

**South Asia Hydromet Forum (SAHF)**  
**19-20 September 2022, Activities, and initiatives of UNESCAP relevant to SAHF**

*Statements delivered by Sanjay Srivastava, Chief of Disaster Risk Reduction and Temily Baker,  
Programme Manager, ESCAP Multi-donor Trust Fund*

**Colleagues, ladies, and gentlemen,**

On behalf of ESCAP, we sincerely thank the SAHF Executive Council for the kind invitation.

RIMES and ESCAP have been working together to address multi-hazard disaster risks and enhancing regional cooperation efforts to move from a single-hazard approach to a multi-sectoral, multi-hazard approach and adapt to the climate uncertainties.

Recognizing our joint efforts, the ESCAP Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction at its 7th session in August 2021 recommended a scale-up of both regional and subregional cooperation strategies to complement national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We have signed a Memorandum of Agreement in August 2021 to deliver our mandates on building disaster, climate, and health resilience together.

The continued collaboration with RIMES will ensure that the processes linked to the larger sustainable development goals keep a focus on building disaster and climate resilience. In multiple VNRs, NDCs and National Adaptation Plans of the South Asian countries, disasters have featured prominently. ESCAP and RIMES will continue to implement mainstreaming of integrated climate services into the sustainable development goals to provide countries with support on multiple SDGs including those related to Climate Action, Poverty, and Hunger.

**Colleagues and friends,**

In specific context of South Asia Hydromet Forum, allow me to share three important points:

**First**, as disasters are becoming more complex with compounding and cascading impacts, the demand for risk informed, impact-based forecasting is on the rise. This brings hydro-met communities much closer to disaster risk management as well as other development sectors. We appreciate the SAHF for attaching priority to this felt need.

Impact forecasting enables early action for minimizing the socio-economic impacts of disasters. ESCAP in partnership with WMO and UK Met Office developed methodologies and enabling tools supported by risk and resilience data portal, manual and e-learning module to operationalize impact forecasting. In specific context of South Asia, we also put in place a regional learning platform for sharing knowledge and experiences on multi-hazard risk assessment and early warning for floods and drought including those with transboundary origins and impacts. Further, ESCAP, through South Asia Climate Outlook Forum and Panel on Tropical Cyclone, is building the institutional capacity of members to support impact forecasting. ESCAP will be pleased to work with members and partners of SAHF to impart capacity development training.

**Second**, ESCAP has put in place the Risk and Resilience Portal to deepen policymakers' understanding of cascading risks, national, sub-national and transboundary risk hotspots. The

portal provides risk scenarios including the economic cost, multi-hazard risk hotspots as well as adaptation priorities for 56 countries including all South Asian countries.

The portal pools climate data of current scenario from the CMIP6 from IPCC WGI Interactive Atlas 2021 → for drought, flood, surface wind and heatwave with baseline 1995-2014. It presents the climate scenarios for SSP2, 1.5°C; SSP2, 2°C; SSP3, 1.5°C and SSP3, 2°C of warming.

On vulnerability profiling, the portal is populated with gridded WorldPop population data, UNDP's Human Development Index and WHO Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) estimates 2000-2019. Portal is also populated with exposure dataset such as critical infrastructure, vegetation, waterbodies data to estimate climate change impact and adaptation priorities. ESCAP will be pleased to collaborate with SAHF and capitalize on this Portal. Already, we have developed an interface with RIMES's RDAS and look forward to scale it up.

**Third, ESCAP, through the Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness**, has been a strong supporter of regional cooperation for early warning systems. The Trust Fund was instrumental in the establishment of RIMES and the Trust Fund continues fund to support to your countries through multiple RIMES projects.

“Enhancing Weather and Climate Resilience in RIMES Member States through Capacity Building on Impact Forecasting – Phase 2” is a current RIMES project supported by the Trust Fund of which Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka are among nine countries receiving training and capacity development of weather and climate information users, specifically on Impact-based forecasting and facilitating national Monsoon Forums.

With that being said, let me stress that not only have your countries been beneficiaries of the Trust Fund, we are proud to also thank our donors to the Trust Fund. Nepal was our third donor to the Trust Fund in 2007, followed by Bangladesh in 2010 and later India provided a generous 1 million USD. Your collective commitment to cooperation, to regional mechanisms such as SAHF, and to supporting your neighbors is truly the reason why the United Nations exists today.

Thank you, and we are looking forward to expanding on the work of the Trust Fund, its replenishment, and the enormous return on investment that we know regional actions can bring.

I look forward to the outcomes and guidance from this meeting.

Thank you.

