

UN PGA Preparatory meeting 2023 Water Conference

Tuesday 25 October 2022

Intervention World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Agenda Item – “Call to Action for the Water Action Agenda: Exchange of views with participating states and relevant stakeholders on integrated ideas for transformative game changers related to the Water Action Agenda”

Thank you, your Excellency, for the opportunity to take the floor.

Excellencies, distinguished panelists, colleagues on behalf of the WMO Secretary General, Professor Petteri Taalas, we wish to state that:

The WMO is the specialized agency of the UN on weather, climate and water, and we are strongly committed to delivering concrete action on the ground. Therefore, we are delighted to contribute to this call for action.

Our mandate includes running global operational networks, in real-time, to allow countries to monitor, predict and prepare for weather, climate, water and atmospheric composition changes, which impact people’s lives and livelihoods and the economy at large every day.

For us here present today, it is clear that many of the strongest impacts of climate change are felt through water.

A major obstacle to provide efficient and sustainable water solutions is the lack of data and information about the current and future availability of water resources.

Today, more 60 % of WMO Member States report insufficient and declining capabilities in hydrological monitoring and, thus, are increasingly unable to provide decision support in the water, food and energy nexus, to all water-related sectors (and there are many), or related to increasing – in number and impact – floods and droughts.

Political decision makers around the world therefore lack a trustworthy information base to take informed decisions.

This situation is not acceptable and not sustainable in the 21st Century and seriously threatens the Sustainable Development Agenda.

On 23 March 2022, Secretary-General Guterres gave WMO a mandate to lead the development of a global action plan to ensure every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems within five years.

The action plan will scale multiple hazards early warning systems for all that consist of several components, including better global water information services, which will allow countries to monitor and better manage their water resources in the years ahead.

Better global water information services for all will be a transformative game changer, revolutionizing how Members States are equipped to address the increasing flood, drought and water security risks, and building on the WMO Global Multi-hazard Alert System (GMAS) and related frameworks and protocols.

Ladies and gentlemen, kindly note that Early Warning Systems are considered a low hanging fruit in climate change adaptation – although a fruit that is not very easy to harvest, but we can – and that the Global Commission on Adaptation found that Early Warning Systems can provide a more than tenfold return on investment.

Now, we now seek your political support to make this contribution to the Water Action Agenda a reality to be able to protect all people and future generations from growing global threats from water-related hazards.

Thank you very much.

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