

Our ref.: CLPA/AGM/HMNDP

GENEVA, 14 January 2013

Annex: 1

Subject: Invitation to the High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP), 11-15 March 2013, Geneva, Switzerland and request for feed-back on Draft Declaration

Sir/Madam,

We have the honour to inform you that the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and programmes, national governments and the private sector, are organizing a "High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP)" from 11 to 15 March 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland.

As you may know, as a result of climate change, the frequency, intensity, and duration of droughts are projected to increase and impacts on many sectors are expected, in particular on food, water and energy. Therefore, 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 countries to move forward with the development of a pro-active, risk-based national drought policies. The HMNDP will provide practical insight into useful, science-based actions to address the key drought issues being considered under the UNCCD and the various strategies to cope with drought.

The Meeting 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. The detailed programme for the scientific segment can be downloaded from: [www.hmndp.org](http://www.hmndp.org)

The High Level segment, which will start in the afternoon of 14 March and will continue on 15 March 2013, is expected to be opened by the President of the Swiss Confederation followed by addresses from Heads of States or Ministers responsible for drought issues in the countries, Heads of a number of UN agencies and other high level dignitaries. A large number of participants from all over the world are expected to attend the Meeting.

To: Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Member States of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO-1375)

We encourage the wide participation of all governments in the HMNDP to discuss and adopt a Declaration calling on governments to establish policies that engender cooperation and coordination at all levels in order to increase their capacity to cope with extended periods of water scarcity in the event of a drought and ultimately create more drought resilient societies.

In this connection, we have the honour to invite the Head of your government to address the High Level segment of HMNDP. We would appreciate if you could inform us of the composition of your delegation not later than **4 February 2013**.

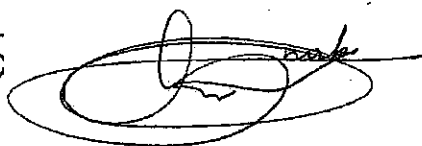
The HMNDP International Organizing Committee (HIOC) developed a draft Declaration based on the policy and science documents which were circulated in April 2012 to all governments. Through this letter, we wish to request your feedback on the draft Declaration, a copy of which is attached herewith. Your response could be sent to Dr Mannava Sivakumar at [msivakumar@wmo.int](mailto:msivakumar@wmo.int).

A copy of this letter is being sent to the Permanent Representatives of Members with WMO, the Hydrological Advisers to Permanent Representatives, the Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, the National Focal Points of UNCCD and the Ministers of Agriculture of Members of FAO.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of our highest consideration.



(M. Jarraud)  
Secretary-General  
WMO



(L. Gnacadja)  
Executive Secretary  
UNCCD



(J.G. da Silva)  
Director-General  
FAO

**WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION**  
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**CLPA/AGM/HMNDP, ANNEX**

**High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP)  
Draft Declaration**

(DECLARATION OPENING)

**DO 1** We, the Heads of States and Ministers, attending the High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP) in Geneva:

(PREAMBULAR PART)

- urgency of the problem
- societal needs
- scientific progress in drought monitoring and early warning systems
- need for vulnerability and impact assessment
- need for rapid relief and response
- context – need for effective drought policies

**- urgency of the problem**

**PP 1:** *Acknowledging* that droughts are natural phenomena that have caused human suffering since the beginning of man-kind;

**PP 2:** *Noting* the high impacts in developing countries, notably the least developed countries, and the particularly tragic consequences of droughts in Africa;

**PP3:** *Observing* that drought has major implications in terms of human lives lost and, and food insecurity and that there are increasingly short-term and long-term economic losses in a number of economic sectors including agriculture, water resources, industry, tourism...;

**PP 4:** *Noting* that climate change is likely to shift the patterns of droughts and possibly increase the frequency and severity of extreme events thus further increasing risk of human and economic losses;

**PP 5:** *Acknowledging* that there is lack of appropriate drought management policies and pro-active drought preparedness in virtually all nations around the world and that nations continue to respond to droughts in a reactive, crisis management mode;

**PP 6:** *Recognizing* the urgent need of societies to better cope with the impacts of droughts.

**- societal needs**

**PP 7:** *Recognizing* that for coping with droughts societies need to be empowered with improved preparedness plans and related measures for better management of drought risks.

**- scientific progress in drought monitoring and early warning systems**

**PP 8:** *Recognizing* that advances in drought monitoring and early warning systems can contribute to enhanced societal resilience and more robust planning and investment decisions including the reduction of consequences of drought impacts;

**PP 9:** *Recognizing* that scientific advances in seasonal to inter-annual and multi-decadal climate predictions offer an additional opportunity for the continued development of new tools and services to support improved management of droughts.

**- need for vulnerability and impact assessment**

**PP 10:** *Noting* the need for cross-sectorial coordination of the assessment of drought vulnerability and drought management, including partnerships among state, academia and the public and private sector.

**- need for rapid relief and response**

**PP 11:** *Noting* the need to identify emergency measures that will reduce the impact of current droughts while reducing vulnerability to future occurrences and noting the need for implementation of drought relief to assist the affected communities/sectors in a timely fashion;

**PP 12:** *Noting* the need to build synergies by linking drought relief to preparedness and mitigation actions.

**- context – need for effective drought policies**

**PP 13:** *Recalling* that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) calls for establishment of effective policies to mitigate the effects of droughts and reduce social, economic and environmental vulnerability to droughts by linking drought policies to sustainable development policies;

**PP 14:** *Recalling* also the call of the COP10 of UNCCD for an advocacy policy framework on drought (including water scarcity) of the UNCCD for promoting the establishment of national drought management policies;

**PP 15:** *Recalling* the decision of governments to create the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) which seeks to enable society to manage better the risks and opportunities arising from climate variability and change, especially for those who are most vulnerable to climate-related hazards.

**(OPERATIVE PART)**

**OP 1:** *Urge* all Governments around the world to develop and implement National Drought Management Policies centred around five goals:

- Proactive mitigation and planning measures, risk management, fostering of science, technology and innovation, public outreach and resource stewardship as key elements of effective national drought policy.
- Greater collaboration to enhance the local/national/regional/global observation networks and information delivery systems to improve public understanding of and preparedness for drought.
- Incorporation of comprehensive governmental and private insurance and financial strategies into drought preparedness plans.

- Establishment of a safety net of emergency relief based on sound stewardship of natural resources and self-help at diverse governance levels.
- Link drought programmes to local/national development policies in an effective, efficient and customer-oriented manner.

**OP 2:** *Request* the World Meteorological Organization, the UNCCD and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as well as other concerned parties, to assist governments, especially the developing countries, in the development of National Drought Management Policies and their implementation by 2020;

**OP 3:** *Urge* the developed countries to assist developing countries, especially the least developed countries, towards the comprehensive development and implementation of National Drought Management Policies by 2020;

**OP 4:** *Urge* the promotion of international cooperation, including south-south cooperation, to foster drought policies in developing countries, particularly in the dryland regions.

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