

# Concept Note: Multi stakeholder partnerships for water-related disaster risk reduction

## Multi stakeholder panel of the second UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters

Date: & Time: November 18th, 2015; 15:00 – 16:20 hrs.

Place: UN Headquarters, New York, USA

## Introduction

Natural disasters are continually increasing in most parts of the world. Water-related disasters are by far the most numerous of all disasters occurring worldwide and garner the largest losses among disaster types. An analysis of the one thousand most fatal natural disasters between 1900 and 2006 shows for instance, that about 90% were water-related disasters.<sup>1</sup>

Climate change is disrupting the water cycle and will increase the frequency and severity of disasters. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its 5th Assessment, predicts more frequent and more severe droughts, floods and storms, intensified glacier melting and sea level rise, all of which will cause and contribute to increasing numbers of disasters worldwide.

A risk-based approach to achieving water security for all is therefore a key element of sustainable water governance. The risk-based approach seeks to increase water security by managing risks and reducing vulnerabilities resulting from climate change and water-related disasters.<sup>2</sup>

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is a systematic approach to identifying, assessing and reducing the risks of disaster. DRR thinking sees disasters as complex problems demanding a *collective response* from different disciplinary and institutional groups. The Guiding Principles of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030<sup>3</sup> state to that effect:

Principle (b): Disaster risk reduction requires that responsibilities be shared by central Governments and relevant national authorities, sectors and stakeholders, as appropriate to their national circumstances and systems of governance;

Principle (d): Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It also requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying

---

<sup>1</sup> Yoganath Adikari and Junichi Yoshitani (2009). *Global Trends in Water-Related Disasters: an insight for policymakers*. The United Nations World Water Development Report 3 'Water in a Changing World'. UNESCO-

<sup>2</sup> Eelco van Beek and Wouter Lincklaen Arriens (2014). *Water Security: putting the concept into practice*. Global Water Partnership, TEC Background Papers # 20.

[http://www.gwp.org/Global/ToolBox/Publications/Background%20papers/GWP\\_TEC20\\_web.pdf](http://www.gwp.org/Global/ToolBox/Publications/Background%20papers/GWP_TEC20_web.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030 adopted at the Third UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, on March 18, 2015.

[http://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291\\_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf](http://www.preventionweb.net/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordrren.pdf)

special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted. In this context, special attention should be paid to the improvement of organized voluntary work of citizens;

Principle (e): Disaster risk reduction and management depends on coordination mechanisms within and across sectors and with relevant stakeholders at all levels, and it requires the full engagement of all State institutions of an executive and legislative nature at national and local levels and a clear articulation of responsibilities across public and private stakeholders, including business and academia, to ensure mutual outreach, partnership, complementarity in roles and accountability and follow-up.

## Objectives of the multi stakeholder panel

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction has four main components: Understanding risk, Strengthening Governance, Investing in Resilience and Ensuring Preparedness. We expect that the two previous panels will address the specifics of what this entails. This multi stakeholder panel will deal with the specific roles of the different stakeholder groups in implementing the Sendai framework in relation to water.

The rationale for multi-stakeholder partnerships in moving from reactive to proactive risk management is clear and compelling. The challenge is to make such partnerships work effectively and efficiently at different levels, and to coordinate actions adequately. The complexity and lengthy process of partnership building, in particular with respect to community involvement and the inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups, is often underestimated.

The panel brings together leading representatives of key stakeholder groups and multi-stakeholder initiatives that already work on the water security and sustainable development interface to jointly discuss and address these challenges.

The session aims to:

1. Sensitize existing global/international stakeholder networks in the water domain on the importance of addressing DRR as intrinsic element of sustainable water governance;
2. Discuss/assess the views of different stakeholder groups about their complementary roles and responsibilities in building resilience to water related hazards at different levels;
3. Gain insights on different stakeholder groups views of what are the appropriate strategic approaches to Water related Disaster Risk Reduction (WDRR);
4. Explore synergies and possibilities for concerted action (consider the creation of a global platform for addressing WDRR);
5. On the basis of the above, to provide clear recommendations on the preconditions for effective stakeholder participation to be delivered to the relevant major UN

conferences, including the UNFCCC COP 21 in December 2015, Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, and Habitat III in October 2016.

## Key questions for the session

1. What are your views on the appropriate strategic approaches to understanding risk, strengthening governance, building resilience and investing in preparedness for Water related Disaster Risk Reduction (WDRR)?  
Link to DRR in general and take into consideration the work done and insights gained.
2. What, from the perspective of your stakeholder group, is the appropriate level to address water related disaster risks?  
Dublin Principle 2 stipulates that stakeholder participation in inclusive water governance should be organised at the lowest appropriate level. DRR literature and the Sendai Framework emphasize the importance of including the most vulnerable and of building community resilience.
3. How can your stakeholder group contribute to understanding risk, strengthening governance, building resilience and investing in preparedness to deal with water-related disasters (floods, droughts, storms, pollution), in particular of the most vulnerable groups?  
Stakeholder representatives are asked to provide an example of WDRR contribution from their constituency.
4. What in your experience are the major obstacles to stakeholder participation?  
Meaningful involvement needs to be pursued, in which communities' input influences the decision-making process and implementation. Hassenfolder et al (2012)<sup>4</sup> for instance, state as the two main obstacles for community participation in water projects: the initial mistrust of the population, and the cost and duration of making community participation a reality; it is a process, not a 1-time activity.
5. What are the preconditions for functional multi-stakeholder partnerships?  
Include relevant conclusions and recommendations from UN Water Zaragoza conference 2015 and the UN-Water for Life review.
6. How to promote concerted action/ the creation of a global platform for addressing WDRR?  
What would be necessary for effective stakeholder participation to be delivered to (i) the relevant major UN Fora, (ii) to national and local implementation, (iii) to regional/trans boundary implementation?

---

<sup>4</sup> Emeline Hassendorfer, Pierre Daniel & Benjamin Noury (2012). *New perspectives for the management of water projects; models and applications from 8 transboundary projects*. Pp 113-114. Oxyo Water, France

## Session outline and agenda

Emphasis is on the enabling environment for local-level action and partnerships. The complementary roles of different actors will be brought to the fore, and how to include those stakeholder groups that represent the most vulnerable and/or are able to mobilize their constituency to increase disaster preparedness and resilience of the local population. In addition to the voices of Women, Youth, Indigenous People and Workers, two good practices of water stewardship are included that demonstrate an inclusive multi-stakeholder approach (European Water Stewardship and Cultivando Agua Boa, Itaipu Binacional), highlighting the role and leadership potential of Local Authorities and Business.

### Agenda

Opening moderation of the panel	Ms Josefina Maestu-Unturbe	Director UN Office to Support the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015	3'
Keynote speech	Dr Ursula Schaefer-Preuss	Chair Global Water Partnership	10'
Making the UN fit-for-purpose through global partnership based on holistic project management and stakeholder management	Dr Sonja Ellmann Mr Erik Mansson	Head Project Management Office, Siemens Co Mindshift Consulting	10'
Multi stakeholder panel round 1			25'
Introductions	Ms Josefina Maestu-Unturbe	Director UN Office to Support the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015	3'
Women	Drs Alice Bouman-Dentener	Honorary Founding President, Women for Water Partnership	4'
Youth & Children	Ms Asma Bachikh	President World Youth Parliament for Water	4'
Indigenous Peoples	Ms Megan Davis (tbc)	Chair of Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues	4'
Q & A		Interventions from the floor	10'
Multi stakeholder panel round 2			25'
Introductions	Ms Josefina Maestu-Unturbe	Director UN Office to Support the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015	3'
Worker & Unions	Mr David Boys	Deputy Secretary General PSI	4'
Government, Business, Farmers, Minorities	Dr Nelton Friedrich (tbc)	Coordination Director, Itaipu Binacional, Brazil - Paraguay	4'
Business, farmers, local authorities	Mr Tom Vereijken	Director European Water Stewardship; former Chair European Water Partnership	4'
Q & A		Interventions from the floor	10'
Synthesis	Mr Wolfgang Kron, Head of Research for Hydrological Hazards, Munich Re; Advisor of HELP		5'
Closure	Dr. Ursula Schaefer-Preuss	Chair Global Water Partnership	2'

## Multi stakeholder panel

Panellists are:

- High level representative of their stakeholder group/ partnership;
- Entitled to speak on behalf of a global constituency;
- Able to voice the experiences of the stakeholder group he/she is representing on issues concerning water related hazards;
- Preferably having consulted the constituency on the main questions to be addressed during the session.

Panel composition

Stakeholder group	Representative	Description
Women	Women for Water Partnership (WfWP);	WfWP is the leading women's civil society network in the water domain with constituency in approx. 100 countries.
Youth & Children	World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW);	WYPW is a young peoples network in 71 countries contributing to universal access with local action.
Indigenous People	The UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UN-PFII);	Advisory body to the ECOSOC mandated to discuss indigenous issues related to economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights.
Workers Unions	Public Services International (PSI)	PSI is a global union federation that represents 20 million working women and men who deliver vital public services in 150 countries
<b>Functional Partnerships</b>	<b>Description</b>	
European Water Stewardship (EWS)	Lead actors are business, farmers and municipalities; the EWS water stewardship principles promote partnership building for inclusive and sustainable water governance in the sphere of influence of the lead actors.	
Cultivando Agua Boa, Itaipu Binacional	Cultivando Agua Boa is the water and environmental stewardship programme that Itaipu Binacional, the joint hydropower plant of Brazil and Paraguay, is implementing since 2003. CAB has a focus on social inclusion and on strengthening and involving Local Authorities, Farmers and minorities in the river basins and water sheds.	