The Second Multi-Hazard Early Warning Conference (MHEWC-II)

Early Warning and Early Action towards
Sustainable, Resilient and Inclusive Societies

13-14 May 2019, WMO Headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland

Session 2 Concept Note

Session title:	*Enhancing the Link between Early Warning and Early Action (EWEA) through Impact-Based Forecasts (IBF)*
Date, time & venue:	*Monday, 13 May, 14:30-16:00, Salle Obasi*
Co-leads:	*Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)*
Other contributing partners:	*United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT), World Food Programme (WFP), Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, International Research Institute for Climate and Society – Columbia University (IRI-Columbia), Water Youth Network (WYN), Practical Action*

Background:

The Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) concept has been a priority for the humanitarian sector for more than 20 years. In recognition of existing gaps, new approaches to early action have been developed in recent years to enhance further the capacity to act effectively in the window of opportunity between a forecast and a potential disaster.

Different actors, including the IFRC, WFP, FAO, Start Network, Practical Action, UNOSAT, among others, are currently implementing new EWEA approaches (e.g, Forecast-based Financing (FbF) – also called Forecast-based Action, Early Warning Systems (EWS), etc.). FbF systems are expected to continue growing in the next years, given the recent creation of early action funding mechanisms like the IFRC Forecast-based Action by the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), the Early Action Fund of FAO, the Anticipation Window of the Start Network and current discussions for a potential Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) financing window for anticipatory action These humanitarian actors can rapidly access funds for early action ahead of a potential disaster using FbF systems in place: triggers, pre-defined early action plans and delivery capacity. FbF draws upon an array of risk analysis and forecasts to enable early action. Further, increased investment on improving forecasts and risk analysis for geophysical variables has led to more appropriate and ultimately 'useable' information developed from research organizations.

However, setting up such systems requires to design forecast triggers that will indicate when and where early action should be implemented. The triggers need to indicate the expected intensity and scope of disaster impacts, based on an analysis of risk (vulnerability and exposure) as well as identifying forecasts (in the case of natural hazards, weather, and climate information) that have been assessed for skill and that are recognized as operational by the National Hydro Meteorological Services (or other appropriate national government actors). The concept of Impact-based Forecasting (IBF) has been the inspiration to develop FbF trigger models, the decision-making tool that allows the IFRC and Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies to activate early action funding, and the same approach is used by FAO and WFP given their extensive capacity for risk and vulnerability data collection and analysis. Ultimately, triggers allow for the movement from a framing of what the weather will be to an understanding of what the weather is likely to do, and where the risk of impact is highest.

Developing these kind of products or services requires a co-production process that includes inputs not only from National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NHMSs), but also from humanitarian actors, disaster risk management agencies, risk modellers, information management experts, including platforms such as OpenSteetMap, among others. In recognition that it is not necessarily a mandate of the humanitarian sector to produce these IBF services, it is important to identify a long-term sustainable alternative for nationally owned IBF services that can be tailored to the humanitarian sector needs (and other sectors), which ultimately aim to protect the most vulnerable population in each country.

Main session objectives:

This session will present the latest initiatives in the humanitarian sector that are using the IBF approach to trigger early action. We will engage the audience on a debate about whether or not to continue with the current model (humanitarian own trigger model) vs a future of NHMSs' own trigger model, we will share the role of scientific research in IBF and we will discuss the potential next steps to move towards institutionalizing IBF to support the humanitarian sector (and other sectors) to reach the most at risk populations at the right time before a disaster happen, to reduce the negative impacts of disasters and essuring that readiness for early action can be done in a systematic way through preparedness and risk reduction efforts2

The main objectives of the session are:

- Introduce the audience to the idea of IBF;
- Familiarize the audience with the latest initiatives in the humanitarian sector that are using the Impact-based Forecasting (IBF) approach to trigger early action.
- Emphasize the importance and effectiveness of IBF in ensuring that early action is targeted to the most-at-risk vulnerable people with the aim to prevent and/or mitigate impacts and for some organizations to prepare for effective response.
- Share the role of academic research in IBF.

- Discuss challenges, opportunities, and needs for the institutionalisation of IBF, including the potential role of NHMS in providing IBF services to support targeted early action by governments and humanitarian actors.
- Share experiences on how to reach consensus on operational triggers and thresholds that are reliable, understandable and work for all actors, (especially in data deficient environments) and working with a diversity of triggers (and thresholds) in multi hazard situations and for different actors on the ground.

Expected outcomes:

- The audience is aware about how the humanitarian sector applies IBF to enable Forecast based Financing
- The audience is aware about the state of the art on IBF research
- Key action points are drafted to plan the way forward towards a government-level led IBF service that will enhance the capacity of the humanitarian sector to protect the most vulnerable.

Key messages:

- Importance of IBF to target the people potentially most at-risk, and to prioritize the most vulnerable households in potentially affected areas.
- Success stories and way forward.
- Commitment from NHMS
- Key recommendations. What needs to happen to have National IBF system?
- Importance of building long-term sustainable processes.

Interactivity Ideas:

- Main Facilitators: **Ms Kara Siahaan** (IFRC), Switzerland & **Ms Dunja Dujanovic** (FAO), Italy

- Debate and interactivity facilitator: **Mr Pablo Suarez**, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, USA

Agenda:

1. Intro: Setting the stage: 10 minutes
2. Mini-Ignites: 30 minutes (each presenter 5 minutes)
3. Interactivity: 15 minutes
4. Debate: 25 minutes
5. Conclusion: 10 minutes

Moderator:

- **Mr Maarten van Alst**, Director, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, Netherlands

1. Intro

- Setting the stage

- Video – "Acting Early in Mongolia", FAO

2. Mini-Ignites:

- **Mr Nicolas Bidault**, Senior regional VAM Adviser Asia and the Pacific, WFP, Thailand

- **Mr Martin Todd**, Professor in Climate Change University of Sussex – SHEAR Principal investigator, UK

- **Mr Luca Dell'Oro**, Head DRR, Disaster Mapping and Climate Service, UNOSAT-UNITAR, Switzerland

- **Ms Prisca Chisala**, Head of Programmes, Malawi Red Cross, Malawi

- **Ms Gabriela Guimarães Nobre**, PhD Researcher at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands

3. Interactivity

- Using innovative approaches to dialogue, participants explore areas of contention and difference of ideas regarding how to link early warning and early action.

4. Debate

Panellists:

- **Ms Ganjuur Sarantuya**, Director of Information and research, National Agency for Meteorology and Environment Monitoring, Mongolia

- **Ms Brenda Lazarus**, Emergency Needs Assessment and Early Warning Expert FAO, Kenya

- **Mr Madhab Uprety**, Knowledge Officer, Practical Action, Nepal

- **Ms Helen Bye**, Director of International Department, Met Office, UK

5. Conclusions:

- Remarks: **Mr Thorsten Klose-Zuber**, German Federal Foreign Office, Germany

- Closing: **Mr Landrico Dalida**, Deputy Administrator, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), Philippines