

Eleventh Meeting of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters The Summary of the Meeting followed by the Minutes of the Meeting

3 May 2018, Geneva, Switzerland

The Eleventh Meeting of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) was held on 3 May 2018 at the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting was co-hosted by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), and was attended by 33 participants from HELP member organizations representing national governments, international organizations, academia, civil society and private sectors.

Opening of the Meeting

Dr. Han Seung-soo, the Chair of HELP, gave the opening remarks, followed by the welcome remarks by Ms. Elena Manaenkova, Deputy Secretary-General, WMO and Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNISDR. Speech by Dr. Han will be uploaded on HELP website soon.

Approval of new members

New HELP members and advisors were proposed by the Chair, approved by members and appointed by the Chair. Five members and one advisor were appointed to replace retired HELP members. One member and two advisors were newly appointed.

Special High-Level Guest Speech

Co-Chair of High-Level Panel on Water (HLPW) delivered his speech.

Remarks by High-Level Participants

Remarks were delivered by H.E. Dr. Masafumi Mori, Vice-Minister for Engineering Affairs, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan; followed by Hon. Eng Alier Bullen Ngong Oka, Undersecretary of Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation of South Sudan on behalf of the President of African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW); the Honorable Minister of Water of the United Republic of Tanzania; Dr. Benedito Braga, President of World Water Council, and; Dr. Danis Sumadilaga, Director General of Research and Development Agency on behalf of H. E. Dr. Basuki Hadimuljono, Minister of Public Works and Housing, Republic of Indonesia.

Presentations

Two representatives from member organizations presented their recent activity and research relating to water and disasters.

Mr. Stephane Jacobzone, Counsellor, Public Governance, OECD presented a newly released OECD report entitled, "Assessing the Real Cost of Disasters" in which they attempt to estimate the cost of disasters, discuss existing problems, and stress the need to enhance the comparability of DRM expenditure information from OECD and partner countries.

By video, Prof. Naoyuki Yoshino, Dean of the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) presented a study on the effects of disasters, in particular floods, on regional economies, based on regional GDP data.

Plenary Discussion

The Plenary Discussion consisted of three parts; 1) recent HELP-related activities, 2) HELP flagship initiatives and 3) future activities of HELP.

First, the panel was briefed on the outcomes of the 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Summit. The 3rd APWS, held on December 11th and 12th, 2017 in Yangon, Myanmar, garnered high-level participation, including Heads of State. The 3rd APWS adopted and issued the Yangon Declaration.

The members were also briefed on the outcomes of the 8th World Water Forum, which was held March 18th-23rd, 2018, in Brasilia, Brazil. During the 8th World Water Forum, a high-level panel

entitled “Special Session on Water and Disasters” was held on 19th March, with high-level participation including: H.E. Mr. János Áder, President of Hungary, HIH Crown Prince Naruhito of Japan and H.E. Mr. Ohn Winn, Union Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation of Myanmar.

The panel was also briefed on the outcome document of HLPW “Making Every Drop Count” which was handed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 14th March 2018. The HLPW’s mandate is concluded with the release of this outcome document. Following these reports, implementation of the flagship initiatives and recommendations of HLPW were discussed. Finally, members were informed on HELP’s next steps to promote actions on water and disasters. Details on the future activities, including flagship initiatives, were further discussed in the breakout sessions.

Breakout Session I

Breakout Session 1: Financing and Investing in Water and Disasters

The session was chaired by H.E. Dr. Masafumi Mori, MLIT, Japan and moderated by Mr. Tomoyuki Okada, MLIT, Japan.

At this session, the outlines of the Principles on Investment and Financing for Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction and prospected future plans for launching the Principles were discussed. It was proposed that consultations with HELP members continue through this year during international conferences and meetings, to further refine the Principles.

Breakout Session 2: Flagship Documents of HELP and HELP Review and Recommended Initiatives

The session was chaired by Dr. Jerome Delli Priscoli, GWP Technical Committee.

Dr. Jerome Delli Priscoli reported on the progress made in editing the third edition of the Water Policy Journal, being developed as a flagship document of HELP. “Case studies to be included in the Flagship Documents of HELP, as well as, HELP Review and Recommendations Initiative” are proposed as the main topics of the issue. It was proposed that topics include both flood and drought issues. It was also proposed that flood issues include urban flood issues and the effects of dams. In particular, the importance of investment and finance for water-related issues will be highlighted. Fifteen individual case studies that include a variety of topics and regions are to be selected.

Breakout Session II

Breakout Session 3: HELP Action on the Climate Change Process

The session was chaired by Mr. Niels Vlaanderen, Ministry of Infrastructure and the Water Management, Netherlands and Mr. Cees van de Guchte, Deltares, Netherlands.

Stressing the need that Disaster Risk Reduction ought to be positioned in the political process of Climate Change, it was suggested that HELP should use the prep-COP 24 to advocate its messages to the greater water community and beyond. It was recommended that the HELP initiative include guidance for prevention-based decision-making, which requires accessing resources to ensure future analysis is built into the Climate Change agenda. It was suggested HELP should liaise with the UN system, especially UNISDR, to promote DRR. It was reaffirmed that drought disaster should continue to figure prominently on the agenda, as most of the African countries suffer from droughts.

Breakout Session 4: Alliance of Alliances for Research on DRR

The session was co-chaired by Prof. Toshio Koike, International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM), Japan, and Dr. Gretchen Kalonji, Sichuan University.

The Alliance of Alliances on DRR Researches which was discussed in Gyeongju, was further elaborated and discussed. It was proposed that the Alliance, as an integrated framework, play the following roles to advance disaster reduction: communications, analytical, catalytic and a supportive

role. In the discussion, participants recognized the need for Alliance of Alliances to infuse policy-making processes with sound science and technological precepts.

Plenary Discussion

Chairs of the above breakout sessions presented the session summaries to the members.

Following the session summaries, proposals and comments were made, namely:

It was proposed that research should bridge the nexus connections between floods, droughts and ecosystems, as a basis upon which to formulate policy decisions.

A DRR collaboration between HELP and UN-ISDR was proposed, including for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to be co-hosted by UN-ISDR and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Geneva in May 2019.

The Chair of HELP declared that the four initiatives were approved and would be advanced as proposed.

Other Matters

The Chair of HELP proposed that the next meeting of HELP be held tentatively in October, November, or December, 2018 in Tokyo, Japan. It was proposed that a field trip to the areas seriously hit by the tsunami of the Great East Earthquake in 2011 be organized in conjunction with the HELP meeting.

Mr. Fakhridin Nabiev, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Geneva, briefed members on the critical situation of the Aral Sea, which has dried up. He indicated that Uzbekistan might possibly host the 13th HELP meeting.

Dr. Wolfgang Kron, Head of Research for Hydrological Hazards, MunichRe, introduced a periodical journal with a feature on disasters, as well as an article on an interview with Dr. Han.

Wrap-Up and Closing

The Chair of HELP provided members with the opportunity for further comments, and declared that, through common agreement, the Flagship Initiatives and other related actions would be implemented by the chairs of the breakout sessions.