

High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters

Water is life. But water is also a threat to life. During the past decade, water-related disasters have not only struck more frequently but have also been more severe, hampering sustainable development by causing political, social, and economic upheaval in many countries. Water-related disasters, such as floods, droughts, storm surges and tsunamis, account for 90% of all disasters in terms of number of people affected.

The High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) was established to assist the international community, governments and stakeholders in mobilizing political will and resources. It will promote actions to raise awareness, ensure coordination and collaboration, establish common goals and targets, monitor progress, and take effective measures aimed at addressing the issues of water and disasters.

Reducing water-related disasters brings the world closer to fulfilling our common aspirations for sustainable development. Let us join our hands to create safer world for our children and future generations to come.



Dr. Han, Seung-soo
Chair of HELP

High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)

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HELP's Position Paper on Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction

1. Water related disasters, such as floods, droughts, storm surges and tsunamis account for 90% of all disasters in terms of number of people affected. This number is still increasing. The poor, vulnerable groups, women and girls are suffering the most. Economic and environmental losses associated with water related hazards are rising in all regions.
2. Disaster Risk Reduction, Water Resources Management and Climate Adaptation should no longer be treated as separate topics.
3. More data and better tools for risk assessment are ready for use now and need to be more widely deployed to identify and prioritize actions. Better preparedness of citizens in terms of risk awareness and emergency planning are also essential.
4. Risk reduction, preparation and prevention are sensible investments that pay off in terms of reduced loss of life, avoided damage, and long-term economic growth and stability. Further emphasis on the role of financial protection measures in Disaster Risk Management is needed.
5. Risk prevention should be integrated with long-term planning. This allows communities and decision makers to identify and exploit opportunities for synergies with planned investments, including plans for adaptation to climate change.
6. Uncertainties are no excuse for inaction: uncertainties are inherent in long-term planning and should be accounted for in a comprehensive, flexible and adaptive approach.
7. Align the efforts under the major 2015 international policy frameworks to create synergy and to increase effectiveness.

For more information, please see the following webpage: <https://www.wateranddisaster.org/category/documents/>

HELP's proposal for the SDGs on Water and Disasters

- **Dedicated goal on water issues**

The SDGs should include a dedicated goal on water. This suggestion has already been supported by various entities including UNSGAB, the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, The progress report of the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals, and UN Water. HELP supports this general consensus of the water community to establish a dedicated water goal.

- **Targets on water-related disaster risk reduction**

UN Water's recent proposal for the dedicated global goal for water is supported by five sets of inter-dependent targets that together would meet this global goal, and a target to reduce water-related disaster losses is one of them. HELP supports this proposal to establish a target on water-related disasters within the water goal.

HELP also agrees with the UN Water's proposal that the target should aim to reduce not only human casualties but also economic losses caused by water-related disasters. Protecting human lives is indeed fundamental to disaster risk reduction but reducing economic losses due to disasters is also a must for disaster vulnerable countries to break away from persistent poverty and attain sustainable development.

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4th HELP meeting, Nov 2014

HELP's Flagship Actions

1. Promote awareness among all stakeholders on the urgency and importance of adaptation to the impacts on water-related disasters caused by climate change and other global changes
2. Ensure that water and disasters are positioned high in the post-2015 development agenda
3. Assist the international community with monitoring and achieving internationally agreed upon targets on water and disasters
4. Promote a platform for regular dialogue on water and disasters at the UN
5. Develop a publication of case studies on recent water-related disasters and policy lessons learned and launch the document at the 7th World Water Forum
6. Support to the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Water
7. Promote actions to provide safe water and toilets effectively when disaster/conflict strikes