

High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP) Final Declaration

(DECLARATION OPENING)

DO 1 We, the Heads of State and Government, Ministers, Heads of Delegations and Experts, attending the High Level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP) in Geneva, 11 - 15 March 2013:

(PREAMBULAR PART)

Urgency of the problem

PP 1: *Acknowledging* that droughts are natural phenomena that have caused human suffering since the beginning of humanity, and are being aggravated as a result of climate change;

PP 2: *Noting* the interrelationships between drought, land degradation and desertification (DLDD), and the high impacts of DLDD in many countries, notably the developing and the least developed countries, and the tragic consequences of droughts, particularly in Africa;

PP 3: *Acknowledging* the role of the UN agencies, and in particular the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in line with its mandate, provisions and principles in particular Parts II and III of the Convention, to assist in the combat against drought and desertification;

PP 4: *Observing* that drought has major implications in terms of the loss of human lives, food insecurity, degradation of natural resources, negative consequences on the environment's fauna and flora, poverty and social unrest and that there are increasingly immediate short-term and long-term economic losses in a number of economic sectors including, inter alia, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, water supply, industry, energy production and tourism.

PP 5: *Concerned* with the impacts of climate variability and change and the likely shift in the patterns of droughts and possible increase in the frequency, severity, and duration of droughts, thus further increasing the risk of social, economic and environmental losses;

PP 6: *Underscoring* that addressing climate change can contribute to reducing the aggravation of droughts and that it requires action, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

PP 7: *Noting* that desertification, land degradation and drought are global challenges that continue to pose serious challenges for the sustainable development of all countries, in particular the developing countries;

PP 8: *Acknowledging* that there are insufficient policies for appropriate drought management and pro-active drought preparedness in many countries around the world and that there is need for enhancing international cooperation to support all countries, in particular developing countries in managing droughts and building resilience, and that countries continue to respond to droughts in a reactive, crisis management mode;

PP 9: *Recognizing* also the urgent needs for countries to manage droughts effectively, and better cope with their environmental, economic and social impacts;

PP 10: *Recognizing* that to better cope with droughts, countries need to understand the need for improved risk management strategies and develop preparedness plans to reduce drought risks.

Scientific progress in drought monitoring and early warning systems

PP 11: *Recognizing* that advances in drought monitoring and early warning and information systems, under government authority, and the use of local knowledge and traditional practices can contribute to enhanced societal resilience and more robust planning and investment decisions, including the reduction of consequences of drought impacts;

PP 12: *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 13: *Noting* the need for urgent intersectoral coordination of the assessment of drought vulnerability and drought management.

Need for rapid relief and response

PP 14: *Noting* the need to identify emergency measures that will reduce the impact of current droughts while reducing vulnerability to future occurrences, relief must be targeted to the affected communities and socio-economic sectors and reach them in a timely fashion.

PP 15: *Noting* also the need to create synergies between drought relief measures and the preparedness, mitigation and adaptation actions for long term resilience.

Need for effective drought policies

PP 16: *Recalling* the commitment in the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) to significantly improve the implementation of Integrated Water Resources Management at all levels, as appropriate.

PP 17: *Recalling* that the UNCCD is pertinent to the promotion of sustainable development and that it calls for the establishment of effective policies to combat land degradation and desertification and mitigate the effects of droughts.

PP 18: *Recalling* also the call of the COP10 of UNCCD for an advocacy policy framework on drought for promoting the establishment of national drought management policies.

PP 19: *Recalling* the decision of governments to create the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) to strengthen production, availability, delivery and application of science-based climate prediction and services.

(OPERATIVE PART)

OP 1: *Encourage* all Governments around the world to develop and implement National Drought Management Policies, consistent with their national development laws, conditions, capabilities and objectives, guided, *inter alia*, by the following:

- Develop proactive drought impact mitigation, preventive and planning measures, risk management, fostering of science, appropriate technology and innovation, public outreach and resource management as key elements of effective national drought policy.
- Promote greater collaboration to enhance the quality of local/national/regional/global observation networks and delivery systems.

- Improve public awareness of drought risk and preparedness for drought.
- Consider, where possible within the legal framework of each country, economic instruments, and financial strategies, including risk reduction, risk sharing and risk transfer tools in drought management plans.
- Establish emergency relief plans based on sound management of natural resources and self-help at appropriate governance levels.
- Link drought management plans to local/national development policies.

OP 2: *Urge* the World Meteorological Organization, the UNCCD and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), other related UN agencies, programmes and treaties, as well as other concerned parties, to assist governments, especially the developing countries, in the development of National Drought Management Policies and their implementation;

OP 3: *Urge* the developed countries to assist developing countries, especially the least developed countries, with the means of implementation towards the comprehensive development and implementation of National Drought Management Policies in accordance with the principles and provisions of the UNCCD;

OP 4: *Encourage* the promotion of international cooperation, including north-south cooperation complemented by south-south cooperation, as appropriate, to foster drought policies in developing countries;

OP 5: *Invite* WMO, UNCCD and FAO to update the draft versions of the Science and Policy documents taking into account the recommendations from the HMNDP and circulate them to all Governments for their review prior to finalization, to assist governments in the development and implementation of the National Drought Management Policies.
