
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 1 Concept Note

- Session title:** *The “last mile”*
- Date, time and venue:** *Monday, 13 May, 11:30-13:00, Salle Obasi*
- Co-leads:** *International Telecommunication Union (ITU),
World Meteorological Organization (WMO),
World Food Programme (WFP)*
- Other contributing partners/experts:** *International Federation of Red Cross and Red
Crescent Societies (IFCR), United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organization (UNESCO), Intergovernmental
Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
(IOC-UNESCO), European Commission - Joint
Research Centre (EC JRC), Practical Action,
Eliot Christian*

Main session objectives:

While considerable progress has been made both in terms of information and communication technology (ICT) access and use and in advancing early warning systems (EWS), reaching vulnerable, marginal groups in societies continues to be an issue. This can be due to both difficulties in accessing or understanding alerts or to a lack of understanding on what actions to take once the alert is received. By focusing on the challenge of ensuring no-one is left behind, this session aims at providing an overview of key issues that need to be taken into account for effective EWS and the role that innovations in information and technology can play in ensuring timely delivery of information to all. These include:

- Sharing experiences and highlighting recent innovations in the development of Information and Communication Technologies that can be effectively used to reach vulnerable communities, including those in remote locations;
- Ensuring a people-centred approach when developing an early warning system that takes into account people’s needs, their perceptions of risk, how different community members access and communicate information;
- Highlighting the importance on the way information is communicated – messages delivered need to be tailored to the local context (e.g. local languages, use of symbols for illiterate people, etc.);

- Discussing the use of the Common Alerting Protocol (CAP) to send all-hazard, all-media alerting messages;
- Understanding how people respond to alerts - at times people are able to access the warning but might not respond to it as expected - looking at issues linked to how information is communicated, if it is trusted (looking at identification of source, historic accuracy, confidence level, delivery through a trusted partner and relating to the user's prior knowledge) and whether people know what to do when receiving a warning are key for the effectiveness of an EWS;

Expected outcomes:

The WMO/WWRP High Impact Weather project (HIWeather) task team on Communication is building up a community of researchers to look at obstacles to effective warnings responses. They will work with others involved in this area, to investigate issues raised in this session, and to document and share good practice.

WMO and ITU will strengthen cooperation in terms of promoting and training on CAP.

Key messages:

- Information and communication technologies can play a crucial role in helping to both deliver warnings and prompt action, particularly for the most vulnerable communities often difficult to reach;
- Effective MHEWS requires new ways of working together – we need to move away from a top-down transmission of information to a model where national Met services work together with a wide range of actors and communities at risk to both tailor the message and choose communication channels that are trusted by people;
- EW alerts need to have sufficient information for people to take action or be supported by effective preparedness plans at all levels (national to local) to enable communities to take action including through education, advertising and long lead warnings;
- Encourage the use of CAP;
- Recommend measurements to monitor the effectiveness of warning communication;
- Investments are needed in better understanding of existing gaps in communicating warnings and in supporting greater awareness raising, effective education and training for preparedness at all levels (national to local);
- Effective warning systems take account of people's needs, how they access information and how they perceive risk;
- Multiple sciences and technologies need to combine effectively to deliver reliable warnings in a timely manner, including engagement of social science expertise; and engagement of practitioners in designing and implementing warning systems;
- Simulation exercises are key for enhancing early action capacity. Simulated disaster scenarios should be developed to test emergency preparedness and response skills linking people, processes and technology.

Moderator:

- **Mr David Johnston**, Senior Scientist, New Zealand's Geological Survey (GNS Science) & Director, Joint Centre for Disaster Research, School of Psychology, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Keynote speaker:

- **Ms Julia Chasco**, Argentine Weather Service, Buenos Aires, Argentina: A country using technologies to deliver early warning alerts to people in risk areas.

Panellists:

- **Mr Simon Gray**, Senior Vice President of Humanitarian Affairs, Eutelsat and Board Director of the Global VSAT Forum (GVF), Paris, France
- **Mr Nicolas Bidault** - Head, Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM), World Food Programme (WFP) Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, Thailand
- **Mr Achala Navartne** - American Red Cross, Country representative to Bangladesh
- **Ms Marilou Erni**, Executive Director of National Resilience Council, Manila, Philippines (TBC)
- **Ms Kim Mallalieu**, Deputy Chairman, Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, Senior Lecturer, The University of West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

