

**CLOSING STATEMENT OF THE SYMPOSIUM ON MULTI-HAZARD EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS
FOR INTEGRATED DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT**

by

**Professor Hong Yan
Deputy-Secretary-General
World Meteorological Organization
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Distinguished guests, Dear Colleague, Ladies and Gentlemen

Traditional way for me to close a meeting is very simple, I only need to say two words: thank you and good bye. But today I want to tell a little more.

Closing a meeting doesn't necessary mean it's the end of the task. Of course it is the end of the task for organizers, but this is only a first step towards development of MH EW system of systems for integrated disaster risk management. The hard work will come after this meeting.

This two-day meeting brought together near 90 multi-disciplinary experts from different agencies and organisations at national to international levels to address two main goals:

1. To provide recommendations for an integrated approach to warning systems for enhanced disaster risk reduction, building on and linking existing capacities of different stakeholders;
2. To explore further the concept of multi-hazard approach to early warning systems, related potential economies and synergies that may result from such approach, and provide recommendations on additional studies and/or demonstrations that may be required to fully assess all aspects of such approach.

Over the past two days we have initiated an important dialogue, shared our knowledge and experiences, discussed activities of our respective agencies and indeed it is tremendous brainstorm to discussion how, through better coordination and alignment of our activities, we can assist our Members to strengthen their capacities for early warning systems as an integral part of disaster risk management.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction and its outcome, the very famous Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) along with other critical international initiatives and conferences such as the recent Third International Early Warning Conference have emphasized the critical importance of early warning systems and have led to significant international momentum and political recognition in this area. During this Symposium, we addressed second high priority area of Hyogo Framework for Action, namely the need for "identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks and enhancing early warnings" as a critical component of disaster risk reduction. Furthermore, HFA stresses that disaster risk reduction must be addressed with an *integrated* and *multi-hazard* approach. The Global Early Warning Survey report has identified many areas of gaps and needs in the different components of end-to-end

Early Warning Systems and along the boundaries of different disciplines. Building on these activities, the next step is ACTION: what needs to be done with what priority to ensure that early warning systems are available to as many countries as possible, particularly those with least resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the past two days we have examined the current state of early warning systems particularly the major gaps and needs at the national, regional and international levels and developed recommendations with prioritisation of what needs to be done to address these gaps. We have discussed that many of these gaps lie at the boundaries of different disciplines and that through enhanced coordination and collaboration among the stakeholders at local, national, regional and international levels these can be addressed.

Our comprehensive discussions have led to better understanding of the concept of "Multi-hazard approach". This is indeed a complex issue with significant implications on governance, organization, and operational, infrastructural and capacity building aspects of Early Warning Systems, which need to be better and deeper understood. Furthermore, during the last two days we explored what this concept means for different components of Early warning Systems and how the economies and synergies of such an approach at different stages could be evaluated and demonstrated.

The new ISDR structure is providing an excellent vehicle for partnerships among agencies to work in a more coordinated fashion towards common goals and priorities as established in HFA. The outcome of this Symposium is an important step towards this goal. And we need to ensure to follow through and make early warning systems a reality for the countries at-risk.

After this meeting, we expect:

- The draft outcome will be developed and shared with all the participants for final comments;
- The Final Report will be sent to ISDR Secretariat for possible inclusion in the report of the UN Secretary General to the UN General Assembly in September 2006;
- The final report will be sent to the heads of all participating agencies in the Symposium for further comments and to be used as a catalyst to initiate partnerships;
- A inter-agency task team will be organized and will immediately take action to implement the recommendations;
- WMO is going to develop demonstration projects at the regional and national level. We would welcome all participants who wish to join these projects to further develop the multi-hazard concept.

A Chinese proverb, quoted by former President Clinton, says "practice tells the truth". The concept of the multi-hazard early warning systems for integrated disaster risk management, discussed at this meeting, should be further developed and materialized at the local level by action. Through demonstration projects, we would better understand the difficulties and find solutions for multi-hazard early warning systems. We should help those countries wishing to develop multi-hazard early warning systems to go one step further.

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, I would like to thank you all and our co-sponsor agencies to work with us and sharing your valuable time to make this event a success. Your presence here was a true testimony to your deep commitment to the development of end-to-end early warning systems. I wish you all a safe journey home and we will be in touch with you about the follow up actions of this Symposium.

Finally, I declare the meeting finished.
