

PRESS RELEASE

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Uganda Environment Minister launches special session on DRR during 29th Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum

Entebbe (Uganda), 2 September 2011 – The Minister of State for Environment, Hon. Flavia Munaaba, launched a special joint session on disaster risk reduction during the Twenty-Ninth Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF29). The aim of the special session is to move towards a “paradigm” shift when addressing climate change and risks for sustainable development in the Region.

“Despite accurate climate forecasting and early warning, drought in East Africa is having unacceptable impacts in too many countries. Therefore, it is an appropriate time to move from a ‘fire brigade approach’ to one based upon proactive risk reduction for sustainable development,” said Youcef Ait Chellouche, Deputy Regional Coordinator for UNISDR’s regional office for Africa during the opening ceremony of the forum.

The recommendations and outcomes from the GHACOF29 and the special session on disaster risk reduction in Entebbe will feed into a heads of state summit planned from 8-9 September. The Prime Minister of Kenya, Right Hon. Raila Odinga plans to hold next week’s summit to discuss how to put an end to “drought emergencies” in the greater Horn of Africa.

UNISDR attended the GHACOF29 and the special session to acknowledge the need to move away from a ‘business as usual’ attitude when addressing risks, particularly ones related to drought and climate change adaptation. Mr. Chellouche spoke about the key gaps and opportunities for disaster risk reduction in the region, including using the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to ensure integration and coherence of DRR initiatives. Justin Ginnetti, from UNISDR’s headquarters in Geneva, presented key findings from the 2011 Global Assessment Report, highlighting the progress in reducing drought risk, the challenges that remain, and possible ways forward to assess and reduce risks more effectively in the greater Horn of Africa. Disaster risk reduction advisors from the East African Community, IGAD and Uganda also participated in the session.

The GHACOF29 is co-organized by the IGAD Climate Application Centre (ICPAC), the World Bank’s Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and UNISDR. Held from 1-3 September 2011, the three-day forum has gathered over 100 climate experts, practitioners, donors, and representatives from NGOs, civil society, the media, governments, and UN agencies. Representatives from Kenya’s Office of the Prime Minister, Somalia and Uganda were also in attendance, as well as Member State representatives from the Greater Horn of Africa region.

For more information about this event contact:

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