



## Second Experts' Symposium on Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS – II) with focus on the Role of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services

5 - 7 May 2009

*Météo-France Conferences International Centre  
42 avenue Gaspard Coriolis, Toulouse, France*

### INFORMATION NOTE

*Symposium website: <http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/drr/events/MHEWS-II/>*

**Symposium will be held in English**

#### 1. Background

Early warning systems have received significant international attention over the past few years, including (i) three International Early Warning Conferences hosted by Germany (1998, 2003, 2006)<sup>1</sup>, (ii) recognition of early warning systems as an integral part of disaster risk reduction within the G8 Summit (2005) and UN General Assembly Resolutions, (iii) Report of the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems (2006)<sup>2</sup>, (iv) First Experts' Symposium (May 2006) on Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems (MHEWS-I), convened by WMO and co-sponsored by six international agencies. Second International Conference on Early Warnings specified the four operational components of early warning systems, including:

- (i) Observation, detection, monitoring, analysis, forecasting and development of hazard warning messages;
- (ii) Assessing potential risks and integrating risk information into warning messages;
- (iii) Dissemination of timely and reliable and understandable warning messages to authorities and public at-risk;
- (iv) Community-based emergency planning, preparedness and training programmes focused on eliciting an effective response to warnings to reduce potential impact on lives and livelihoods.

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<sup>1</sup> The three International Early Warning Conferences are as follows:

- 1) First International Conference on Early Warning (EWC-I) in 1998 (<http://www.geomuseum.com/ewc98/>)
- 2) Second International Conference on Early Warning (EWC II) in 2003 (<http://www.ewc2.org/pg000001.htm>)
- 3) Third International Conference on Early Warning (EWC II) in 2006 (<http://www.ewc3.org/>)

<sup>2</sup> In 2005, following the tragic Indian Ocean tsunami, Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan requested a global early warning survey. This survey was coordinated by ISDR Secretariat through its Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning Systems, support by a multi-agency task team, co-chaired by WMO and OCHA. The report of this survey can be accessed at: [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/AMMF-6VKH6Z/\\$file/UNISDR-Sep2006.pdf?openelement](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/db900sid/AMMF-6VKH6Z/$file/UNISDR-Sep2006.pdf?openelement)

Based on these components, MHEWS-I identified criteria for “good practices” in early warning systems (EWS), further discussed major gaps within these components, as revealed by the Global Early Warning Survey, and identified a number of such good practices in early warning systems.<sup>3</sup>

MHEWS-I further stressed that,

- Development and sustainability of EWS would require political commitment and dedicated investments;
- EWS should be an integral part of national and local disaster risk management plans and budgets;
- Enforceable legislation must define explicitly roles and responsibilities of various authorities and agencies;
- Implementation of EWS requires clear concept of operations and standard operating procedures enabling effective coordination among agencies across the components of EWS, at national and local levels, and;
- Systematic feedback and evaluation at all levels are needed, to ensure improvements of the system over time.

Following the MHEWS-I, WMO Congress (XV) and Executive Councils (LVIII, LX) requested that WMO in collaboration with other key partners initiate EWS projects, particularly demonstrating National Meteorological and Hydrological Services’ (NMHS) institutional cooperation and coordination with disaster risk management agencies and other stakeholders. Furthermore, these projects should determine whether economies and synergies could be achieved through a multi-hazard approach. In this regard,

- 1) WMO in collaboration with the NMHS and their national partner ministries and agencies has initiated multi-hazard EWS projects in China (Shanghai) and France. In addition, WMO is facilitating the documentation of the Tropical Cyclone Warning System in Cuba and Bangladesh, with specific focus on the role of NMHS in EWS including, their operational coordination and cooperation with other technical and disaster risk management agencies at national to local levels.
- 2) WMO is working with ISDR System partners<sup>4</sup> to facilitate national early warning system projects aimed at strengthening operational coordination and cooperation of the NMHS, with their national partners such as disaster risk management agencies and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (RCRC) for meteorological, hydrological and climate-related hazards. These projects would address requirements of disaster risk management agencies for warnings and information, development of standard concept of operations and a feedback mechanism for improving the coordination and operations among the NMHS and their stakeholders. First set of such pilots are being initiated in Central America.

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<sup>3</sup> MHEWS-I co-sponsors included: WMO, IFRC, OCHA, UNDP, UNESCO, the World Bank and the ISDR Secretariat. This symposium brought together nearly 100 experts from networks of 20 international, regional and national agencies. MHEWS-I identified i) Shanghai Emergency Preparedness Programme; ii) France “Vigilance” System; iii) Cuba tropical cyclone early warning system; and iv) Bangladesh Cyclone Preparedness Programme as examples of “good practices”. The Meeting noted that this is not a comprehensive list as there are such practices that could be identified and added to this list. Further details about the outcomes of MHEWS-I are available from [http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/drr/events/ews\\_symposium\\_2006](http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/drr/events/ews_symposium_2006).

<sup>4</sup> Among partners include the World Bank, ISDR regional offices, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and other regional and technical agencies.

The ability to scale up these capacities would require effective sharing of experiences and lessons learned and provision of guidelines to support capacity development through training and development projects overtime.

In this regard, WMO is convening the “Second Experts’ Symposium on Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems with focus on the Role of National Hydrometeorological Services (MHEWS-II),” to be hosted by Météo-France, in Toulouse, France on May 5-7, 2008. This document provides details on the goals, expected outcome, format and other programmatic details for this symposium.

## **2. Goals and expected outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium**

MHEWS-II will bring together experts from NMHSs, disaster risk management authorities, RCRCs and other international and regional agencies, with the goals to:

- i) Review and synthesize lessons learned from documented “good practices” in EWS, focusing on specific roles of NMHS and how they can best support disaster risk management agencies and other stakeholders within the EWS operational framework at national to local levels;
- ii) Review and provide expert input into the draft guidelines on the “Role of NMHS in Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems with Focus on the Governance, Institutional Coordination and Cooperation,” which would be developed based on the synthesis of good practices in EWS, and;
- iii) Provide recommendations to improve coordination and collaboration among agencies responsible for different aspects of early warning systems (national to local levels) for hydro-meteorological and climate-related hazards.

Expected outcomes include:

- i) Detailed documentation of four “good practices” including, (i) Shanghai Multi-Hazard Emergency Preparedness Programme; (ii) France “Vigilance” System; (iii) Cuba tropical cyclone early warning system; and (iv) Bangladesh Cyclone Preparedness Programme, particularly focusing on the role played by their NMHS in supporting various EWS stakeholders and components;
- ii) First Guidelines on the “Role of NMHS in Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems with Focus on Institutional Coordination and Cooperation”, and;
- iii) Recommendations on concrete initiatives that can be undertaken by WMO and its international and regional partners to improve coordination and collaboration among NMHS and other agencies (national to local levels) to improve early warning systems for hydro-meteorological and climate-related hazards.

## **3. Symposium Date, Venue and Format:**

**Date:** 5-7 May 2009

**Venue:** Centre International de Conférences de Météo-France  
42, avenue Coriolis - 31057 Toulouse  
Tel.: +33 5 61 07 80 52/51 - Fax: +33 5 61 07 80 59

**Host:** Météo-France

**Participants:** The Symposium will be by invitation only, involving senior level experts from NMHS, disaster risk management agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (RCRC), as well as

expert's from networks of international and regional agencies (e.g., UNDP regional coordinators, UN Resident Coordinator, World Bank country representatives, UN National & Regional Humanitarian coordinators, donor agencies etc.).

#### **4. Participation of regional and international agencies**

Experts from international and regional agencies will be invited to participate.

#### **5. Planning**

Focal points for programmatic planning of MHEWS-II are:

- Dr Maryam Golnaraghi, [mgolnaraghi@wmo.int](mailto:mgolnaraghi@wmo.int), +41 22 730 8006 (WMO);
- Ms Ariane de Billy, [ariane.debilly@meteo.fr](mailto:ariane.debilly@meteo.fr), +33 1 45 56 70 52 (Météo-France);

#### ***Logistical matters***

Focal points for administrative and logistical matters of MHEWS-II are:

- Ms Nadia Oppliger, (Tel: +41 22 730 8260, [noppliger@wmo.int](mailto:noppliger@wmo.int)) (WMO Headquarters);
- Ms Sylviane Balland (+33 5 61 07 80 69, [Sylviane.Balland@meteo.fr](mailto:Sylviane.Balland@meteo.fr)), (Météo-France focal point in Toulouse);

#### **6. Other logistical matters**

Information on travel, visa requirements, accommodations, transportation and hospitality will be provided on the Symposium website:

[http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/drr/events/MHEWS-II/index\\_en.html](http://www.wmo.int/pages/prog/drr/events/MHEWS-II/index_en.html)

Please check this website regularly for updates and new information.

#### **For more information, please contact:**

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