

Statement to the closing session of the High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP), Geneva, Switzerland, 15 March 2013

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues

This week has been a remarkable testament to the vision, the passion and commitment of hundreds of people around the world to tackle the scourge of drought, to put in place proactive policies which can build drought resilience in communities and countries, to reduce the suffering and the numbers of people affected by these slow creeping disasters.

I would like to extend warm thanks and congratulations to our hosts, WMO, to the key UN partners, UNCCD and FAO. And I would like to congratulate all the distinguished delegates on agreeing this historic declaration on national drought policy, which paves the way for further work worldwide on building drought resilience.

On Wednesday this week, the Integrated Drought Management Programme was launched, as a joint programme between GWP, WMO and many other partners. At global level this programme will be anchored here at WMO, within the Climate and Water Department, 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.

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

The Global Water Partnership has a special relationship with WMO as WMO joined together with a number of governments to create GWP as a new intergovernmental organization, back in 2002, with the vision of building a water secure world. GWP already has an MOU with FAO, signed in 2002, and I hope that in the near future we will also conclude an MOU with UNCCD in order to work on drought and land degradation issues. We will also link with UNESCO. GWP's role is to bring together people and organisations in new ways, to tackle emerging challenges. We are a global network of 2,800 partner Organizations, in 167 countries, organized through CWPs and RWPs. We currently have 80 accredited Country Water Partnerships and 13 Regional WPs worldwide, with partner Organizations from a wide range of sectors, including Agriculture, industry, transport, environment and infrastructure.

The Integrated Drought Management Programme is similar in structure 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, together with many other partners. For GWP

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within the perspective of the IWRM approach, 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 portfolio of climate programmes, which seek to build climate resilience through improving water security.

Ladies and gentlemen, I will end with a plea. Within the Sustainable development goals proposed at Rio+20 for the post-2015 period, we ask you to support the development of an SDG on water, which will incorporate targets on WSS, Wastewater management, water resources management and on water-related disasters. As discussed last week in New York, at the special UNGA session on water and disasters, Over 90% of all disaster impacts are due to water-related disasters, whether floods, droughts or tsunamis. The target proposed is to halve the number of people affected by water-related disasters by 2030. This will provide an important international framework for continued and sustained work on building drought resilience. Thank you.

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 HMNDP.

Dr Ania Grobicki
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