

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION STATEMENT AT THE  
SECOND SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

by  
M. Jarraud  
Secretary-General  
World Meteorological Organization  
(Geneva, 18 June 2009)

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,  
Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and its Secretary-General, Mr M. Jarraud, I wish to express our appreciation to the ISDR, for the kind invitation to address this key meeting, which is an exceptional opportunity for UN System-wide efforts in disaster risk reduction and follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA).

Although the human and economic losses caused by natural disasters were again devastating in 2008, the overall trends continue to show that, as the number of disasters and related economic losses rose steadily over the last five decades, the loss of life associated with hydro-meteorological hazards fell by a factor of 10, in particular as a consequence of appropriate early warning systems implemented in combination with effective emergency preparedness and response planning.

The Fourth Assessment Report of the WMO co-sponsored IPCC has confirmed that a number of weather- and climate-related extreme events are expected to rise in frequency and severity over the next decades. The IPCC is currently starting to outline its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), to be finalized in 2014, as well as a new Special Reports on Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation, due in 2011.

It is therefore indeed vital that all disasters continue to be monitored and analyzed meticulously, so the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, launched in Manama last month has been a milestone event to further advance in climate change studies and in the implementation of the HFA.

In particular, from the WMO perspective, the Global Assessment Report has highlighted the need for:

- Augmented and sustained observations, especially from the developing world;
- Enhanced disaster risk reduction and prevention, in particular through the modernization of the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs);
- Further strengthening of operational early warning systems, especially through a multi-hazard approach;
- Extensive capacity building in hazard monitoring, forecasting and analysis, especially in the developing countries;
- Enhanced risk awareness and improved partnerships at all levels, in particular cooperation strengthening of WMO networks with all the relevant disaster risk management stakeholders.

The first two World Climate Conferences, organized by WMO with partners in 1979 and 1990, were groundbreaking in heralding climate change awareness and contributing to the development of observational and research capacities. However, nearly 20 years have passed and the borders of weather and climate prediction have merged seamlessly, so improved information and tools are now available to empower decision-makers in optimally managing the risks and opportunities related to weather and climate impacts on vulnerable sectors.

Accordingly, from 31 August to 4 September 2009, WMO, Switzerland and the UN System will convene in Geneva the Third World Climate Conference (WCC-3), under the theme “climate prediction and information for decision-making”. The WCC-3 will also provide key input to the UNFCCC fifteenth Conference of the Parties (Copenhagen, December 2009), by contributing to establish a Global Framework for Climate Services linking scientific predictions and information with climate-risk management and adaptation to the anticipated impacts of global climate variability and change, in addition to addressing food security, water quality, health and other climate-associated risks.

I therefore look forward to an active participation of the ISDR System in the WCC-3. Let us continue to work together in making our world a safer place.

Thank you.