

Regional Consultative Workshop on El Niño in Asia-Pacific

Bangkok, Thailand

7-9 June 2016

I Concept Note

Rationale

The impacts of the 2015-16 El Niño highlight the urgent need to address slow-onset disasters in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2015, the weather extremes triggered by El Niño have ranged from severe drought in South and South-East Asia to intense rainfall in the Pacific. El Niño and related slow-onset disasters have complex causative factors, are difficult to demarcate on a timeline, and have both short and long term socio-economic effects across a range of productive sectors. However, critical gaps remain in assessing and standardizing methodologies related to assessing impacts of such slow-onset disasters in multiple social, economic and environmental sectors. To achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the region, it is vital to address these gaps both on regional and country-specific levels, and to build regional and country-level capacities to assess impacts from slow-onset disasters.

To build technical capacity to understand risks from slow-onset disasters in the region, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will be co-organizing a Regional Consultative Workshop on El Niño in Asia-Pacific from 7 to 9 June in Bangkok, Thailand. The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES) will provide technical facilitation for this workshop. RIMES will also showcase assessment tools; particularly the seasonal climate and social and economic impact outlooks.

Expected Outcomes

The aim of this consultative workshop is that countries are able to formulate a programmatic framework within the wider resilience agenda (the humanitarian-development nexus) in both the short-term and medium-term.

The workshop will also contribute toward formulating a regional standardized methodology for assessing economic impacts of slow-onset disasters; with a particular focus on addressing impacts from disasters that are transboundary in nature. It is expected that the methodology can also be adapted by countries in the region, and will also align with UNDP's programmatic framework for country-level multisectoral impact assessment.

Participation

A pool of approximately 35-40 delegates from twelve Asia-Pacific countries will be invited to participate in this consultative workshop; covering the Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Fiji, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, the Philippines and Cambodia. UN agencies and affiliated entities will also be invited.

Targeted sectoral agencies include hydro-meteorological departments, agriculture and national disaster management authorities. Other key cross-cutting sectors include food security, health, water, environment and livelihood. Local governors or mayors of the most affected governments/districts will be invited to convey national experiences.