

**Concept Note**  
**Second UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters**  
**November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015**  
**The UN Headquarters, New York, the U.S.A.**

**1. Background**

In March 2013, the United Nations Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters and the High Level Panel on Water and Disaster were held at UN Headquarters in New York. Following these Events, Member States and the UN system sought to advocate for national, regional, and local policies and cooperation measures which could reduce disaster risks related to water.

Additionally, the United Nations Secretary General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB) has been working to raise awareness and build common understanding of global water issues, promote cooperation, and encourage responsible and sustainable water management practices. The High Level Panel on Water and Disaster (HLEP/UNSGAB) in its 2009 Water and Disaster Action Plan called for actions for the UN "to dedicate a substantial proportion of a future session to disaster management."

In March 2015, the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) was held in Sendai, Japan, at which participating States reviewed the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA), and adopted a successor framework, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Recognizing that disaster risk reduction advances progress on sustainable development and climate change, the Sendai Framework is a key pillar/element of the post-2015 development agenda, together with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and target indicators under the SDGs, which will be adopted at the SDG Summit in September 2015.

The proposed high-level event will build on the WCDRR, the Conference on Financing for Development, and the SDG Summit, and will become a milestone for the UNFCCC COP21 in Paris, Istanbul Humanitarian Summit and Habitat III. It will be a timely opportunity to highlight the issue of "Water and Disasters" in the context of these ongoing international processes and the internationally agreed frameworks. The primary objective of the event is to overarch the issue of Disaster Risk Reduction and Water, as well as other core global issues, which are closely interlinked with each other and are crucial for achievement of sustainable development. It also aims to send a message to the international community for the purpose of further promotion of necessary actions by respective stakeholders.

## **2. Rationale and objectives**

During the past decade, climate and water-related disasters have not only struck more frequently but have also been more severe. Over 90% of disasters in the world are water-related in terms of number of affected people. Disaster risk levels are driven by factors such as climate variability, poverty, poor land-use planning and management, as well as ecosystem degradation, and are increasing as more people and assets are located in areas of high risk.

The economic loss risk associated with water-related disasters such as floods and tropical cyclones is increasing in all regions, and the poor are suffering the most. The recent mega-water disasters have demonstrated that the issue of water and disasters is no longer a local issue, but is a global one, and cooperation and solidarity among nations is the only rational way forward.

The issue of “Water and Disasters” must be addressed with firm determination and without delay if we hope to make sustainable development a reality. It is high time to accelerate our efforts to share our experiences and lessons learned, strengthen regional coordination and collaboration, set common goals and targets in order to lay a foundation for weathering the water-related disasters to come, and make progress towards creating a better-prepared and resilient society.

## **3. Expected outcome**

- Messages and recommendations to be delivered to the relevant major UN conferences, including the UNFCCC COP 21 in November 2015, Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, and Habitat III in October 2016

## **4. Organizers**

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

## 5. Proposed agenda

**Date and time: 9:30-17:50 on Wednesday, November 18**

**Venue: UN Headquarters (New York)**

**9:30-10:30**

### **(1) Opening Plenary in the General Assembly Hall**

**Co-chairs: Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations and Dr. Han Seung-soo, UN Special Envoy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Water**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
9:30-9:40	Opening address	Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General
9:40-9:50	Congratulatory address	H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
9:50-10:20	Keynote lecture	HIH the Crown Prince of Japan
10:20-10:30	Closing remarks	Dr. Han Seung-Soo, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Water / Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea / Chair of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)

**11:00-12:50**

**(2) High Level Panel Debate on Water and Disasters in the Conference Room 4**

**Chair: Dr. Han Seung-soo, UN Special Envoy on Disaster Risk Reduction and Water**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
11:00-12:50 11:00-11:50	High Level Panel Discussion	<p>(1)Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H.E. Ms. Melanie Schultz van Haegen, Minister, Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment, Kingdom of the Netherlands</li> <li>• H.E. Mr. Keiichi Ishii, Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan</li> <li>• H.E. Mr. Amadou Mansour Faye, President of AMCOW / Minister of Hydraulics and Sanitation, Senegal</li> <li>• H.E. Dr. Basuki Hadimuljono, Minister, Department of Public Works and Public Housing, Republic of Indonesia</li> <li>• Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP</li> <li>• Mr. Bambang Susantono, Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, ADB</li> <li>• Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, Chief of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), United States of America</li> </ul>
11:50-12:45		<p>(2) Panel Discussion: Moderator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Kenzo Hiroki, Coordinator of HELP, Member of UNSGAB, Vice President of College of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (CLITT), MLIT, Japan</li> </ul> <p>High Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Young-mok Kim, President of Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)</li> <li>• H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations</li> <li>• Mr. Rolf Alter, Director for Public Governance and Territorial Development, OECD</li> <li>• Dr. Keizrul bin Abdullah, Chairperson, Network of Asian River Basin Organization (NARBO)</li> <li>• Dr. Ena Jaimes Espinoza, Senior Officer of the Processes Management Division, for the National Center for Prevention and Disaster Risk Reduction (CENEPRED) of Peru</li> <li>• Mr. Idibek Kalandarov, Head of the International Organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tajikistan</li> </ul>
12:45-12:50	Closing	Chair of the session

15:00-16:20

**(3) Major Group Panel – “Multi-stakeholder Partnership for Water-related DRR” in the Conference Room 4**

**Moderated by Global Water Partnership (GWP)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
15:00-15:03	Opening	Ms. Josefina Maestu-Unturbe, Director UN Office to Support the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” 2005-2015
15:03-15:13	Keynote speech	Dr. Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, Chair of Global Water Partnership (GWP)
15:13-15:23	Making the UN fit-for-purpose through global partnership based on holistic project management and stakeholder management	Dr. Sonja Ellmann, Head Project Management Office, Siemens Co  Mr. Erik Mansson, Mindshift Consulting
<b>Multi stakeholder panel round 1</b>		
15:23-15:48	Moderator	Ms. Josefina Maestu-Unturbe, Director UN Office to Support the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” 2005-2015
	Women	Drs. Alice Bouman-Dentener, Honorary Founding President, Women for Water Partnership
	Youth & Children	Ms. Asma Bachikh, President World Youth Parliament for Water (WYPW)
	Indigenous Peoples	Ms. Megan Davis, Chair of Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (tbc)
	Q&A	Interventions from the floor
<b>Multistakeholder panel round 2</b>		
15:48-16:13	Moderator	Ms. Josefina Maestu-Unturbe, Director UN Office to Support the International Decade for Action “Water for Life” 2005-2015
	Workers & Unions	Mr. David Boys, Deputy Secretary General of Public Services International (PSI)
	Business, farmers, local authorities	Mr. Tom Vereijken, Co-founder and Former Chair of European Water Partnership (EWP)
	Q&A	Interventions from the floor
16:13-16:18	Synthesis	Dr. Wolfgang Kron, Head of Research for Hydrological Hazards, Munich Re and Advisor of HELP
16:18-16:20	Closure	Dr. Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, Chair of Global Water Partnership

**16:20-17:40**

**(4) Science Technology Panel – “Science and Technology to Advance DRR on Water” in the Conference Room 4**

**Moderated by Science Council of Japan (SCJ) and International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
16:20-16:28	Objectives and relevance of the technical session and introduction of speakers	Dr. Toshio Koike, Professor the University of Tokyo and Director, International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM)
16:28-16:44	National and Regional Flood and Drought Issues	Dr. Carlos Nobre, President of CAPES, Agency for Graduate and Post-Graduate Education of Brazil  Dr. Wadid Erian, Senior Advisor, League of Arab States
16:44-16:52	Contribution by the Earth Observation Communities	Mr. Kiyoshi Higuchi, Senior Technical Advisor, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and President, International Astronautical Federation (IAF)
16:52-17:08	Activating International Initiatives	Dr. Johannes Cullmann, Director, Climate and Water Department, WMO  Dr. Blanca Jimenez-Cisneros, Director, Division of Water Sciences, Secretary of the International Hydrological Programme, UNESCO
17:08-17:33	Panel Discussion on how to promote inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary cooperation for designing and implementing flood and drought risk reduction	all presenters
17:33-17:40	Summary of commitments and conclusion by the Chair	Dr. Toshio Koike, the Chair

**17:40-17:50**

**(5) Closing Plenary in the Conference Room 4**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
17:40-17:47	Special Remarks	Ms. Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Disaster Risk Reduction
17:47-17:50	Wrap-up by Co-Chair	Dr. Han Seung-Soo, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Water / Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea / Chair of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)