



World Meteorological Organization  
Organisation météorologique mondiale

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WMO/OMM – GENEVA – FRANCE

Our ref.: CLW/CLPA/HMNDP

GENEVA, 23 April 2012

Annex: 1 (under separate cover)

Subject: High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP), 11-15 March 2013,  
Geneva

Action required: Feedback and national contributions to HMNDP

Dear Sir/Madam,

Given the current concerns with climate change, projected increases in the frequency, intensity, and duration of droughts and resulting impacts on many sectors, in particular food, water, and energy, there is cause for concern regarding the lack of drought preparedness and appropriate drought management policies for virtually all nations. The time is ripe for nations to move forward with the development of a pro-active, risk-based national drought policy.

In order to address the issue of national drought policy, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Congress, at its sixteenth session (Cg-XVI) held in Geneva from 16 May to 3 June 2011, recommended the organization of a "High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP)".

Accordingly, WMO and the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in collaboration with a number of UN agencies, international and regional organizations and key national agencies, plan to organize the HMNDP from 11 to 15 March 2013 in Geneva. Given the importance of the potential outcomes to be derived from this Meeting, I would like to encourage you to provide input and feedback on these issues, and to also stress the significance of your support.

A brochure announcing HMNDP and providing a short summary of the background, objectives and expected outcomes is being sent under separate cover. This can also be downloaded from the Meeting Website: [www.wmo.int/hmndp](http://www.wmo.int/hmndp)

The first meeting of the HMNDP International Organizing Committee (HIOC) was held in Geneva from 13 to 14 December 2011, with the participation of several UN system agencies and international partners, among others. The Committee noted that the Meeting would be held at the Geneva International Conference Center (CICG) from 11 to 15 March 2013 and set up four subcommittees on major organizational issues.

To: Permanent Representatives (or Directors of Meteorological or Hydrometeorological Services) of Members of WMO (PR-6636)

cc: Hydrological Advisers to Permanent Representatives

The HIOC finalized a policy document and a science document that outline the major elements that could be considered for inclusion in a national drought policy. These documents can be downloaded from the HMNDP Website. HIOC proposed that the HMNDP sessions include a science segment and a High-Level Segment which will build on the science segment expected outputs, and therefore considered that work on a Ministerial Declaration should await the further development of the scientific issues.

At the HIOC meeting, considerable attention was also devoted to the need for greater involvement of international agencies, institutions and conventions in the HMNDP organization.

As you may also recall, Cg-XVI decided that the cost of the HMNDP, which was preliminarily estimated to be in the order of CHF 2 million, must be funded from extrabudgetary resources. It would therefore be highly appreciated if you could also consider pledging your contribution to the HMNDP Trust Fund as a matter of urgency.

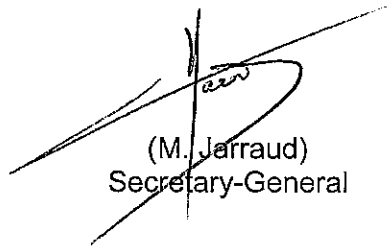
It is planned that those Members contributing above a minimum of CHF 100,000 will have their logos included in the HMNDP materials. Contributions above CHF 50,000 received from UN system agencies and the private sector will also entitle them to be acknowledged in these materials. Other key contributions will also be recognized appropriately. I therefore wish to invite you to contribute in communicating the importance of the HMNDP within your country and to assist in mobilizing contributions therein.

Through this letter, I therefore wish to:

- (a) Request your feedback on the HMNDP direction and issues;
- (b) Solicit national contributions to the Special Trust Fund, in support of various HMNDP activities.

I look forward to receiving your reply and I will keep you informed on key future developments.

Yours faithfully,



(M. Jarraud)  
Secretary-General

## HMNDP PARTNERS

- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)  
[www.wmo.int](http://www.wmo.int)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)  
[www.unccd.int](http://www.unccd.int)
- UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
[www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)  
[www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org)
- United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)  
[www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)
- International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)  
[www.icrisat.org](http://www.icrisat.org)
- International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)  
[www.icarda.org](http://www.icarda.org)

## SOME USEFUL INFORMATION ON NATIONAL DROUGHT POLICY CAN BE FOUND IN:

Towards a Compendium on National Drought Policy - Proceedings of an Expert Team Meeting. Sivakumar, Mannava V.K., Raymond P. Motha, Donald A. Wilhite, and John J. Qu (Eds.). 2011. Proceedings of an Expert Meeting on the Preparation of a Compendium on National Drought Policy, July 14-15, 2011, Washington DC, USA; Geneva, Switzerland: World Meteorological Organization. AGM-12; WAOB-2011. 135 pp.

## GLOBAL FRAMEWORK FOR CLIMATE SERVICES

WMO, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, governments and the private sector, organized the World Climate Conference-3 (WCC-3) in Geneva, from 31 August to 4 September 2009. WCC-3 established the Global Framework for Climate Services, an international framework to guide the development of climate services. This framework links science-based climate predictions and information with climate risk management and adaptation to climate variability and change throughout the world.

HMNDP will contribute to the GFCS by engaging users of drought information, including policy makers, in order to highlight areas where drought information needs to be improved.

For more information:

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# High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP)

International Conference Centre (CICG), Geneva  
11–15 March 2013



## INTRODUCTION

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Drought is widely recognized as a slow creeping natural hazard that occurs as a consequence of the natural climatic variability. In recent years, concern has grown world-wide that droughts may be increasing in frequency and severity given the changing climatic conditions. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report (IPCC, 2007) stated that the world has indeed been more drought-prone during the past 25 years. Responses to droughts in most parts of the world are generally reactive in terms of crisis management and are known to be untimely, poorly coordinated and disintegrated. Consequently, the economic, social and environmental impacts of droughts have increased significantly worldwide. Because of their long-term socio-economic impacts, droughts are by far the most damaging of all natural disasters.

The context of current droughts calls for pro-active future actions to be able to cope with their associated imperatives. Despite the repeated occurrences of droughts throughout human history and their large impacts on different socio-economic sectors, no concerted efforts have ever been made to initiate a dialogue on the formulation and adoption of national drought policies. Without a coordinated, national drought policy that includes effective monitoring and early warning systems to deliver timely information to decision makers, effective impact assessment procedures, pro-active risk management measures, preparedness plans aimed at increasing the coping capacity, and effective emergency response programmes directed at reducing the impacts of drought, nations will continue to respond to drought in a reactive, crisis management mode.

In order to address the issue of national drought policy, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Congress at its Sixteenth Session held in Geneva in 2011 recommended the organization of a "High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP)." Accordingly, WMO

and the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in collaboration with a number of UN agencies, international and regional organizations and key national agencies, plan to organize the HMNDP in Geneva in March 2013.

HMNDP will provide practical insight into useful, science-based actions to address the key drought issues being considered by governments and the private sector under the UNCCD and the various strategies to cope with drought. National governments must adopt policies that engender cooperation and coordination at all levels of government in order to increase their capacity to cope with extended periods of water scarcity in the event of a drought. The ultimate goal is to create more drought resilient societies.



## GOALS OF THE NATIONAL DROUGHT POLICIES

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- 1) Proactive mitigation and planning measures, risk management, public outreach and resource stewardship as key elements of effective national drought policy.
- 2) Greater collaboration to enhance the national/regional/global observation networks and information delivery systems to improve public understanding of, and preparedness for, drought.
- 3) Incorporation of comprehensive governmental and private insurance and financial strategies into drought preparedness plans.
- 4) Recognition of a safety net of emergency relief based on sound stewardship of natural resources and self-help at diverse governance levels.
- 5) Coordination of drought programmes and response in an effective, efficient and customer-oriented manner.

## PROGRAMME FOR HMNDP

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The HMNDP will start with a half day opening plenary (with a major keynote address) followed by three days of scientific segment and one and half days of the High Level segment for ministers.

A detailed programme for both the scientific and the high level segments will be available by August 2012.