**Launch of Integrated Drought Management Programme**
**High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy, 13 March 2013**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Bill McKibben, the ecologist has said, "humanity used to be ruled by the larger forces of nature. Now we are those larger forces". Quoted in WWDR2, in the days when I was working for UN Water, and it has stayed with me over the years.

Make no mistake, things will get worse before they get better.

Ban Ki Moon has said, "the abnormal is the new normal" (in his speech to the delegates at COP18 in Doha). We have disturbed the hydrological cycle, and it will take a long time before we learn to manage our planet, manage our climate, and return to a more temperate Earth. In the meantime, climatic extremes are fast becoming the greatest challenge of our times.

GWP's role is to bring together people and organisations in new ways, to tackle these emerging challenges.  We are a global network of 2,800 partner Organizations, in 167 countries, organized through CWPs and RWPs.  In a sense GWP is an organisational form of the future that exists today - inclusive, non- hierarchical. We work together with UN agencies, and with UN Water, and through IDMP GWP is helping to connect the tremendous global expertise and knowledge resources of WMO with the organisations, governments, civil society, private sector, academia ...  in the countries and regions of the world where droughts are causing more and more human suffering and economic losses.

Droughts have a severe impact on water availability and quality, agricultural and energy production, and ecosystem health. There is an urgent need to develop better drought monitoring and risk management systems, and for countries to have frameworks in place to manage drought risks through an integrated approach. This programme aims to support countries in this endeavour, within their regional contexts. The aims are:
  - to support the development of national and regional drought policies and monitoring frameworks
  - to disseminate best practices on drought and water resources management
  - to connect the users of climate information with the providers of this information, the national hydromet services and the regional climate centres, in this the programme aims to support the User Interface Platform of the GFCS.

This is similar to the APFM which has been running successfully and supporting countries in integrated flood management for over 10 years now, also a joint initiative between GWP and WMO. Within the perspective of IWRM, it is important to manage water better throughout all climatic conditions, whether they bring too much or too little water.  Within GWP, both the flood management and the drought management programmes are part of a suite of climate programmes, which seek to build climate resilience through improving water security.

Four regional drought programmes are being supported by GWP, one already launched in Central and Eastern Europe, and three in preparation in South Asia, Eastern Africa and West Africa.

In Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), the IDMP promotes drought management to increase the capacity and ability of the region to adapt to climate variability and enhance drought resilience. In cooperation with national hydrometeorological institutions, river basin authorities, ministries, and research institutions, the project will implement monitoring and risk assessments to share best practices at local, national, and regional levels.

In West Africa, GWP is developing a pilot project around the Liptako Gourma dry land area involving Niger and Burkina Faso. The project will contribute to capacity building of key stakeholders in the management of risks associated with drought, and improvement in agro-forestry and breeding activities in areas affected by drought.

On behalf of GWP and our partners, I thank WMO for great collaboration, for an excellent conference together with UN partners, FAO, UNCCD. GWP and our partners are committed to implement the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy.

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