

## **Concept Note**

### **The Fifth UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters “Building Back Better towards More Resilient and Sustainable Post-COVID-19 World” June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

#### **1. Background and Objective**

The UN Special Thematic Sessions on Water and Disasters (STSWD5) will be held online on Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to globally raise awareness and promote actions for building back better towards more resilient and sustainable society in the post-COVID-19 era by addressing the issues of water and disasters as well as other development issues, such as urbanization, food, environment, and climate change. The UN Special Thematic Sessions on Water and Disasters (STSWD) have been held biennially since 2013.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has gravely affected the countries all over the world socially and economically and disrupted efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In the current COVID-19 environment, immediate attentions of the national leaders, governments and people in the world have been focused on mitigating COVID-19 infection. However, the threats of water-related disasters remain as imminent now as before COVID-19. Millions of people around the world have been affected and thousands of people lost their lives due to water-related disasters which are increasingly frequent with the impact of various global changes. Urgent actions are needed to prevent concurrent catastrophes of water-related disasters and COVID-19 aggravating each other.

It is vital to globally raise political awareness and share the experiences and good practices with practical guidance amongst leaders, DRR and COVID-19 managers, private sector, civil society and all stakeholders to cope with these challenges by the co-occurring disasters and mitigate their impacts. The political commitments made must be matched by appropriate policies and investment given the current and future situation of society with COVID-19 and water-related disasters. Implementation of disaster risk reduction strategy with this current global crisis as well as post-COVID-19 era in mind is essential. Sharing experience and lessons, coordinating policies, and strategizing actions to cope with the twin pandemic today will make significant difference in achieving the national and international goals of ending poverty and ensuring sustainable and equitable growth for all in the future.

STSWD5 will keep momentum of the previous Sessions in raising high-level political awareness and urging actions on the issues of water and disasters among UN member states. The Session will focus on sharing experience and promoting actions to realize a sustainable, resilient and climate adaptive society in the post-COVID-19 era based on the lessons learned from the Pandemic. The event will provide a concrete step towards acceleration of globally agreed agendas to be back on track by providing with useful lessons, innovative ideas, and common understandings to future milestone events on water and other SDGs such as the High-level Political Forums, Food Systems Summit in 2021, UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028 in 2023, and key regional initiatives such as the 4<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Water Summit in 2022.

## **2. Expected outcome**

- Chair's Summary on the outcomes of the Session
- Messages and recommendations of the Session to be delivered to the relevant major UN conferences

## **3. Organizers/sponsors**

- UN Member States (Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, The Netherlands, Republic of Korea and Tajikistan), High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) and National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) of Japan

## **4. Date**

Friday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## **5. Duration**

- 1) Science and Technology Panel: 75 minutes  
(Break: 45 minutes)
- 2) Plenary Session: 105 minutes  
(Break: 15 minutes)
- 3) High-level Panel Discussion: 90 minutes
- 4) Wrap-up and closing: 10 minutes

## **6. Start time**

Science and Technology Panel: New York 5:30 am (EDT, UTC-4), Central Europe 11:30 am (CEST, UTC+2), Jakarta/Bangkok 4:30 pm (WIB/TST, UTC+7), Manila 5:30 pm (PST, UTC+8), Seoul/Tokyo 6:30 pm (KST/JST, UTC+9)

Plenary Session: New York 7:30 am (EDT, UTC-4), Central Europe 1:30 pm (CEST, UTC+2), Jakarta/Bangkok 6:30 pm (WIB/TST, UTC+7), Manila 7:30 pm (PST, UTC+8), Seoul/Tokyo 8:30 pm (KST/JST, UTC+9)

High-level Panel Discussion: New York 9:30 am (EDT, UTC-4), Central Europe 3:30 pm (CEST, UTC+2), Jakarta/Bangkok 8:30 pm (WIB/TST, UTC+7), Manila 9:30 pm (PST, UTC+8), Seoul/Tokyo 10:30 pm (KST/JST, UTC+9)

## **7. Format**

Virtual

## **8. Language**

English

## 9. Provisional Agenda

### (1) Science and Technology Panel (75 minutes)

Start time: New York 5:30 am, Central Europe 11:30 am, Jakarta/Bangkok 4:30 pm, Manila 5:30 pm, Seoul/Tokyo 6:30 pm

#### Facilitators

- Dr. Gretchen Kalonji, Dean, Institute for Disaster Management and Reconstruction, Sichuan University
- Prof. Toshio Koike, Executive Director, International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM)

#### Agenda

- Introduction (4min)
- Opening
  - Opening Remarks by Prof. Akihiko Tanaka, President, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) (3min)
  - Keynote Speech by Prof. Xu Weilin, Executive Vice President, Sichuan University/Director of the State Key Laboratory on Hydraulics and Mountain River Engineering (5 min)
- Speaker presentations (30 min)
  - Dr. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO
  - Dr. Elena Manaenkova, Deputy Secretary-General, WMO
  - Mr. Ricardo Mena, Director, UNDRR
  - Dr. Blanca Elena Jimenez Cisneros, former Director-General, National Water Commission (CONAGUA), Mexico
  - Prof. Joy Jacqueline Pereira, Southeast Asia Disaster Prevention Research Initiative (SEADPRI-UKM), Malaysia

(Break :5 min)

- Panelist interventions (25 min)
- Wrap-up (3 min)

*(Break: 45 minutes)*

## **(2) Plenary Session (105 minutes)**

Start time: New York 7:30 am, Central Europe 1:30 pm, Jakarta/Bangkok 6:30 pm, Manila 7:30 pm, Seoul/Tokyo 8:30 pm

### **Opening Remarks**

- Dr. Han Seung-Soo, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea and Chair of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)
- H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations
- H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

### **Keynote Speeches**

- His Majesty the Emperor of Japan
- H.E. Mr. János Áder, President, Hungary  
*(Break: 5 minutes)*
- H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President, The Republic of Tajikistan
- H.E. Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces
- H.E. Ms. Sheikh Hasina, Honorable Prime Minister of Bangladesh
- HRH Princess Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden, Duchess of Västergötland

### **Thematic Messages**

- H.E. Prof. Danilo Türk, Former President of the Republic of Slovenia, Chair of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace and Lead Political Advisor of the Geneva Water Hub
- Dr. Uschi Eid, Former Chair of United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB)/ President of the German-Africa Foundation
- Prof. Kenzo Hiroki, HELP Coordinator: Launching HELP Guiding Principles to Build Resilient Post-corona World and HELP Global Report on Water and Disasters 2021

*(Break: 15 minutes)*

### **(3) High-level Panel Discussion (90 minutes)**

Start time: New York 9:30 am, Central Europe 3:30 pm, Jakarta/Bangkok 8:30 pm, Manila 9:30 pm, Seoul/Tokyo 10:30 pm

#### **Moderator**

- H.E. Ms. Cora van Nieuwenhuizen, Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Netherlands

#### **Panelists**

- H.E. Dr. Basuki Hadimuljono, Minister for Public Works and Housing, Indonesia
- Mr. Bambang Susantono, Vice President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, Asian Development Bank
- H.E. Mr. Kazuyoshi Akaba, Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan
- Major General William (Butch) H. Graham, Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Mr. Gilbert F. Hougbo, Chair of UN-Water / President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- Prof. Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- Prof. Howard Bamsey, Chair, Global Water Partnership (GWP)
- Mr. Loic Fauchon, President, World Water Council (WWC)
- Mr. Ilkka Salmi, Director of Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Directorate, European Commission
- Mr. Masamichi Kono, Deputy Secretary-General, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

### **(4) Wrap-up and closing (10 minutes)**

Start time: New York 11:00 am, Central Europe 5:00 pm, Jakarta/Bangkok 10:00 pm, Manila 11:00 pm, Seoul/Tokyo 0:00 am

- Message from “Water Dialogues for Results - Bonn 2021” by Mr. Thomas Stratenwerth, Working Group Leader, Working Group General Aspects of Water Management, Adaptation to Climate Change, Health in Climate Change, Federal Ministry for Environment, Germany
- Remarks by Mr. Liu Zhenmin, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs
- Closing by Dr. Han Seung-Soo, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea and Chair of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)