



EXPERTS AGREE ON INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO REDUCE IMPACTS OF FLASH FLOODS

GENEVA/SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA 22 MARCH 2006 – Experts attending the first international workshop to address the threat of flash floods have agreed on extensive measures to tackle the issue. About 100 experts from some 48 countries have been taking part in the event organized by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department of Environment of the Government of Canada. The First International Workshop on Flash Flood Forecasting was hosted by Costa Rica’s National Meteorological Institute in San José (see Info note no. 19). During the five day workshop participants:

- Agreed that an international road map to reduce the impacts of flash floods through flash flood warning cooperation should be implemented.
- Reaffirmed the need for an end-to-end flash flood warning system to reduce the impacts of flash floods.
- Agreed to maintain a platform for the exchange of knowledge, information and technology (including experts) while strengthening all elements of the flash flood forecasting and warning system.
- Agreed the need for advanced data observing systems, computer models communication systems and response planning.
- Launched testing and application of advanced technologies through region specific demonstration projects of high national and international interest. These projects are focused on attracting donor support.

Secretary-General of WMO, Mr Michel Jarraud emphasized latest developments in flash flood forecasting and stressed the need for cooperation between all stakeholders. He especially welcomed workshop recommendations, which he said would advance WMO’s efforts in developing a multi-hazard early-warning system and, in particular, bring together all necessary competence to combat flash floods.

General John J Kelly, Permanent Representative of the United States with WMO and NOAA Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere stated: “To succeed, National Meteorological and Hydrological Services must work closely, internationally and regionally, on technology and policy to improve flash flood and all hazard forecasting capabilities.”

Characterized by a tendency to strike with little or no warning and a capacity to trigger massive landslides with catastrophic loss of life, flash floods are among the most destructive types of natural disasters. Flash floods and landslides took thousands of lives and caused billions of dollars in damages throughout the world during the past year alone. There was consensus amongst experts that the loss of lives and property is unacceptable when

appropriate technologies and know-how is already available to prevent flash floods from becoming disasters.

WMO is the United Nations' authoritative voice on weather, climate and water

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