

Early Warnings for All



UNDRR Press Release: <https://www.undrr.org/news/early-warnings-all-initiative-scaled-action-ground>

WMO Press Release: <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/early-warnings-all-initiative-scaled-action-ground>

Early Warnings For All Initiative scaled up into action on the ground

People least responsible for climate change suffer most from extreme weather

Early warnings are efficient and cost-effective form of climate adaptation

New York, 21 March 2023 _ A global initiative to ensure that everyone on Earth is protected by early warnings by 2027 is being fast-tracked into action on the ground. A recent record-breaking tropical cyclone in Southeast Africa once again shows the paramount importance of these services to save lives and livelihoods from increasingly extreme weather and climate events.

To aid this work, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has convened an Advisory Panel of leaders of UN agencies, multilateral development banks, humanitarian organizations, civil society, insurance and IT companies on 21 March. The aim is to inject more political, technological and financial clout to ensure that [Early Warnings for All](#) becomes a reality for everyone, everywhere.

The months ahead will see stepped up coordinated action, initially in 30 particularly at-risk countries, including Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries. Additional countries are expected to be added as this vital work with partners gathers pace, scale and resourcing.

At the same time, the UN's existing actions and initiatives to save lives and livelihoods, and build resilience across a wide range of other countries will continue and be reinforced, ensuring the Early Warnings for All campaign turns its pledges into life-saving reality on the ground for millions of the most vulnerable people. The aim is not to re-invent the wheel, but rather promote collaboration and synergies and to harness the power of mobile phones and mass communications.

“Now it is time for us to deliver results. Millions of lives are hanging in the balance, It is unacceptable that the countries and peoples that have contributed the least to creating the crisis are paying the heaviest prices,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

“People in Africa, South Asia, South and Central America, and small island states are 15 times more likely to die from climate disasters. These deaths are preventable. The evidence is clear: early warning systems are one of the most effective risk reduction and climate adaptation measures to reduce disaster mortality and economic losses,” said Mr Guterres.

The need is urgent.

- In the past 50 years, the number of recorded disasters has increased by a factor of five, driven in part by human-induced climate change which is super-charging our weather. This trend is expected to continue.
- If no action is taken, the number of medium- or large-scale disaster events is projected to reach 560 a year – or 1.5 each day – by 2030.
- The occurrence of severe weather and the effects of climate change will increase the difficulty, uncertainty, and complexity of emergency response efforts worldwide.

Preventable deaths

Half of countries globally do not have adequate early warning systems and even fewer have regulatory frameworks to link early warnings to emergency plans.

“The unprecedented flooding in Mozambique, Malawi and Madagascar from Tropical Cyclone Freddy highlights once again that our weather and precipitation is becoming more extreme and that water-related hazards are on the rise,” said WMO Secretary-General Prof. Petteri Taalas. “The worst affected areas have received months’ worth of rainfall in a matter of days and the socio-economic impacts are catastrophic.”

“Accurate early warnings combined with coordinated disaster management on the ground prevented the casualty toll from rising even higher. But we can do even better and that is why the Early Warnings for All initiative is the top priority for WMO. Besides avoiding damages the weather, climate and hydrological services are economically beneficial for agriculture, air, marine and ground transportation, energy, health, tourism and various businesses,” he said.

WMO and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) are spearheading the Early Warnings for All initiative, along with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

“The operationalization of this initiative is a clear example of how the UN System and partners can work together to save lives and protect livelihoods from disasters. Inclusive and multi-hazard early warning systems that close the ‘last mile’ are among the best risk reduction methods in the face of climate-related hazards and geophysical hazards such as tsunamis. Achieving this is not only a clear target in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction but a moral imperative as well,” said Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UNDRR.

Climate Change Adaptation

Early warning systems are widely regarded as the “low-hanging fruit” for climate change adaptation because they are a relatively cheap and effective way of protecting people and assets from hazards, including storms, floods, heatwaves and tsunamis to name a few.

- Early Warning Systems provide more than a tenfold return on investment
- Just 24 hours’ notice of an impending hazardous event can cut the ensuing damage by 30 per cent.
- The Global Commission on Adaptation found that spending just US\$800 million on such systems in developing countries would avoid losses of \$3 to 16 billion per year.

“When disaster strikes, people and communities can turn to technology as a lifeline,” said ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin. “By leading the work of the UN Early Warnings for All initiative on ‘Warning Dissemination and Communication,’ ITU is helping ensure that those at risk can act in time to our increasingly climate-vulnerable world.”

Alerts can be sent via radio and television channels, by social media, and with sirens. ITU recommends an inclusive, people-centered approach using the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), a standardized data format for public warnings, to keep messages coherent across different channels.

“Early warnings that translate into preparedness and response save lives. As climate-related disasters are becoming more frequent, more intense and more deadly, they are essential for everyone, but one in three people globally are still not covered. Early warning systems are the most effective and dignified way to prevent an extreme weather event from creating a humanitarian crisis - especially for the most vulnerable and remote communities who bear the brunt of it. No lives should be lost in a predictable disaster,” said IFRC Secretary-General Jagan Chapagain.

Advisory Panel

The [Early Warnings for All](#) initiative calls for initial new targeted investments between 2023 and 2027 of US\$ 3.1 billion – a sum which would be dwarfed by the benefits. This is a small fraction (about 6 per cent) of the requested US\$ 50 billion in adaptation financing. It would cover strengthening disaster risk knowledge, observations and forecasting, preparedness and response, and communication of early warnings.

A range of new and pre-existing innovative financing solutions are required to implement the plan to protect every person on Earth. These include a scaling up of the [Climate Risk Early Warning Systems \(CREWS\) Initiative](#), the [Systematic Observations Financing Facility \(SOFF\)](#), and accelerated investment programmes of climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Adaptation Fund, and key Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), as well as other innovative new financial instruments across all stakeholders of the early warning value chain.

The Advisory Panel meeting will consider advancing the four key Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) pillars:



- **Disaster risk knowledge and management (US\$374 million)** : aims to collect data and undertake risk assessments to increase knowledge on hazards and vulnerabilities and trends. Led by UNDRR with support from WMO .
- **Detection, observations, monitoring, analysis and forecasting of hazards (US\$1.18 billion)**. Develop hazard monitoring and early warning services. Led by WMO, with support from UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UN Environment Programme (UNEP).
- **Dissemination and communication (US\$ 550 million)**. Communicate risk information so it reaches all those who need it, and is understandable and usable. Led by ITU, with support from IFRC, UNDP, and WMO.
- **Preparedness and response (\$1 billion)** : Build national and community response capabilities. Led by IFRC, with support from Risk Informed Early Action Partnership (REAP), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and World Food Programme (WFP).



Notes for Editors :

Background to the initiative

The Early Warnings For All Initiative (EW4All) was formally launched by the UN Secretary-General in November 2022 at the COP27 meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh.

The Initiative calls for the whole world to be covered by an early warning system by the end of 2027.

Early Warnings for All is co-led by WMO and UNDRR and supported by pillar leads ITU and IFRC. Implementing partners are: FAO, OCHA, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, REAP, and WFP.

The Advisory Panel will monitor and report on the progress against the achievement of the goal to the UN Secretary-General, and has the following objectives:

- (1) Assess progress of the Early Warnings for All initiative against its goals and targets
- (2) Build political and overall momentum and support for the Early Warnings for All initiative
- (3) Provide overall recommendations for the mobilization of resources, and
- (4) Monitor scientific and technical development related to early warning systems

Initial countries.

The UN Secretary-General has sent a letter to heads of state and government of an initial group of countries to receive coordinated and targeted support. This list will be expanded in the future and UN support for other countries will continue in the meantime.

Asia and Pacific: Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Lao (People's Democratic Republic), Cambodia, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Fiji, Tonga

Africa: Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Chad, Comoros, Ethiopia, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, South Sudan, Uganda

Latin America and Caribbean: Guyana, Haiti, Barbados, Antigua Barbuda, Guatemala, Ecuador

Central Asia: Tajikistan

Membership of Advisory Panel

Petteri Taalas, WMO Secretary-General

Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction

Jagan Chapagain, IFRC Secretary-General

Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary-General

Implementing Partners:

UN Development Programme

UN Environment Programme

UN Women

Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS)

UN Development Coordination Office (UNDCO)

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Executive Office of the Secretary-General

Green Climate Fund

Microsoft

GSMA

Insurance Development Forum

Climate Action Network

SG's Youth Advisory Group

African Development Bank

COP 27 Presidency

COP 28 Presidency