



As of 13 February 2023

Concept Note

High-level Symposium on “Integrated Water Cycle Management in the post-COVID-19 era” at the 9th International Conference on Flood Management (ICFM9) in GRIPS, Tokyo, Japan on February 18th, 2023

1. Objective

The COVID-19 Pandemic and frequent large-scale disasters have gravely affected the countries all over the world socially and economically and disrupted efforts to achieve the global goals and targets, namely, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Paris Agreement. COVID-19 affected the implementation of prompt disaster responses, while at the same time water-related disasters such as floods and droughts made it difficult to take necessary measures to tackle COVID-19. Though there are different impacts of concurrent catastrophes of water-related disasters and COVID-19 depending on the regions and geographic characteristics, the important thing to note is that they can disproportionately affect vulnerable regions/countries, such as small island developing States (SIDS) and landlocked developing countries (LLDC) among others.

One of the effective approaches to deal with these situations is to recover sound water-cycles for decreasing multi-hazard risks induced by intensified floods and droughts, changes in soils and water quality, sea-level rises, glacier melting, which are expected to increase due to climate change. This approach will also contribute to achieving various inter-connected SDGs and realizing resilient trans-national societies with peace and stabilization. We could make a big step forward for the establishment of quality society with resilience, sustainability, and inclusiveness by strengthening the actions to facilitate the integrated water cycle management in the recovery process from the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is imperative that we address the issue of water-related disasters with the integrated river basin management by combining knowledge and experiences available in the science and technology, governance and financing sectors.

The International Conference on Flood Management (ICFM) is organized every three years and provides an important opportunity for all the stakeholders working on the flood issues from around the world to discuss with their peers. The ninth session (ICFM9) will be organized in February 2023 in Tsukuba, Japan, just one month before the UN 2023 Water Conference, which will be the first UN Water Conference since 1977.

The objective of the High-level Symposium on “Integrated Water Cycle Management in the post-COVID-19 era” is that leaders from politics, governments, academia and CSOs as well as all the other stakeholders would discuss, share experiences and knowledge, and reaffirm the commitment for actions. The collective messages from the flood community will be compiled based on the discussion and input to the important processes towards and after the 2023 UN Water Conference. The messages will encourage the facilitation of the concrete actions for the resolution of world flood issues at national and local levels as well as in the UN and international communities.

2. Draft Outline

Date: Saturday, February 18th, 2023

Morning Session (1), 2) and 3)): 9:30-11:30

Afternoon Session (4) and 5)): 13:00-14:30

Format: "Sokairo-Hall", National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) (broadcasting on UNTV (tbc))

Organizers: High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP), National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)/United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)

Chair: H.E. Dr. Han Seung-soo, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea and Chair of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP)

Speakers and panelists: Ministers, heads of UN/International organizations, representatives of academia, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders

Expected outcomes: Chair's Summary to be input to the international process

3. Draft Agenda

Morning Session 1 (9:30-10:30)

- 1) Opening remarks by the representatives of the co-organizers
 - H.E. Dr. Han Seung-Soo, Chair of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) / Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea
 - Prof. Hiroko Ota, President of the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)
 - Mr. Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations
- 2) Keynote speeches 1
 - H.E. Ambassador Csaba Kőrösi, President of the 77th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
 - Prof. Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
 - Mr. Pablo Bereciartua, Chair of Global Water Partnership / President of the Argentinean Engineering Centre (Centro Argentino de Ingenieros – CAI)
 - Dr. Ir. Arie Setiadi Moerwanto, MSc., Senior Advisor for the Minister in Water Resources Management, Ministry of Public Works and Housing of the Republic of Indonesia

Break (10:30-10:45)

Morning Session 2 (10:45-11:30)

- 3) Keynote speeches 2
 - Prof. Slobodan P. Simonovic, Director of Engineering Studies, Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, The University of Western Ontario
 - Dr. Shamila Nair-Bedouelle, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO
 - Mr. Woonchong Um, Managing Director General of Asian Development Bank
- 4) Launching "Flood Risk Management and Environmental Justice policy brief", a HELP Flagship Initiative by Dr. William S. Logan, Director, International Center for Integrated Water Resources Management (ICIWaRM), Institute for Water Resources, US Army Corps of Engineers U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Lunch Break (11:30-13:00)

Afternoon Session (13:00-14:30)

5) High-level Panel Discussion: “Integrated Flood Management in the post-COVID-19 era”

Panelists

- Dr. Johannes Cullmann, Director for SDGs, the Office of the 77th President of UN General Assembly
- Prof. Toshio Koike, Executive Director, The International Centre for Water Hazard and Risk Management (ICHARM)
- Ms. Paola Albrito, Director, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
- Dr. Stefan Uhlenbrook, Director Hydrology, Water and Cryosphere, Water and Cryosphere Branch, World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
- Dr. Anil Mishra, Chief of Section, Hydrological Systems, Climate Change and Adaptation, Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), Division of Water Sciences, UNESCO
- Dr. Alessio Giardino, Senior Water Specialist (Climate Change), Asian Development Bank
- Dr. Valentin Aich, Senior Water & Climate Specialist, Global Water Partnership (GWP)

Moderator

- Prof. Kenzo Hiroki, Professor, GRIPS/Coordinator, HELP

6) Closing

- H.E. Dr. Han Seung-Soo, Chair of the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) / Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea