Statement of the World Meteorological Organization

Fourth Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction

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The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is the U.N. system's authoritative voice on weather, climate and water. The National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) of its 191 Members observe, monitor and predict weather–, climate- and water-related hazards through a globally coordinated operational network. Disaster risk reduction is one of the highest priorities of the WMO, as over 90% of disasters are linked to weather, climate- and water-related hazards.

Scientific advances in weather forecasting, combined with proactive emergency preparedness have dramatically cut the human toll from hydro-meteorological hazards, even though the economic cost has risen.

WMO is expanding on scientific advances to increase the availability and accuracy of user-friendly climate services to help countries and communities, especially the most vulnerable, adapt to climate variability and climate change. The initiative, called the "Global Framework for Climate Services" (GFCS) is being implemented by governments with support from WMO and its partners within and outside the United Nations system. It will include a joint platform between providers and users of climate services, and targets disaster risk reduction as one of its top priorities, along with food security, water resource management and health.

WMO has a major programme on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), underpinned by the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). This focuses on strengthening the national capacities and facilitates regional cooperation to enhance weather, climate, and hydrological services to support risk analysis, early warning systems, sectoral planning and risk financing. Over the last few years, this coordination has led to multiple initiatives for national multi-hazard early warning systems in over 50 countries. Through its work with the Interagency Standing Committee, WMO is linking authoritative weather and climate services to international humanitarian agencies to improve humanitarian contingency planning, preparedness and response. Finally, as risk reduction measures should be informed by risk analysis, WMO is working to develop international standards and guidelines for weather, climate and hydrological hazard definitions and methodologies for statistical and forward looking hazard analysis.

WMO promotes proactive and integrated risk-management policies on floods and droughts, two of the major natural hazards, with highest socio-economic impacts and is working with partners to facilitate coordinated capacity development assistance to its Members.

The HFA has provided the impetus for strengthened and more coordinated international cooperation on disaster risk reduction and building resilience as part of sustainable development. But many challenges lie ahead. WMO recommendations on priorities for the Post 2015 Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction include:

(1) More Integrated multi-hazard, multi-sectoral, multi-level approach

Investments in the core capacities of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to support disaster risk analysis for informed decision-making should be considered a priority for national and local development planning across all socio-economic sectors and geographical levels.

(2) Investments in early warning systems

Investments in development and strengthening of national early warning systems should be considered as an integral part of national risk reduction and resilience-building planning with a multi-hazard, multi-sectoral and multi-level approach. Investments in these systems should reflect long-term sustainability. In this regard, investment in the national meteorological systems and networks, particularly in developing and least developed countries, would lead to very large benefits.

(3) Governance, legal frameworks, institutional coordination, planning

The implementation of the HFA by national governments is leading to amendments and/or development of new national DRR policies as well as legal and institutional frameworks. Roles, working arrangements and strengthening of technical agencies such as the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services should be anchored in the new policies and frameworks.

(4) Global, regional, national cooperation and partnerships

Strengthening of global, regional and national partnerships and coordination between the meteorological, climate and hydrological and the disaster risk reduction communities are critical to the development of science-based information to enable community action, build disaster and climate resilience, leverage resources, sustainability and manage risks associated with trans-boundary and larger scales hazards.

(5) Coordinated financial resources to support capacity development

Effective coordination and leveraging of government investments and risk financing strategies with international humanitarian, development, climate-related funding in areas such as institutional and infrastructure capacities, hazard/risk and climate information systems are critical to avoid duplication, address gaps and sustainability.

(6) Benefits from the new global partnership under the GFCS

Strengthening of the new global partnership under the GFCS and investments in continued improvements of climate forecasts and climate change scenarios and development, availability and accessibility of climate services in user-friendly formats targeted at different sectors, at different levels (global, regional, national, local) provide unprecedented opportunity to build disaster and climate resilience.