

## **HLPF 2022 SDG6 Special Event**

**Wednesday 13 July 2022**

### **Intervention of the Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization, Professor Petteri Taalas.**

Thank you, Madame Chair, and thank you colleagues for the opportunity to address you all today.

WMO is the specialized agency of the UN of weather, climate and water, and we are strong believers in delivering concrete action at the country level. Our business is running global operational networks, in real-time, to allow Members to monitor, predict and prepare for weather, climate, water and atmospheric composition changes, which impact people's lives and livelihoods every day.

WMO hosts the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and provides updates on the State of the Global Climate on an annual basis, to inform the public and policy makers alike. The most recent WMO State of the Global Climate Report, highlighted that 2021 broke new records in greenhouse gases, sea level rise, ocean heat and ocean acidification. It showed that the past seven years have been the warmest on record.

It is clear that the real impacts of climate change are felt through water. The term 'global warming' does not adequately describe the impacts of climate change, as temperature changes are only one aspect. The most significant impacts are felt through floods, droughts and storms, which are all water related. There has been a five-fold increase in economic losses due to weather, climate and water related disasters of the past 50 years. Last year alone we saw major flooding problems in China, India, Germany and Belgium. Drought affected many parts of the world including the Horn of Africa, Canada, the United States, Iran, Afghanistan and Türkiye.

Last year's IPCC reported highlighted that continued global warming is projected to further intensify the global water cycle, including its variability, and the severity of wet and dry events. This will have major impacts on soil moisture in many regions, affecting food security. Increased demand from growing populations will put further pressure on food and water systems.

In March 2022, Secretary-General Guterres gave WMO a mandate to lead the development of a global plan to ensure every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems within five years. This year's IPCC report on Adaptation recognised Early Warning Systems as a proven, effective, and feasible adaptation measure, which provide almost a tenfold return on investment, and enhance the benefits of other adaptation measures when combined. And yet, less than half of WMO Members report having early warning systems in place, and there is a global incapacity to translate early warnings into early action.

WMO has been working on an action plan to present at COP27, which consists of several key components to close this early warning gap. One is to invest in the basic observing systems, through the newly created Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF). Current systems suffer from large gaps, and when you have poor data going into your forecast, you can a lower quality forecast out. We have also been helping countries to build their human capacity through technical assistance, capacity building and operational support through the CREWS Initiative (Climate Risk Early Warning Systems Initiative). And

recognizing the important issues raised today, we have created the Water and Climate Coalition to galvanise action to develop a Global Water Information System, to allow countries to monitor and better manage their water resources in the years ahead.

It is clear that the magnitude of the challenges we will face if we fail in mitigating climate change, will be far greater than what we have seen in recent years with COVID-19 and its far-reaching socio-economic impacts. We must protect our people and future generations from growing global threats to water availability and from water-related hazards.

Thank you