

Draft Concept Note
Fourth UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters
Monday, June 24th, 2019
ECOSOC Chamber, the UN Headquarters, New York, the U.S.A.

1. Background and Objective

Water is life. Water is also threat to life. Water related disasters account for 90% of all disasters in terms of number of people affected. Climate change is expected to impact countries, particularly small island countries and other developing countries that are highly vulnerable, and cause devastating impacts through extreme weather events. Recent global agreements including the Sendai Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and COP21 Paris Agreement, all call for addressing water-related extreme events and climate change adaptation in more concerted and integrated way for progressing towards and realizing sustainable development.

The political commitments made must be matched by finance and appropriate policies. Investing in water and disasters can save lives, avoid the destruction of vital infrastructure, and make a significant difference in achieving the national and international goals of ending poverty and ensuring sustainable and equitable growth for all.

Achieving the globally agreed goals also requires sharing and transfer of knowledge, technology and experiences among countries and relevant entities. Science community plays a pivotal role in bridging knowledge gaps among divergent actors involved in disaster risk reduction and in providing information and tools to facilitate timely decisions.

In July 2017, the Third United Nations Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters was held. About 500 representatives of the member states and diverse stakeholders including Heads of States, Ministers and Heads of International/Stakeholder Organizations shared the recognitions and understanding that addressing the issue of “water and disasters” is critical element and the core of achieving sustainable development.

The Fourth UN Special Thematic Session is proposed to continue the global dialogue and maintain high level of awareness on the issues of water and disasters among UN member states so as to promote further actions required to address the issue. The primary objective of the event is to overarch the issue of Water-related Extreme Event, which are to be placed at the core of Adaptation to Climate Change and are crucial for achievement of sustainable development. The event will provide a concrete step forward towards implementation of globally agreed agendas, and will become a milestone for future actions such as, the implementation of the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 including the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review in 2023 and a high-level meeting in 2021, and the UNFCCC COP processes.

2. Expected outcome

- Chair's Summary on the outcomes of the Session
- Reports, messages and recommendations of the Session to be delivered to the relevant major UN conferences;
 - Global Report on Water and Disasters, and
 - Principles on Investment and Financing for Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction

3. Organizers

- Co-sponsors: UN Member States (Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Tajikistan) and High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)
- Supporting Agencies: UN Agencies (UNISDR, WMO, UNESCO, etc.)

4. Venue

- ECOSOC Chamber, the UN Headquarters, New York

5. Proposed agenda

Morning

(1) Opening Plenary (10:00-11:30)

- 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)
- Opening Remarks, H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations (tbc)
- Opening Remarks, H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly (tbc)
- Opening Remarks, H.E. Mr. Luis Alfonso De Alba, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the 2019 Climate Action Summit (tbc)
- Keynote Speeches by Heads of States and Dignitaries
 - H.E. Mr. Peter Mutharika, President of Republic of Malawi (tbc)
 - H.E. Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of Republic of Mozambique (tbc)
 - H.E. Mr. Emmerson Mnangagwa, President of Republic of Zimbabwe (tbc)
 - H.E. Mr. Danilo Türk, former President of Republic of Slovenia/ Chair of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace

(2) High Level Panel Discussion (11:30-13:00)

Chair: Ms. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) (tbc)

Speakers:

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

H.E. Mr. Basuki Hadimuljono, Minister of Public Works and Public Housing, Indonesia (tbc)

Hon. Norbert Emmanuel Tony Ondo MBA, President of the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW)/Minister of Water, Energy and Mines, Gabon (tbc)

H.E. Mr. Christos Stylianides, Commissioner, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, European Union (tbc)

H.E. Mr. Sirojiddin Muhridinovich, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tajikistan (tbc)

H.E. Mr. Myung-Rae CHO, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea (tbc)

H.E. Mr. Shozo Kudo, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan

LTG Mr. Todd Samonite, Chief of United States Corps of Engineers, U.S.A.

Ms. Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Lunch Time

(3) Special Session "Build Back Better from Cyclone Idai – Lessons Learnt and Actions to Reduce Climate Change Impact in the Future-" (13:30-14:45)

Chair: Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (tbc)

Speakers:

- Representatives from three affected countries; Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe
- Experts and resource persons from the Member States and United Nations organizations/agencies

Afternoon

(4) Science and Technology Summit to Address Water and Disasters (15:00-16:20)

Chair: Dr. Petteri Taalas, Secretary General of World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Prof. Gordon MacBean, President of International Science Council

Prof. Akihiko Tanaka, President of National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Japan

Prof. Li Yanrong, President of Sichuan University, China

Dr. Alex Halliday, Director of the Earth Institute, Columbia University, U.S.A.

Prof. Choi Gyewoon, President, Society of Korean Smart Water Grid/Former CEO of K-Water (tbc)

Prof. Toshio Koike, Director, Director, International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM)

Dr. Monika Weber-Fahr, Executive Secretary of Global Water Partnership

(5) Special Session on Financing and Investment in Water and Disasters (16:20-17:40)

Chair: Ms. Jennifer Sara, Senior Director, World Bank

Mr. Bambang Susantono, Vice President of Asian Development Bank

Dr. Blanca Jiménez Cisneros, Director-General, Comisión Nacional del Agua (CONAGUA), Mexico

Mr. Loic Fauchon, President of World Water Council

Ms. Claire Melamed, Chief Executive Officer, Global Partnership for Sustainable Data

Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren, Director, Green Climate Fund

(6) Closing Plenary (17:40-18:00)

Coalition for “Resilience and Adaptation” of the UN 2019 Climate Summit

Wrap-up and Closing by Chair

Evening

Reception to be hosted by the Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and other co-sponsoring countries