

*As of 17 July 2017*

## **Draft Concept Note**

### **Third UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters**

**“Adaptation to Climate Change, Boosting Financing and Investment, and Advancing Science and Technology”**

**20 July 2017**

**Conference Room4, The UN Headquarters, New York, U.S.A.**

#### **1. Background**

In November 2015, the Second United Nations Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters was held by the initiative of the UN Secretary-General, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Water, and the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters. About 500 representatives of the member states and diverse stakeholders shared the recognitions and understanding that addressing the issue of “water and disasters” is critical element and the core of achieving sustainable development.

Water related disasters account for 90% of all disasters in terms of number of people affected, and could be a major obstacle in achieving our common aspirations for eradicating poverty, promoting inclusive economic growth, preserving the environment, and ultimately, moving towards sustainability. Disaster risks will increase with the current trend of rapid population growth and urbanization, and climate change will cause more frequent and intense climate related hazards occurring across the world.

Climate change is expected to impact many countries, particularly small island states and other developing countries that are highly vulnerable, and cause devastating impacts through extreme weather events. Recent global agreements including the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and COP21 Paris Agreement, all call for addressing water-related extreme events and climate change adaptation in more concerted and integrated way.

The political commitments made must be matched by finance and appropriate policies. Investing in water and disasters can save lives, avoid the destruction of vital infrastructure, and make a significant difference in achieving the national and international goals of ending poverty and ensuring sustainable and equitable growth for all.

Achieving the globally agreed goals also requires sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology and experiences among countries and relevant entities. Science community plays a pivotal role in bridging knowledge gaps among divergent actors involved in disaster risk reduction and in providing information and tools to facilitate timely decisions.

The Third UN Special Thematic Session is proposed to continue the global dialogue and maintain high level of awareness on the issues of water and disasters among UN member states so as to promote further actions required to address the issue. The primary objective of the event is to overarch the issue of Water-related Extreme Events, which are crucial for achievement of sustainable development. The event will provide a concrete step forward towards implementation of globally agreed agendas, and will become a milestone for relevant major UN conferences.

## **2. Expected outcome**

Messages and recommendations to be delivered to the relevant major UN conferences/outcomes including UNGA, COP23, plans of UN Decade of Action “Water for Sustainable Development” (2018-2028), Sendai follow-ups, High Level Panel on Water, and global review processes for achieving SDGs

## **3. Organizer**

UN Secretary-Generals’ Special Envoy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Water  
High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)

## **4. Co-organizers**

UN-WB High Level Panel on Water (HLPW)

## **5. Venue**

Conference Room 4, The UN Headquarters, New York

## **6. Proposed agenda**

**Morning: 10:00 am-1:00 pm**

### **(1) Opening Plenary**

#### **Opening Remarks**

- Opening Remarks, Dr. Han Seung-Soo, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disaster Risk Reduction and Water; Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea and Chair of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)
- Opening Remarks, H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly

#### **Keynote Speeches**

- Keynote Speech by H.E. Dr. János Áder, President, Hungary
- Keynote Speech by H.E. Dr. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, President, the Republic of Mauritius
- Keynote Speech by H.E. Mr. Henry Van Thio, Vice President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- Keynote Speech by H.E. Mr. Toshihiro Nikai, Secretary General of Liberal Democratic Party, Japan, representative of Prime Minister

#### **Keynote Lecture through Video**

- Keynote Lecture through Video by His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Naruhito of Japan

#### **Closing**

- Remarks, Mr. Wu Hongbo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs
- Closing by Dr. Han Seung-soo

### **(2) High level Panel Discussion**

- High level panel discussion to address key issues on water and disasters in order to raise global awareness, share experiences and lessons, and promote priority actions and activities towards achievement of internationally agreed goals, targets and agreement

such as 2030 Agenda, Sendai Framework and Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”.

- “Financing and Investment on Water-related DRR” will be focus of discussion

#### **Chair**

- H.E. Ms. Melanie Schultz Van Haegen, Minister of Infrastructure and Environment, Kingdom of the Netherlands

#### **Panelists**

- H.E. Mr. Nematullo Hikmatullozoda, Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Republic of Tajikistan
- H. E. Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Vice Chairperson of the National Disaster Management Committee (NDMC), Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- H.E. Mr. AHM Mustafa Kamal, Hon'ble Planning Minister, People's Republic of Bangladesh
- H.E. Dr. Masafumi Mori, Vice Minister for Engineering Affairs, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), Japan
- Lt. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Dr. Oyun Sanjaasuren, Chair of GWP, former Foreign Minister of Mongolia
- Mr. Rolf Alter, Director of Governance and Regional Development, OECD

**Break: 1:00 pm-3:00 pm**

**Afternoon: 3:00 pm-6:00-pm**

#### **(3) Special Session on Science and Technology**

- Special Session to discuss roles of science and technology in achieving internationally agreed goals and targets on water-related disaster risk reduction and how countries and promote and benefit from their development.

#### **Co-Chairs**

- Professor Toshio Koike, Director, ICHARM
- Professor Gretchen Kalonji, Dean, Institute of Disaster Management and Reconstruction, Sichuan University

#### **Keynote presentation**

- 1) Prof. Xie Heping, President, Sichuan University, People's Republic of China
- 2) Prof. Naoyuki Yoshino, Dean, the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI)
- 3) Dr. Jose Antonio Marengo, Senior Member, the Brazilian Academy of Sciences

#### **Discussion “Activating International Initiatives on Water and Disasters”**

- 1) Dr. Johannes Cullmann, Director, Climate and Water Department, WMO
- 2) Dr. Blanca Jimenez-Cisneros, Director, Division of Water Sciences, Secretary of the

International Hydrological Programme, UNESCO

**(4) Panel Discussion “Connecting Ocean, Water, and Disasters”**

- Following up the UN Ocean Conference in June, 2017, high level deliberation and panel discussion will be conducted to address issues connecting ocean, water, and disasters, such as integrated management of ocean and rivers against disasters, preventing oceanic pollution and environmental hazards by water-related disasters, and strengthening ocean monitoring to predict large-scale droughts and climatic extreme events.

**Panelists**

- H.E. Mr. Thoriq Ibrahim, Minister of Environment and Energy, Republic of Maldives
- Prof. Atsushi Sunami, Vice President, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Japan
- H.E. Mr. Luke Daunivalu, Chargé d’Affaires and Deputy Permanent Representative of Fiji to the UN
- Mr. Ricardo B. Jalad, Administrator of the Office of Civil Defense/ Executive Director of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, the Philippines
- Dr. Gil-Hong Kim, Senior Director concurrently Chief Sector Officer, Sector Advisory Service Cluster (SDSC), Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Dr. Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, former Chair of the Global Water Partnership and former Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development

**Moderator**

- Dr. Jerome Delli Priscoli, Chair of Technical Committee, Global Water Partnership

**(5) Wrap-up and closing**

- Remarks by H.E. Mr. Juan José Gómez-Camacho, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN
- Closing by Dr. Han Seung-soo

**Evening: 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm**

Reception hosted by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations (335 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017)