

**Statement to the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference for Ministers responsible for Meteorological Services.**

**Kenyatta International Conference Center, Nairobi, Kenya, April 15.  
Ms Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction.**

Your Excellency Chairman of the Conference, Honorable Ministers,  
Excellencies,

It is my honor to be able to address this unique Conference today as you conclude your proceedings. It is timely and important that attention and focus be given to how National Meteorological and Hydrological Services can be strengthened in order to be equipped to provide decision-makers in public and private sectors and many individual users with critical and reliable information supporting decisions that touch on social, financial and safety for people and countries.

In this same building we are meeting as Disaster Risk Reduction community to update and prepare for a Ministerial Conference to take place tomorrow, an extended Plan of Action to reduce disaster risk in Africa. The International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction is a multi-Stakeholder forum engaging Governmental, scientific, civil society national and regional organizations worldwide in a shared and interdependent determination to reduce the impact of disaster risk on people and countries. WMO is an active participant in the Strategy.

An increasing number of people in Africa, and in the world, are exposed to natural hazards and risks because of more people living in vulnerable areas and exploiting vulnerable resources. The cost of disasters to countries and individuals is rapidly increasing. For these very real and practical reasons, the importance and necessity of working closely together with all sectors and all expertise is strongly recognized and called for in the guiding instrument for international disaster risk reduction, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 Building the resilience of nations. What national and international experience to reduce disaster risk has highlighted as a main constraint for progress, is lack of adequate, inclusive coordination mechanisms that help information sharing and decision making regarding policy directions and implementation methods. We encourage and welcome that your services will be an active partner in these national mechanism to help making the work to reduce the impact of disasters more effective. This

is a win win partnership. In this health services, infra structure, agriculture, land use planning, transport and communications, planning and finance services are all included as well as social organizations and media and community organizations. Every sector has a role in reducing disaster risk and save lives and livelihoods.

Risks are most effectively reduced locally with the support of a well informed public. We therefore appreciate the significance of the work you are doing in this conference as you consider how to effectively and timely cooperate with all users of vital weather and climate information – demands are increasing dramatically due to a rapidly increasing interest in and understanding of what weather forecasts mean in our daily lives. Agriculture, fishery, water resources management, energy supply, tourism, transport systems – all direct users that depend on reliable and timely provision of weather and climate data. More cooperation will result in more sustainable development.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to take part in your expert meeting two days ago through a panel representing a wide range of risk reduction experts, all your partners at national level. This Panel demonstrates how we will together develop new ways of working and mobilizing resources and capacity for the necessary service and information delivery.

Our congratulations to the success of this Conference and we commit to work together to achieving the goals set that we can only accomplish together.

Thank you