric and hydrological processes offered operational services with concrete guidance on how to improve weather and climate forecasting as well as how to improve early warning systems for drought, famines and public health (Polcher et al., 2011). CLARIS-LPB provided a better understanding of the interactions between the water cycle of the La Plata basin, ecology, the food production and the challenges posed by climate change. These three experiments provided a greater level of outreach and exposure to local science communities than had been previously achieved.

The more trans-disciplinary nature of this generation of CSEs ultimately led to the emergence of the Coordinated Regional Downscaling Experiment (CORDEX), which sought to address the need for downscaled climate change predictions and impacts at the scales more immediately relevant to society. AMMA was an especially important source of motivation to CORDEX, with the international community being asked to downscale various scenarios so that they could be evaluated with the new knowledge brought by the CSE and disseminated to the scientific community of the region (e.g., Paeth et al. 2011; Nikulin et al., 2012).

3.4 Toward the prediction challenge: Model representation of hydrometeorological processes and feedbacks involving water and energy

A number of focused model assessment initiatives were introduced under the GMPP during phase II as a step toward developing a process understanding of critical hydrological feedbacks. The GEWEX Atmospheric Boundary Layer Study (GABLS) activity was introduced in 2002, given the central importance of the atmospheric boundary layer to land-atmosphere coupling that shapes important Earth system feedbacks. GABLS aimed to improve understanding and representation of the atmospheric boundary layer in weather-forecast and climate models on regional to global scales. Although the early focus was on more heuristic cases of stable atmospheric boundary layers, GABLS evolved over time towards more realistic and more difficult configurations. Assessment activities of GABLS inspired modeling groups at major forecast centers to improve their representation of boundary layer processes.

The Continual Intercomparison of Radiation Codes (CIRC, Oreopoulos and Mlawer, 2010) was also an initiative of Phase II. The intent of CIRC was to be an evolving and regularly-updated reference source for evaluation of radiative transfer (RT) codes used in global climate models and other atmospheric applications. CIRC analysis, for example, identified that improvements in the calculation of diffuse shortwave flux, shortwave absorption and shortwave CO_2 forcing, as well as in the treatment of spectral surface albedo, needed consideration (Oreopoulos et al., 2012). CIRC continued into the next phase of GEWEX, again calling out issues with respect to the treatment of shortwave radiative transfer in schemes used in global models (Pincus et al., 2015). These issues emerged later in the context of the hydrological sensitivity of climate models and the constraint radiation provides on this sensitivity, underscoring again the central importance of coupling energy and water in shaping changes to the hydrological cycle (e.g., DeAngelis et al., 2015).

Another important assessment activity developed in the second phase of the Global Soil Wetness Project (GSWP-2), under the auspices of the GLASS panel. The first global gridded multi-model land surface analysis was developed (Dirmeyer et al., 2006) to provide an analysis of land surface state variables and fluxes for assessing, among other uses, the role of soil wetness in water and energy balances over global land masses. The analysis was developed from multi-model simulations forced by a common dataset created as a "hybrid" of observational and reanalysis forcing datasets. This forcing included observed precipitation, radiation and near-surface meteorology interpolated using model fields on finer space-time resolutions not available in the observations but required to force the models. The analysis was presented on a regular 1° x 1° grid and reported for the same 10-year core period of ISLSCP (1986–1995). Figure 4 highlights one of the key results of this GSWP-2 activity, showing the multi-model analysis of the hydrological cycle over global land. In addition to the global land mean values of the water fluxes and soil water stores (box values), argued to be more reliable than any single model result, the vertical bars and values in red denote the range of interannual variability of the global values for the 10-year period. The horizontal black bars and values represent the ranges of these global mean annual hydrological cycle components and are an indicator of model uncertainty. This depiction offers users a basis to make decisions on the surety of each variable. While convergence among models is not a guarantee of a "right answer," the fact that there existed such wide variability among LSMs driven by the same forcing data suggests there remains much room for improvement in the modeling of this part of the Earth system, which continues to be a focus of GLASS.

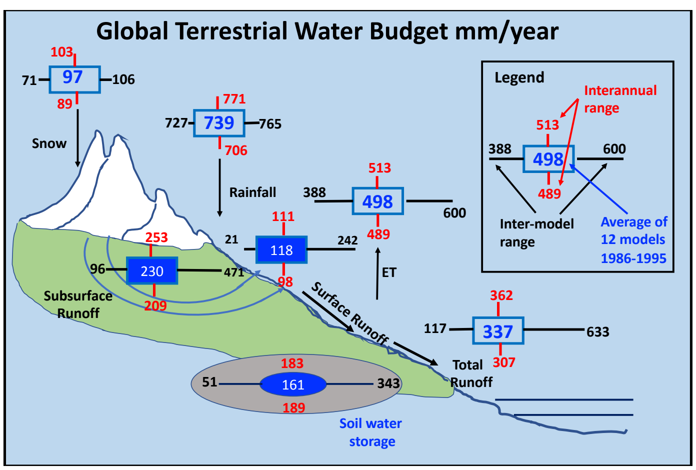

Figure 4 Multi-model mean terrestrial water budget from GSWP-2 data analysis. Both the inter-model spread (values in black) and the inter-annual variability (1986-1995; values in red) are shown for each term. Model spread in precipitation terms reflect the distribution of total precipitation over snowfall and liquid precipitation. Variability of the estimates of evapotranspiration (ET), soil moisture storage and runoff from the model ensemble is much larger than the interannual range, reflecting the limitations of understanding of the hydrological partitioning processes (modified from Dirmeyer et al, 2006).

4.0 Phase III – The quantitative understanding of water and energy coupling (2013–2022)

In planning for the post-2013 time frame, the JSC recommended a revision of all four core projects of WCRP based on a common set of basic “themes”: (i) observations and analysis; (ii) model development, evaluation and experiments; (iii) processes and understanding; (iv) applications and services; and (v) capacity building. There was a basic agreement that the three GEWEX panels that served the earlier activities , namely GRP, GMPP and GHP, remained relevant both to GEWEX and these JSC recommendations. A proposal to split GMPP into two panels, the Global Land/Atmosphere System Study (GLASS) Panel and the GEWEX Atmospheric Systems Study Panel (GASS) was subsequently adopted and the GRP was renamed the GEWEX Data Assessments Panel (GDAP) to reflect more appropriately the activities of that panel. While GLASS activities had always been part of GEWEX, the GASS Panel represented a joining of the GCSS, the GEWEX Atmospheric Boundary Layer Study (GABLS) activities, along with other groups within GEWEX. GASS has since launched a number of projects focusing on atmospheric process understanding and their implementation in model parameterizations. This model development strategy based on process understanding, first initiated by GCSS and GABLS, continues to be a common thread throughout GEWEX.

Building both upon the results and experience from Phases I and II together with the JSC directive and its reorganization, GEWEX subsequently formulated its activities around four main themes, each defined by four specific science questions that effectively set the activities of Phase III.

4.1 Observations and predictions of precipitation: How can we better understand and predict precipitation variability and change?

4.1.1 *Observations*

Important advances occurred during Phase III as a result of the ever improving and expanding global precipitation data records accrued from observations and overseen by GDAP and GHP (Kummerow et al. 2019). Observational developments during this period included the INTElligent use of climate models for adaptatioN to non-Stationary hydrological Extremes (INTENSE, Blenkinsop et al., 2018). The INTENSE project created (i) a new data record for study of short-duration rainfall extremes (discussed below), (ii) assessments of current global precipitation products for addressing different science questions including those related to precipitation extremes (e.g., Masunaga et al., 2019; Roca, 2019) and (iii) identification of gaps in precipitation observations, such as in regions of high terrain with steps toward addressing these shortcomings. This latter effort was part of a broader cross-cut project initiated by GHP, namely the International Network for Alpine Research Catchment Hydrology (INARCH, Pomeroy et al., 2015). Its goal is to understand alpine cold region hydrological processes, improve prediction of these processes and diagnose their sensitivities to global change. The project has accumulated and evaluated crucial data, including precipitation, from 29 experimental research basins in 14 countries covering most continents and mountain regions of the world (e.g., Pomeroy and Marks, 2021). The initial phase of INARCH (2015–2020) saw significant advances in understanding and predictive modeling of the high mountain water cycle (e.g., López-Moreno et al., 2020).

Greater insights on changes that have occurred in the residual of precipitation minus evaporation (P-E) also emerged during Phase III. Although not an activity overseen by GEWEX, multi-decadal compilations of ocean in situ salinity data (e.g., Durack and Wijffels, 2010) provided a window into understanding the regional patterns of change in the residual of P-E. The patterns of salinity change, matched to the climatology of salinity, supported the notion of the “wet, wetter and dry, drier” regional responses of the oceanic hydrological cycle (Durack et al., 2012), whereby climatological salty ocean regions are becoming saltier and climatological fresh regions are, conversely, becoming fresher. By contrast, the picture of P-E change over land, appears to be much more complicated being driven by, among other factors, water availability and plant functioning and thus do not follow this simple "wet, wetter and dry, drier" pattern of intensification observed over oceans (e.g., Greve et al., 2014).

4.1.2 *Modeling and prediction*

The GEWEX strategy for advancing the topic of precipitation prediction, beyond the obvious and central role observations play, involves coordinating efforts to advance the representation of precipitation-related critical processes in models. GEWEX launched projects to understand and model the local and remote effects of land surface processes and state variables (soil moisture, soil temperature, vegetation water and energy fluxes and snow water equivalent, among other factors, Sidebar 1) on precipitation as well as activities aimed at understanding and simulating the diurnal cycle of precipitation. An important and perhaps defining activity, not only for Phase III, but also one that will shape the science of WCRP in the coming decade, is the desire to simulate the coupled atmosphere, ocean, ice and land Earth system at a resolution of an order of 1 km (hereafter *km-scale* Earth system models and information systems, e.g., Bauer et al., 2021; also Sidebar 2).

Modeling at the km-scale, however, introduces a different set of challenges that GEWEX will have to confront. LSMs suitable for km-scale simulations will have to abandon the hypothesis that evaporation is fed only by local precipitation and include explicit hill slope processes to redistribute water horizontally over continents (e.g., Swenson et al., 2019; Fan et al., 2019; also Sidebar 1). Higher resolution modeling also exposes the need to address important dependencies of processes, such as convective initiation and intensity, that are increasingly sensitive to local mechanisms typically obscured in a more global view. Convective precipitation and storm severity, for example, are sensitive to local factors like topography, the heterogeneity of land surface characteristics including snow cover, vegetation type and soil moisture, as well as human influences resulting from land and water management (e.g., urbanization, irrigation for crop cultivation or forest degradation to create agricultural land) among other factors. Figure 5, from Fujita (1987), suggests a distinct connection between convective storm intensity, expressed as tornado occurrence between 1930–1985, with areas of agriculture world-wide. Although qualitative, the apparent tight location of tornadic storms in areas of agriculture hints at connections between storm intensity and soil moisture, a topic of considerable ongoing research (e.g., Wallace and Minder, 2021).

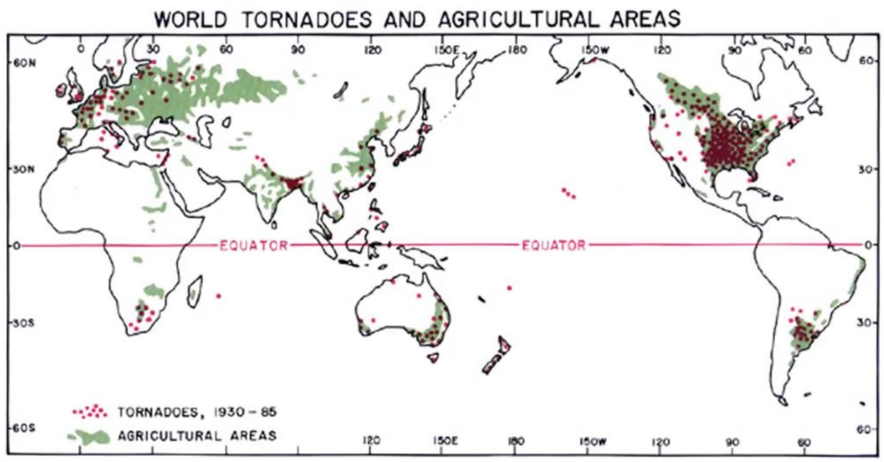

Figure 5 A hint at the coupling between soil moisture and convection storm intensity underscoring the importance of soil moisture feedbacks on convection. Shown are the occurrences of tornadoes overlying areas of agriculture suggesting a connection between the enhanced soil moisture of these regions and severity of convective storms (from Fujita, 1987).

4.2 Global water resource systems: How do changes in land surface and hydrology influence past and future changes in water availability and security?

The nature of the continental scale projects, aimed at addressing questions about water resource systems, fundamentally changed during Phase III. The Regional Hydroclimate Projects (RHPs) executed during this phase (refer to Figure 3b) evolved from activities largely concerned with geophysical processes to efforts that include effects of human processes on water resource systems, thus preparing GEWEX to be much more societally-relevant in grappling with the challenges of changing water resources in the coming decade. The RHPs became increasingly more trans-disciplinary, addressing explicitly the interactions between climate change and the human management of land and water resources. The Changing Cold Regions Network (CCRN, DeBeer et al., 2021), for example, examined how the rapid warming experienced over the Canadian Rockies and plains interacts with the hydrological processes and the water management of the region. The Hydrological cycle in the Mediterranean Experiment (HyMeX, Drobinski et al., 2014) studied how intense rainfall events, projected to intensify in a warmer climate, influence the hydrology of the region.

Advances in both observations and modeling, of basic relevance to the science questions of water availability, also occurred during Phase III. A multi-decadal record of remotely-sensed global observations of continental water storage emerged from the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) mission (Tapley et al., 2019). The Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity (SMOS) mission also provided a decadal-length record on near-surface soil moisture content (Kerr et al., 2010).

Land surface models continued to morph into land models (LMs) that capture not only surface, but also sub-surface process interactions (Sidebar 1). During Phase III of GEWEX, observations advanced with new insights emerging on continental water storage (Sidebar 4). Land models that represented only the components of the natural land water and energy cycles evolved to include human water management and usage; i.e. water resources. One area worth noting is that during the latter two phases of GEWEX, significant advances were made in accounting for land and water use changes and in representing these effects in models. The task of simulating water use, however, is complex. Steps toward accounting for this influence in land surface models are advancing, albeit in simple ways (see, e.g., Nazemi and Wheater, 2015a, 2015b; Blyth et al., 2021, for an overview). For example, the largest consumptive water use is irrigation, which is being progressively added to models (e.g., Blyth et al., 2021). In the coming years, LMs will need evolve such that irrigation also satisfies the water continuity equation. Abstraction points for each demand will also have to be predicted (Zhou et al., 2021). GLASS and GHP continue to lead the community in this direction.

4.3 Changes in extremes: How does a warming world affect climate extremes, especially droughts, floods and heat waves, and how do land area processes, in particular, contribute?

INTENSE was the first major international effort to focus on global sub-daily rainfall extremes, enabling progress in quantifying observed historical changes and providing some physical understanding of processes necessary for improved regional prediction of change. It delivered a rain-gauge-based data record to study short duration precipitation and its changes. The data have been used in a number of studies, and Fowler et al. (2021) summarize the main findings so far as well as provide suggestions for future directions of research. Evidence from analysis of INTENSE data suggests, for example, that the intensity of long-duration (on the order of a day and longer) heavy precipitation increases at a rate close to the Clausius-Clapeyron (CC) rate (6-7% K^{-1}) for the warming observed during the period defined by the data record. Many uncertainties in understanding the scaling of precipitation remain and mechanistic understanding is still rudimentary. The influences of large-scale circulation versus the more local convective storm-scale dynamics on changes to precipitation extremes are also yet-to-be understood. Feedbacks governed by large-scale circulation changes define the regional responses associated with the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), for example, that produce significant excursions above the CC rate of change (e.g., Stephens et al., 2018). Localized heavy short-duration (hourly and sub-hourly) rain intensities also appear to invoke responses about twice that expected from simple CC considerations. Day-to-day scaling of short-duration intensities supports this higher scaling, with mechanisms proposed being related to local-scale dynamics and feedbacks in convective storms, although the relevance to broader aspects of climate change is still not clear.

While the early study of extremes concentrated on analysis of data records of individual variables, like precipitation, the coordinated joint GEWEX and CLIVAR study of extremes pointed to how extreme events are often linked. Floods, wildfires, heatwaves and droughts, for instance, often result from a combination of interacting physical processes across multiple spatial and temporal scales. A more systems-based approach to understanding extremes as compound events is needed, and from a better understanding of compound events, improving projections of potential high-impact events is likely to result with better quantification of risks associated with them (e.g., Zscheischler et al., 2018).

4.4 Water and energy cycles and processes: How can understanding of the effects and uncertainties of water and energy exchanges in the current and changing climate be improved and conveyed?

It is well understood that water and energy are intimately coupled, and in most respects this understanding has been the foundational principle of GEWEX. It was also recognized from the outset that quantitative assessment of the uncertainties attached to the fluxes of water and energy, an emphasis of Phase II, was seminal to any representation of respective budgets and the degree to which closure could be claimed. Many of the GEWEX activities in the earlier phases culminated in Phase III with a joint synthesis of the water and energy budgets, performed either on the regional scale of the HyMeX RHP (e.g., Pellet et al., 2019) or globally as supported under the NASA Energy and Water Cycle Study (NEWS) program and ESA's Water Cycle Multi-mission Observation Strategy (WACMOS) projects (Sidebar 3).

4.5 Remaining challenges emerging from the Phase III era

4.5.1 *Hydrology of high terrain*

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group II (IPCC WG II) Report (2014) notes that the changing nature of precipitation, and changes to the degree of snow and ice melt, are altering hydrological systems and affecting water resources both in terms of quantity and quality. Understanding the sensitivity of hydrological processes to the warming being experienced in high elevation snowy and glacierized headwater catchments is therefore of paramount importance for improving our ability to understand and predict global climate, ecology and water system changes not only within those regions, but also for large portions of the world population dependent on alpine snow melt. Such sensitivity may be seriously affected by the specific climate conditions of the different mountain regions that lead to different contributions by various components of energy and mass balance of the snow packs and glaciers. The development of reliable alpine datasets for advancing understanding and developing models by testing and numerical experimentation continues to define INARCH's goals going forward.

Lack of model resolution profoundly limits our ability to characterize regional hydrology and predict how water resources are likely to be impacted as Earth warms (Sidebar 2, also section 4.5.4 below). One area where this limitation is clear is on the hydrology of regions of high mountain terrain. Figure 6 illustrates this point, showing how better resolving the topography of the Colorado Rockies (Figures 6a and b) improves precipitation simulation in the region (Figures 6c and d, adapted from Rasmussen et al., 2014). The large differences between modeled and observed precipitation apparent for the 36 km resolution model, in part because of the highly smoothed topography at that resolution, are largely eliminated with finer resolution that significantly improves the representation of precipitation both locally and regionally and in both cold and warm seasons. In a more recent study, Müller et al. (2021) use the global discharge from rivers to assess the representation of precipitation in two versions of the Hadley Centre Global Environmental Model, version 3 (HadGEM3) of differing resolutions. They find that not only do models with higher resolution produce more discharge owing to increased precipitation over the more-resolved topography, but that the different estimates of discharge from observations and reanalysis are also dependent on the coarseness of the resolution of the data itself. The more resolved are the data, the greater is the discharge estimated.

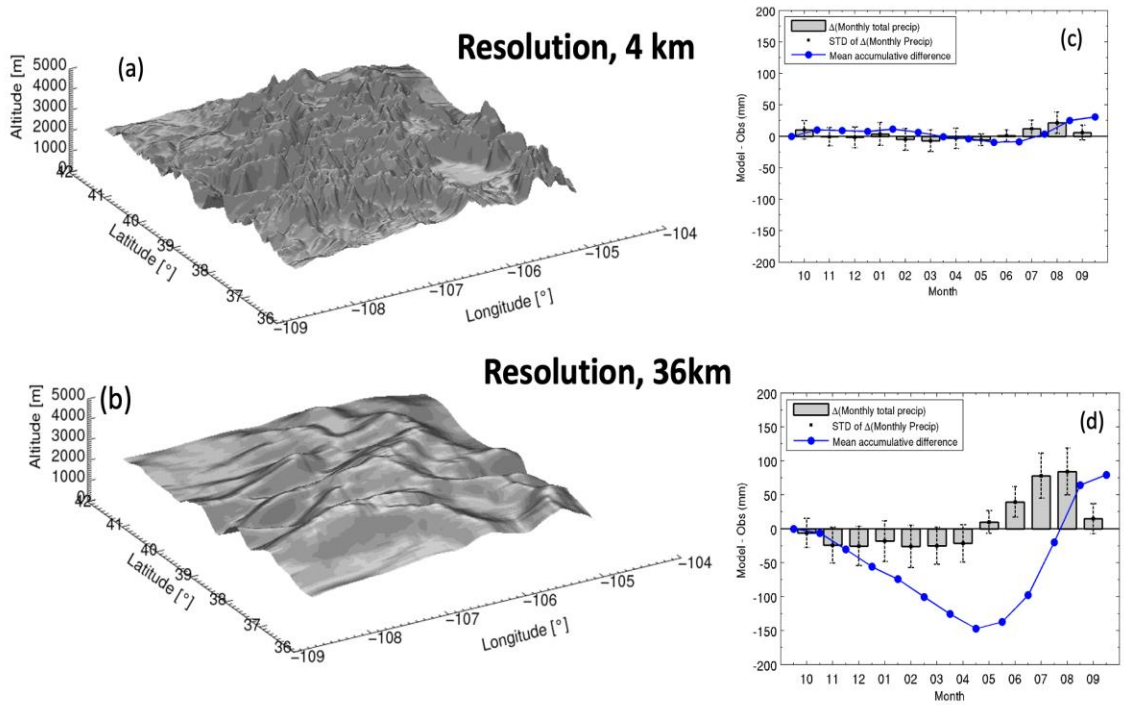

Figure 6 a) and b) The topography of the Colorado Rockies at two different resolutions that define the head waters as described in Rasmussen et al (2014). c) and d) The 8-yr average of the model bias (model minus observations) in monthly total precipitation (bars) and accumulation difference (blue line) over a full year from the c) 4-km (upper) and d) 36km simulations.

Kilometer scale modeling of the Earth system improves our ability to represent hydrological processes in profound ways (e.g., Sidebar 2), including prediction of extreme events such as flood and drought in regions with complex topography. Moving the attention of the GEWEX communities to these higher resolutions can be expected to lead to important collaborations with the hydrological and agronomic sciences for developing the process knowledge needed to improve climate and weather forecasts on phenomena critical for society. The emergence of km-scale modeling, however, comes with new challenges, as noted above.

4.5.2 Regional understanding of energy and water balances

Although we continue to make advances in our depiction of the global water and energy balance (e.g., Sidebar 3 and discussion), our ability to provide closure on regional scales remains challenging. The adjustments developed so far and used to produce constrained budgets of the form illustrated in Figure SB3 are constructed primarily using Earth's energy imbalance as a global constraint. While we have not yet established ways to define constraints more regionally, progress is occurring. Regional constraints on energy budgets over ocean basins, for example, were introduced in the study of Thomas et al. (2020) in the form of the additional horizontal transports in oceans derived from re-analyses.

4.5.3 Earth's energy imbalance (EEI)

The imbalance between incoming and outgoing radiation at the top of the atmosphere (TOA), referred to as EEI, is a basic measure of the warming of the planet and careful monitoring of it is essential for understanding many aspects of the changing Earth system. Given that absolute accuracy of TOA radiometric measurements is approximately $\pm 4 Wm^{-2}$, the EEI which needs to be quantified, between 0.5–1 Wm^{-2} (Figure SB3), is small and is challenging to observe from space alone (e.g., Stephens et al., 2012). It is obvious that reliable estimates for long-term global mean EEI from TOA fluxes are not possible and even more challenging from the perspective of surface fluxes presented in Figure SB3. Thus, we are forced to resort to more indirect ways to deduce the EEI. As over 93% of the EEI is stored in the ocean, the global ocean heat content (OHC) provides our strongest global constraint on the EEI and the ability to determine the global ocean heat storage change continues to be essential assessing the state of climate and its future evolution.

In September 2018, a joint GEWEX and Climate and Ocean: Variability, Predictability and Change (CLIVAR) workshop was devoted to the topic of EEI and an assessment of our ability to estimate it. Meyssignac et al. (2019) provide an overview of the key outcomes of that workshop offering a review of four main methods to estimate the global OHC. That assessment concluded that the approaches to estimate global mean EEI via the estimation of changes to OHC from either in situ, reanalysis or combined remote sensing techniques are more reliable than other methods and complement each other. In situ measurements were deemed to be the most reliable estimate of the OHC and its change over time and also deliver unprecedented information on how ocean heat is distributed vertically. Nevertheless, denser and deeper float measurements are still needed to improve on the representation of temporal short-term variability and better estimate deep (below 2000 m) and abyssal (below 4000 m) ocean heating. The finding of the workshop overall was that none of the techniques available today enable us to estimate the EEI with the perceived required accuracy less than ± 0.3 Wm^{-2}, let alone with an aspirational accuracy of ± 0.1 Wm^{-2}. Significant improvements in existing observing systems are necessary to achieve this target.

4.5.4 km-scale Earth system modeling and the role of Convection – A prevailing theme in Earth system science in the 2020s

A prevailing theme not only of GEWEX, but one that cuts across WCRP including within its new Lighthouse Activities (LHAs, https://www.wcrp-climate.org/lha-overview) and beyond, is the emphasis on km-scale modeling described above. Existing climate models have significant shortcomings in simulating local weather and climate because of a lack of resolution. They cannot resolve the detailed structure and lifecycles of systems such as tropical cyclones, depressions and persistent high-pressure systems which are key in the coupling of the energy and water cycle. These systems also drive many of the more costly impacts of climate change, such as coastal inundation, flooding, droughts and wildfires. Present-day global models are also unable to resolve ocean currents that are fundamental to climate variability and regional climate change (Marotzke et al., 2017). Recent studies illustrate the potential of the new generation of high-resolution models for revolutionizing the quality of information available for mitigation and adaptation, from global climate and regional climate impacts, to risks of unprecedented extreme weather and dangerous climate change. A thread common across both GEWEX objectives and these new modeling initiatives is the topic of convection, not only from the context of resolving it with models, but also for its importance to the prediction of precipitation and severe weather. Resolving convection is an essential for understanding of the future of our water resources under climate change (Slingo et al., 2022).

5.0 GEWEX in the decade of km-scale Earth system science

As GEWEX moves forward, it does so under a simple vision articulated at the 2018 GEWEX Open Science Conference by Dr. Alan Betts during his keynote address, *"Water, Energy: Life on Earth",* which underscores the very basic challenge of the next phase of GEWEX and beyond: that humanity is deeply embedded in an interconnected physical Earth system. That the Earth system influences humanity in profound ways is well understood, but an appreciation for the wider and profound influences of humanity on the Earth system, and on the hydrological and climate cycles in particular, continues to be realized. The connections between water, energy and life become particularly acute as we strive to bring Earth sciences down to the km-scale (e.g., Slingo et al., 2022), a point further underscored by reference to Figure 7 that also hints at why we expect this connection will become increasingly important as GEWEX moves into the next phase. The figure offers a contrast between the natural water cycle, expressed here as a mean discharge of the Amazon (5000 km^3/yr), the largest river by volume, compared to the volume of global water withdrawn by different sectors of human society. The modification to the continental water cycle occurring from a continually increasing human withdrawal is now larger than the mean discharge of the Amazon river. The impact is more complex to evaluate as not all water abstracted by humans from the natural system is consumed. Human water management practices impact river discharge, coastal processes and contribute non-trivially to sea level rise (e.g., Reager et al., 2016).

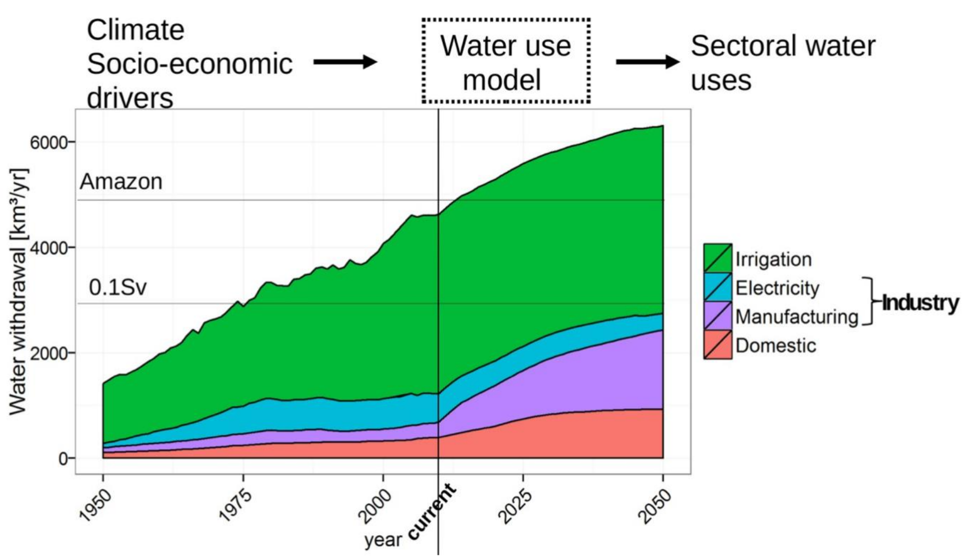

Figure 7 The time change of human water withdrawal by different sectors including projections to 2050 compared to an average discharge from the Amazon.

5.1 Proposed GEWEX Phase IV science goals

In recognition of the emerging challenges in understanding how the water cycle is changing in response to these different pressures, and in an attempt to make progress in addressing the issues central to them, GEWEX Phase IV proposes a focus around three overarching but connected goals. One goal is centrally focused on prediction, another on the critical interactions that define the physical system and the third delves more explicitly into anthropogenic influence on water and energy cycles with special focus on water resources at continental and regional scales.

Goal # 1 (GS1): Determine the extent to which Earth's water cycle can be predicted. This Goal is framed around making quantitative progress on three related areas posed in terms of the following questions:

1) **Reservoirs:** What is the rate of expansion of the fast reservoirs (atmosphere and land), what is its spatial character, what factors determine this and to what extent are these changes predictable?

2) **Flux exchanges:** To what extent are the fluxes of water between Earth's main reservoirs changing and can these changes be predicted, and if so, on what time/space scale?

3) **Precipitation Extremes:** How will local rainfall and its extremes change under climate change across the regions of the world?

Goal # 2 (GS2): Quantify the inter-relationships between Earth's energy, water and carbon cycles to advance our understanding of the system and our ability to predict it across scales:

1) **Forcing-feedback understanding:** How can we improve the understanding of climate forcings and feedbacks formed by energy, water and carbon exchanges?

2) **ABL process representation:** To what extent are the properties of the atmospheric boundary layer (ABL) defined by sensible and latent energy and water exchanges at the Earth's surface versus within the atmosphere (i.e., horizontal advection and exchanges between the ABL and the free atmosphere)?

3) **Understanding circulation controls:** To what extent are exchanges between water, energy and carbon determined by the large-scale circulations of the atmosphere and oceans?

4) **Land-atmosphere interactions:** How can we improve the understanding of the role of land surface-atmospheric interactions in the water, energy and carbon budgets across spatiotemporal scales?

Goal # 3 (GS3): Quantify anthropogenic influences on Earth's water cycle and our ability to understand and predict it:

1) **Anthropogenic forcing of continental scale water availability:** To what extent has the changing greenhouse effect modified the water cycle over different regions and continents?

2) **Water management influences:** To what extent do water management practices and land use change (e.g., deforestation and irrigation, among others) modify the water cycle on regional to global scales?

3) **Variability and trends of water availability:** How do water and land use and climate change affect the variability (including extremes) of the regional and continental water cycle?

6.0 Concluding comments: Prospects for progress

The very first GEWEX newsletter released in spring 1991 contained contributions by both Dr. Moustafa Chahine, the Chair of the GEWEX Scientific Steering Group (SSG), and Professor Pierre Morel, Director of WCRP. While Dr. Chahine outlined the objectives of GEWEX that shaped the program for many years to come and described above, Professor Morel offered the insight that "*A little thought about the problem of climate and climatic variations leads to an understanding that the main difficulty lies with getting the coupling right between the different components of the climate system, the global atmosphere, the world oceans, land and sea ice and the land surface hydrology including snow and vegetation.*"

As WCRP undergoes its reorganization and develops its strategic plan for the coming years via the WCRP Lighthouse Activities, the focus remains true to Morel's insight that the emphasis will be toward developing a more quantitative understanding of climate processes, which are necessary for "*getting the coupling right between the different components of the climate system*." We can anticipate progress over the next 5–10 years on this challenge because of major opportunities in observations, computing, modeling, artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI/ML) and emerging partnerships.

(i) New observations, both in situ and from space, will reveal new understanding of processes in Earth's energy, water and carbon cycles and identify where progress is still lacking. This will come from the expansion of the Earth observing systems, including the Sentinel program of the European Space Agency, NASA's designated observables indentified as priorties for the coming decade (NAS, 2018) and the sustained and enhanced observations from operation observing systems that collectively establish the Program of Record (PoR). One example of where progress can be expected from the PoR is in the development of the next-generation version of the ISCCP, a coordinated effort across major operational satellite organizations and research communities to create global, high-resolution in space and time data products (on the order of 2 km global, 10–30 minute) on clouds and related information. The creation of a fundamental data record of spectral, spatially and temporally homogenized radiances for this purpose serves as input to many other Earth science applications. The development of smallsats and cubesats, drones and other space and airborne platforms, and advances in space technology associated with these developments (e.g., Stephens et al., 2020) has opened a whole new era of observational capabilities that will become increasingly embedded in the more traditional approaches.

(ii) The length of existing data records will continue to expand and with increased lengths of time series come unforeseen evolution of the system realized as new trends. Sea level rise data records have revealed an increase in the rate of sea level rise over time with surprising interannual variations (e.g., Boening et al., 2012) and recent studies of the TOA radiation budget are hinting at an energy imbalance that is also increasing over time

(Loeb et al., 2021; Stephens et al., 2022, among others), suggesting an acceleration of global warming. These expanding data records will test our understanding of the changing Earth system that will force a re-examination of the contributions of the various man-made changes to the energy and water cycles.

(iii) Evolving modeling techniques and exa-scale computers will enable research and operational simulations at kilometric scales globally and at even higher resolutions regionally with benefits that are only now becoming apparent. This evolution will also reveal that some assumptions necessary for coarser resolutions (such as assumptions inherent to convection parameterization, influences of surface topography and heterogeneities in soil/vegetation and other landscape features that affect hydrologic processes) are not valid. Over continents, these km-scale resolutions will reveal the importance of human management on surface/atmosphere interactions with associated environmental impacts and will thus need to be explicitly represented to gain the full value for society of (sub)kilometric scale predictions. These developments, however, should be made with careful consideration of compound uncertainties in data and algorithms representing different natural and anthropogenic processes.

(iv) Our enhanced observational capabilities and the promise of more spatially-refined models will require new techniques to confront one with the other and to deduce essential parameters of the system that are not yet directly measured by the current observational systems. With the rapid progress in AI/ML, their applications become more important for GEWEX activities in the physics-inspired AI/ML analysis of huge amounts of data from observations and model output, in the AI/ML integration with modeling (e.g., to replace some of the existing physical parameterizations in Earth system models), and in the AI/ML assistance in data-based scientific discovery and understanding.

(v) The close collaboration of the research groups within GEWEX with operational weather and hydrological services serves to better formulate societal needs in terms of environmental monitoring and prediction and ensures that the scientific topics proposed serve wiser management of the environment and an adaptation to changing resources.

The collaboration of GEWEX with the Integrated Land Ecosystem-Atmosphere Processes Study (iLEAPS) and other programs will facilitate improvements to the coupling of the energy and water cycle with the carbon cycle in models and in Earth system analyses and studies of climate change at decadal to centennial time scales.

7.0 Acknowledgements

To the memory of Moustafa Chaine, The inaugural chair of the science steering committee. GEWEX's achievements over the last 30 years would not have been possible without the scientific community working on the Earth's water and energy cycles. As not all can be thanked here, we would like to express our gratitude to those who have chaired the Scientific Steering Committee before us : Moustafa Chahine, Soroosh Sorooshian, Tom Ackerman, Kevin Trenberth, Howard Wheater and Sonia I. Seneviratne.

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8.0 Data Availability

GEWEX provides the stewardship of many global and regional data sets and data producing networks. The data are publicly available and an overview of these data is provided at https://www.gewex.org/panels/gewex-data-and-analysis-panel/gdap-matured-datasets/

Specific links to important data sets that have been maintained over the many years of GEWEX include:

Matured Datasets

International Satelite Cloud Climatology Project (ISCCP):

https://isccp.giss.nasa.gov

https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/products/international-satellite-cloud-climatology

Global Precipitation Climatology Project (GPCP):

https://disc.gsfc.nasa.gov/datasets/GPCPDAY_3.2/summary?keywords=GPCPDAY_3.2 (latest)

https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/products/global-precipitation-climatology-project (Historical)

Surface Radiation Budget (SRB):

https://asdc.larc.nasa.gov/project/SRB

Regional Hydroclimate Projects:

https://www.gewex.org/panels/gewex-hydroclimatology-panel/regional-hydroclimate-projects-rhps/

Key network centers:

Baseline Surface Radiation Network (BSRN):

https://bsrn.awi.de

Global Precipitation Climatology Centre (GPCP):

http://gpcc.dwd.de/

Global Runoff Date Centre (GRDC)

https://www.bafg.de/GRDC/EN/Home/homepage_node.html

Sidebar 1: From land surface to land models

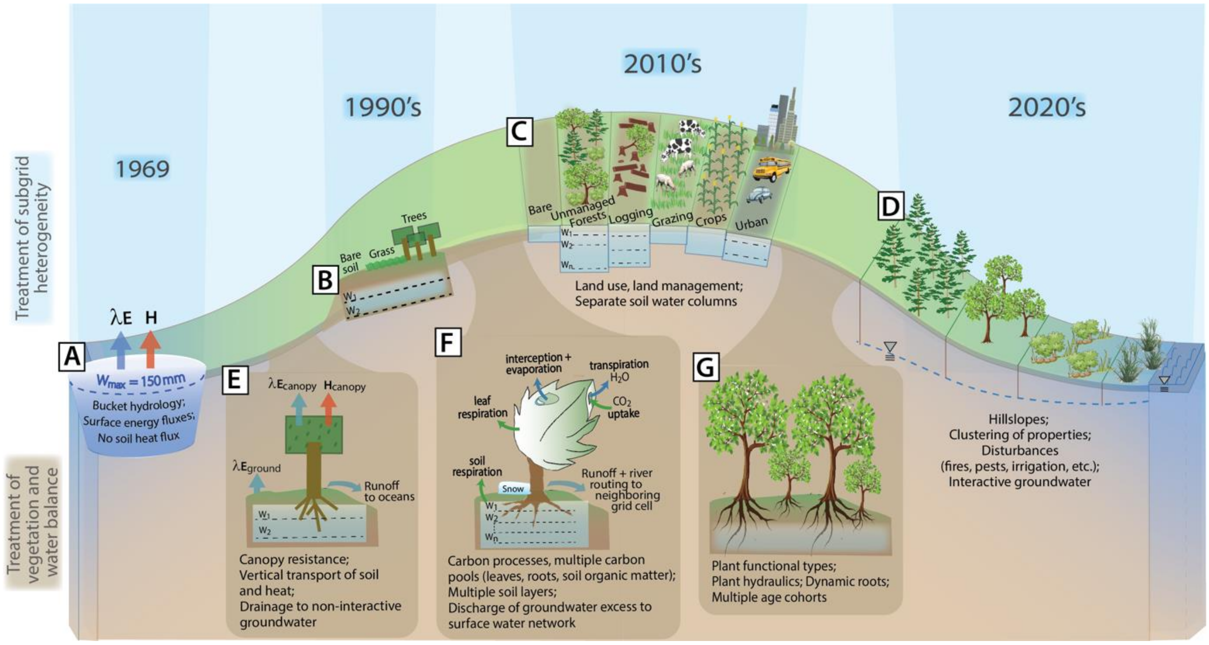

Figure SB1: The evolution of land model formulations, beginning with the Manabe bucket model in 1969 (A), gradually improving the treatment of water, heat and vegetation, while also including increasingly complex and heterogeneous representations of vegetation and soil processes both above and below the land surface. Dates are approximate. Blue arrows: λE = evaporative flux (where λ = latent heat of vaporization of water, E = evaporation rate). Red arrows: H = sensible heat flux. Green arrows: carbon fluxes.

Land models are numerical representations of processes within and below the land surface and vegetation canopy. Output of these models include fluxes of water, energy and carbon transferred from the land to the atmosphere. The early bucket model of Manabe (1969) was designed to provide the surface fluxes of latent and sensible heat as boundary conditions for the atmosphere (Element A in Fig. B1). Initially, treatment of the land was embedded within atmospheric model code. GEWEX facilitated the important work of pulling land-relevant code out of the larger model code, allowing for the broader creation and development of stand-alone land models while still serving as the "surface" for the atmosphere (Polcher et al., 1998). These models have since evolved to account for vertical moisture and heat transport within the soil column and separate evaporative terms from the vegetation canopy and the ground (Dickinson et al., 1984; Element E), to inclusion of carbon processes (photosynthesis, transpiration, leaf respiration; e.g., Shevliakova et al., 2009; Element F) and routing of runoff to neighboring grid cells through river routing schemes (e.g., Milly et al., 2014; Ngo-Duc et al., 2007), to finally the complex models at the cutting-edge today, including forest systems with a range of canopy heights and multiple age cohorts, dynamic roots, plant hydraulics and more (Element G).

A synergistic evolution of the treatment of sub-grid heterogeneity (Elements B–D) occurred in parallel to the evolution of more advanced process representation (Elements E–G). Early approaches to heterogeneity occurred by allowing for a few tiles of different surface types, but with access to a shared soil water reservoir (e.g., Koster and Suarez, 1992, 1994; Element B), to treatment of land use and land management in tiles with separate soil moisture reservoirs (de Rosnay and Polcher, 1998; Element C). Recent advances include using machine learning techniques to cluster land properties (e.g., elevation, soil textures, vegetation types) and better represent the hydrological connectivity between these subgrid clusters (Chaney et al., 2018; Element D).

The improved representation of the soil system was central to the evolution conveyed in Figure SB1. Modeling the soil system and its role within the Earth system has been topic of focus of different communities for many decades. The motivation has varied from interests in understanding how soils impact the environment and ecosystem (see Vereecken et al., 2016) to perspectives on both hydrology (e.g., Sood and Smakhtin, 2015) and climate (e.g., van Looy et al., 2017; Fatichi et al., 2020), with a particular focus on land-atmosphere coupling. The defining roles of water and energy fluxes in coupling the land and atmosphere provide the motivation of both the formation and evolution of GEWEX-GLASS activities (e.g., van den Hurk et al., 2011; Dirmeyer, 2018; Santanello et al., 2018). Soils were initially viewed simply through the lens of the Manabe single layer “bucket” model, which parameterized the available soil moisture by assuming a 15 cm soil moisture holding capacity globally (Element A). Soil heat flow and storage was not accounted for in this simple scheme. Pivotal improvements occurred when Deardorff (1978) introduced a method for simulating soil temperature and moisture in two layers (Element E). Subsequently, analytical equations were replaced by numerical schemes that solve partial differential equations for the conservation of soil water and heat, thus allowing for the coupled heat and water transfer and providing a number of advantages, including the prediction of seasonally frozen soils. This approach also gave the modelers the soil matric potential, which allowed for the proper implementation of root water uptake and plant hydraulic theory, thus offering a more interactive land surface and sub-surface system. Further increases to the number of soil layers (~4 initially and currently up to 20; Element F) were required for appropriate treatment of soil thermal and hydrological lower boundary conditions (Decharme et al., 2013), which proved particularly important in cold regions (Stevens et al., 2007; Slater and Lawrence, 2013; Sapriza-Azuri et al., 2018). The inclusion of groundwater (Yeh and Eltahir, 2005; Maxwell and Miller, 2005) significantly improved simulation of the hydrological cycle. Most Earth system models are still working to add fully interactive groundwater (Element D). For further reviews and vision papers on land model development, see, e.g., Pitman (2003), Overgaard et al. (2006), Clark et al. (2015), Fisher and Koven (2020) and Blyth et al. (2021).

Sidebar 2: From local cloud resolving to global storm resolving modelling (SRM) – A GEWEX legacy

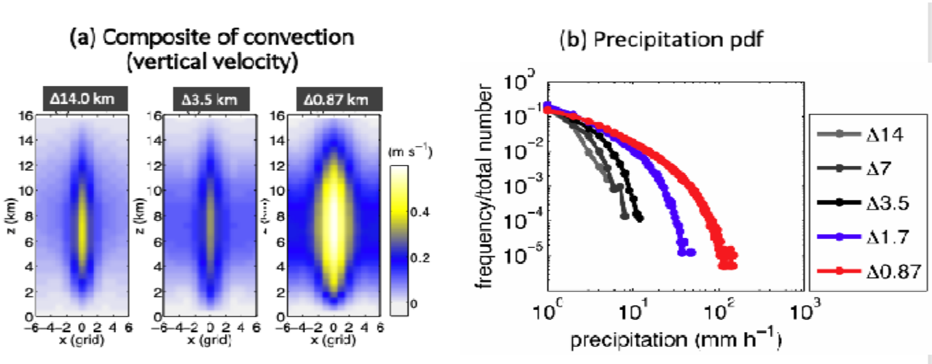

Figure SB2 An example of how km-scale convection permitting and resolving global and regional simulations impact simulated properties of convective motion and precipitation. (a) The global composite of vertical motion, showing how increased resolution enhances the intensity of updrafts, Kajikawa et al. (2016), (b) The pdf of global precipitation illustrating how the occurrences of more intense precipitation increase with model resolution (Δ14=14km resolution, Miyamoto et al., 2013).

From the outset GEWEX recognized the important role of atmospheric process modelling and developed specific initiatives for using cloud resolving models (CRMs) and large eddy simulation (LES) models to study the important cloud systems on Earth. Early work helped develop the physics of process models and the physical parameterizations of climate models but also exposed a number of model shortcomings, such as their inability to represent the organisation of single convective clouds into larger systems, that are critical elements of Earth's radiation budget, important to climate feedbacks, a basic influence on precipitation extremes, and influential to circulation on all scales.

Through their use in GCSS and more recently GASS, the LES and CRMs themselves where continuously exposed to field observations resulting in continued improvements to them. It soon became clear that these models could produce realistic simulations at the cloud system scale, and later work showed that the organisation of clouds into mesoscale systems could emerge when the CRMs or LESs were run on larger domains. This created the exciting prospect to further increase the domain size of these models even on the domain of the whole globe, eventually performing climate simulations with them. This also led to the implementation of simplified CRMs to replace parametrisations in the so-called super-parametrisation approach (Grabowski, 2001).

There is now compelling evidence that the lack of resolution of these global models and the inability to explicitly resolve convection specifically is a major obstacle in making the advances needed to confront important Earth science challenge. The example of Figure SB2, taken from the model studies of both Miymoto et al (2016) and Kajikawa et al., (2016), offers a clear example of the influence of model resolution on the properties of convection. Figure SB2a is a radial-height depiction of the vertical motion of deep convective updrafts from a global 'cloud resolving' model of resolution varying from 14km (left panel, Δ14) to 0.87km (right panel, Δ0.87). Models produce much stronger vertical motions as resolution increases that, in turn, results in significant changes to the intensity of such storms and to the properties that relate to the intensity. One such property is the intensity of the precipitation. The extreme precipitation over the area of the convective core (Figure SB2b) in the Δ14, Δ7.0, and Δ3.5, simulations for example, is confined to less than 20 mm h^{-1} in stark contrast to the more intense precipitation of the Δ1.7 (around 50 mm h^{-1}) and Δ0.87 (more than 100 mm h^{-1}) model simulations.

Figure SB2 underscores just how important resolution is in representing the heaviest and most extreme rainfalls from convective storms. Global SRM capabilities at this scale offer the potential to make advances on our ability to simulate the important cloud-circulation interactions at the heart of climate feedbacks, to make major inroads in modelling the full character of precipitation (e.g. Figure SB2b) as well as other important hydrological processes (refer Figure 6 of main text) and enable a deeper understanding of the role of small-scale processes in affecting the large-scale climate. It will help address the critical question of how the weather might change under global warming, especially high-impact events, which will underpin society's ability in making decisions in implementing mitigation and adaption strategies at the local and regional level.

Today the advantages of 'storm-resolving' kilometer-scale (*km-scale*) models and associated information systems is widely recognized (e.g. Bauer et al., 2021; Slingo et al.

2022) both for short term weather prediction (Palmer, 2014; Deuben et al., 2020) and regional and global climate prediction (Schär et al., 2019). GEWEX has and continues to advance the agenda of such modelling and does so on a number of fronts, such as through its workshops (e.g., Prein et al.,2017), through the advances to observations of extremes (Fowler et al., 2021) and to the specific advances being made to land models (e.g. Sidebar 1) as well as to LES and CRMs. The various activities that focus on modelling Earth on the *km-scale* have galvanized into a few large international efforts (e.g. Stevens et al., 2019) including those expressed by the new WCRP lighthouse activities that can be expected to shape future activities of GEWEX.

Sidebar 3: Earth's energy budget

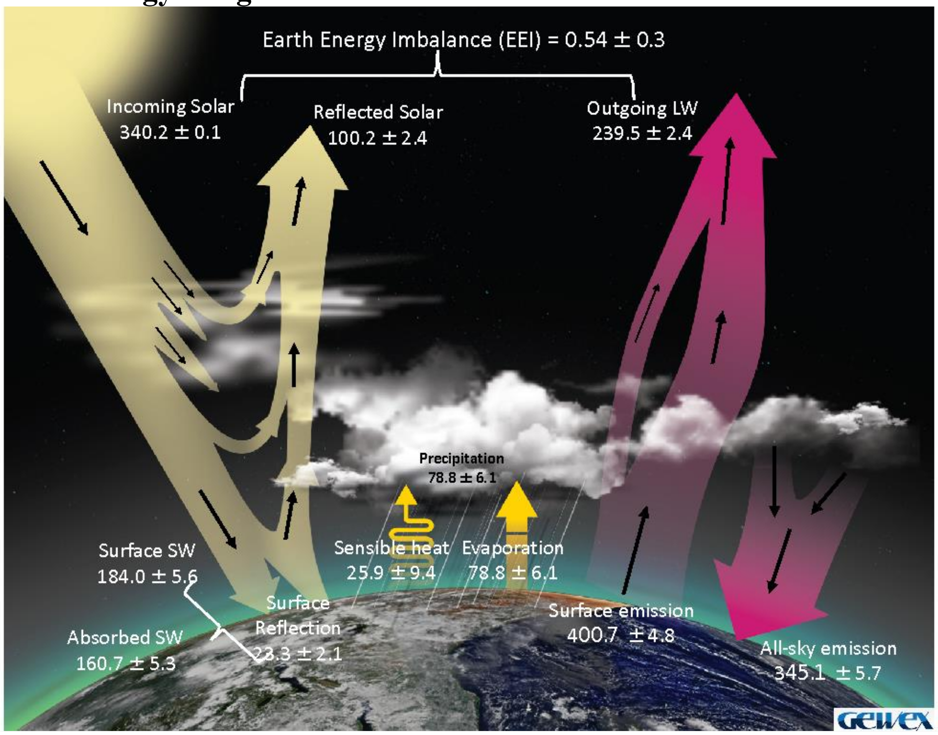

Figure SB3: An update on the mean annual fluxes of the global energy budget (all in Wm^{-2}) for the first decade of the millennium. This budget was achieved using a 'global' optimization described in L'Ecuyer et al (2015) that requires quantitative uncertainties but uses data that produce more consistent set of fluxes.

Quantifying the various ways energy flows through the Earth system has been a foundational activity of GEWEX from the outset and the latest version of the annual global mean depiction is presented in Figure SB3 based on the most up-to-date GEWEX data records. A number of sustained GEWEX activities, like the surface radiation budget project, land and ocean heat flux activities, maintenance of the GPCP precipitation climatology precipitation, TOA radiation budget assessments evolved over time with a focus on defining the uncertainties of the energy components of the budget which are reflected in Figure SB3. The NASA NEWS project produced a synthesis of a vast amount of these global data and provided, for the first time, a careful and more detailed assessment of the joint uncertainties attached to both global energy and water budgets. This provided the basis for a more objective methodology to adjust fluxes to constrain jointly closure of the global water and energy budgets, finally moving away from past *ad hoc* flux adjustment methods that had little justification. This coupled, constrained depiction of the energy and water balances and methods developed are described in the joint studies of L'Ecuyer et al. (2015) and Rodell et al (2015) and the global budget portrayed in Figure SB3 uses these same objective methodologies.

It was also recognized within GEWEX that inconsistencies existed in data inputs that were used to determine some of the fluxes that define these global balances. GDAP introduced an effort to address this issue creating an integrated self-consistent range of products (Kummerow et al., 2019) that offer a better and more consistent source of information for determining all fluxes, but particularly those at the Earth's surface. The fluxes expressed in Figure SB3 are based on the use of these newer integrated and more self-consistent GEWEX products.

Sidebar 4 Continental water storage

A remarkable result derived from observations of continental water storage appears in the visible imprint of human water management on the evolution of regional ecosystems. This imprint is illustrated in Figure SB4 showing the correlation between groundwater depletion detected by GRACE (Figure SB4b) and the greening of cropland regions in northern India over the past two decades (Figure SB4a). These regions also coincide with the canals built in the early 20th century to support irrigated agriculture and which have raised the water table through their leakage (MacDonald et al. 2016). This comparison underscores an important point that to understand current trends in the continental water cycle one needs to take into account both the influence of human water usage and the engineering developed to support it, as well as the influence of the physical climate system.

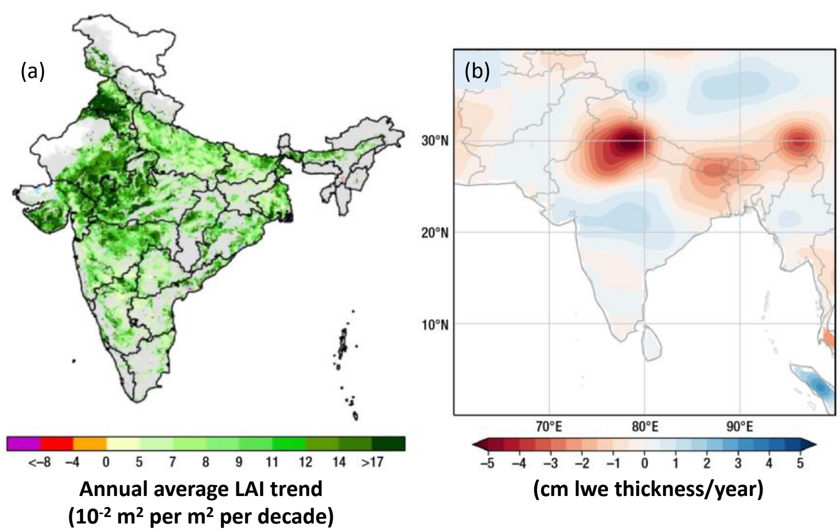

Figure SB4 (a) Trends in annual average MODIS leaf area index (LAI) for 2000–2017 in croplands in India. Statistically significant trends (Mann–Kendall test, $p \leq 0.1$) are color-coded. Grey areas show vegetated land with statistically insignificant trends. White areas depict barren lands, permanent ice-covered areas, permanent wetlands and built-up areas. (b) GRACE record length trends (2002–2016) over the Indian subcontinent (in liquid water equivalent (LWE) units in cm per year), showing extensive groundwater depletion in Northwest India (adapted from both Chen et al., 2019 and Stephens et al., 2020).

Appendix A: List of Acronyms

ADEOS II	Advanced Earth Observation Satellite II
AI/ML	Artificial intelligence and machine learning
AMMA	African Monsoon Multidisciplinary Analyses
BALTEX	Baltic Sea Experiment
BSRN	Baseline Surface Radiation Network
CC	Clausius-Clapeyron rate
CCRN	Changing Cold Regions Network
CERES	Clouds and the Earth's Radiant Energy System
CIRC	Continual Intercomparison of Radiation Codes
CLIVAR	Climate and Ocean: Variability, Predictability and Change project
CORDEX	Coordinated Regional Downscaling Experiment
CSE	Continental Scale Experiment
DO	Designated observables
EEI	Earth Energy Imbalance
ENSO	El Niño-Southern Oscillation
ENVISAT	European Space Agency Environmental Satellite
EOS	Earth Observing System
GABLS	GEWEX Atmospheric Boundary Layer Study
GAME	GEWEX Asian Monsoon Experiment
GARP	Global Atmosphere Research Programme
GASS	GEWEX Atmospheric Systems Study Panel
GCSS	GEWEX Cloud System Study
GEWEX	Global Energy and Water Cycle Experiment / Global Energy and Water EXchanges project
GHP	GEWEX Hydrometeorology Projects
GLASS	GEWEX Land Atmosphere System Studies
GMPP	GEWEX Modeling and Prediction Projects
GPCP	Global Precipitation Climatology Project
GPM	Global Precipitation Mission
GRACE	Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment
GRP	GEWEX Radiation Project
GVaP	Global water Vapor Project
HadGEM3	Hadley Centre Global Environmental Model, version 3
HyMeX	HYdrological cycle in the Mediterranean Experiment
iLEAPS	Integrated Land Ecosystem-Atmosphere Processes Study
INARCH	International Network for Alpine Research Catchment Hydrology
IPCC WG II	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group II
ISCCP	International Satellite Cloud Climatology Project
ISLSCP	International Satellite Land Surface Climatology Project
INTENSE	INTElligent use of climate models for adaptatioN to non-Stationary hydrological Extremes
JSC	Joint Scientific Committee
LBA	Large-Scale Biosphere-Atmosphere Experiment in Amazonia
LHA	Lighthouse Activities

MAGS	Mackenzie GEWEX Study
NEWS	NASA Energy and Water Cycle Study program
NWP	Numerical weather prediction
OHC	Ocean heat content
PILPS	Project for the Intercomparison of Land-Surface Parameterization Schemes
PoR	Programs of Records
PROES	Process Evaluation Study
RHP	GEWEX Regional Hydroclimate Projects
SMOS	Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity mission
SRB	Surface radiation budget
SSG	Scientific Steering Group
TOA	Top of atmosphere
TOGA	Tropical Ocean and Global Atmosphere Project
TRMM	Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission
WACMOS	Water Cycle Multi-mission Observation Strategy
WCRP	World Climate Research Programme
WEBS	Water and energy budget synthesis
WGNE	Working Group on Numerical Experimentation
WGRF	Working Group on Radiative Fluxes
WOCE	World Ocean Circulation Experiment

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