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The Message of WMO Secretary-General

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Theme: Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development

Greetings from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the specialized agency of the United Nations on weather, climate, and water. We are privileged to speak at the seventy-ninth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

From mountain peaks to ocean depths, climate change continued its advance in 2022, as recently revealed in the State of the Global Climate 2022. Droughts, floods and heatwaves affected communities on every continent and cost many billions of dollars. Antarctic sea ice fell to its lowest extent on record and the melting of some European glaciers was, literally, off the charts.

The report also shows the planetary scale changes on land, in the ocean and in the atmosphere caused by record levels of heat-trapping greenhouse gases. For global temperature, the years 2015-2022 were the eight warmest on record despite the cooling impact of a La Niña event for the past three years. Melting of glaciers and sea level rise - which again reached record levels in 2022 - will continue to up to thousands of years.

While greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise and the climate continues to change, populations worldwide continue to be gravely impacted by extreme weather and climate events. For example, in 2022, continuous drought in East Africa, record breaking rainfall in Pakistan and record-breaking heatwaves in China and Europe affected tens of millions, drove food insecurity, boosted mass migration, and cost billions of dollars in loss and damage.

However, collaboration amongst UN agencies has proven to be very effective in addressing humanitarian impacts induced by extreme weather and climate events, especially in reducing associated mortality and economic losses. The **UN Early Warnings for All Initiative** aims to fill the existing capacity gap to ensure that every person on earth is covered by early warning services. At the moment, about one hundred countries do not have adequate weather services in place. Achieving this ambitious task requires improvement of observation

networks, investments in early warning, hydrological and climate service capacities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to inform you that, co-led by WMO, the UN Early Warnings for All global initiative to ensure that everyone on Earth is protected by early warnings by 2027 is being fast-tracked into action on the ground.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced the Executive Action Plan for the Early Warnings for All initiative at a meeting of government and UN organization leaders, financing agencies, Big Tech companies and the private sector during the World Leaders Summit at the UN climate change negotiations, COP27, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 7 November 2022.

The estimated new targeted investments of US\$ 3.1 Billion over the five years would be used to advance the four key Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) pillars:

- Disaster risk knowledge (US\$374 million) - systematically collect data and undertake risk assessments on hazards and vulnerabilities
- Observations and Forecasting (US\$1.18 billion) - develop hazard monitoring and early warning services
- Preparedness and response (\$1 billion) - build national and community response capabilities
- Dissemination and communication (US\$ 550 million) - communicate risk information so it reaches all those who need it, and is understandable and usable

The plan identifies key areas for advancing universal disaster risk knowledge, and outlines the priority actions required to achieve this, building on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

It prioritizes the top technical actions required to enhance capacity to detect hazards, close the observations gap, and advance global forecast data processing systems and data exchange, optimizing international efforts.

The plan indicates how key foundational financing mechanisms will be scaled up to support the achievement of the goal, including a new framework developed by the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) Initiative and Green Climate Fund, and the operationalization of the Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF).

The plan also calls for increased coherence and alignment of existing and planned investments from international financing institutions, utilizing the Alliance for Hydromet Development as an important uniting partnership of climate finance institutions.

The plan recognizes existing successful bilateral funds for early warnings and calls for an acceleration of these mechanisms. Tracking progress, informing decision making, and measuring success are all key to ensuring effective implementation, and so plans are outlined to develop an objective Early Warnings for All Maturity Index in advance of COP 28.

Dear participants,

WMO looks forward to continued cooperation with ESCAP and its Member States in advancing progress on the SDGs by accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific.

A side event themed “Disaster Resilience: Early Warnings for All in Asia and the Pacific” will be held later today with the support of UN ESCAP, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and I welcome you to join.

With that, I look forward to fruitful discussions, and I wish you all happy and safe. Thank you for the opportunity to address you.
