

# European Humanitarian Forum

## Forum humanitaire européen



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### Building a climate response capacity: the role of early warning systems

Tuesday 22. March 2022, 11.00 - 12.45h

**Moderator:** *Alessandra Zampieri* - Joint Research Centre (DG JRC), Head of the Disaster Risk Management Unit

**Panelists:** *Marco Anzidei* - National Institute of Geophysics and Volcanology (INGV), Senior Researcher; *Ricklef Beutin* - German Federal Foreign Office, Director General for Crisis Prevention, Stabilisation, Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Assistance; *Carlo Buontempo* - European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), Director of the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S); *John Harding* - World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), Head of the Climate Risk and Early Warning System Initiative (CREWS); *Catalina Jaime* - International Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre (IFRC), Team Leader for climate risks in conflict areas; *Francois Kayitakire* - African Risk Capacity (ARC), Director of Research and Development

#### Executive Summary:

Disasters lead to loss of life, damage in housing, losses in agriculture or displacement. They may indirectly increase the risk of conflicts by exacerbating existing social, economic and environmental stress. With an increased intensity and frequency of the events related to the climate change, we could expect a higher demand for assistance and humanitarian actions around the world. Early Warning Systems (EWS) are an ecosystem of tools and data information that supports preparedness, capacity building and trainings as well as enhances capacities down to citizens. They can prepare and improve the disaster's resilience of the communities. EWS should urgently be put in place and operative in countries highly vulnerable to climate impacts, such as South America, Africa and South Asia.

In this respect, participants of the session stressed the importance of access to data and data analysis. This would allow to understand trends and to adjust mitigation and adaptation actions. The information should be accessible and understandable to a wide range of recipients, incl. humanitarian actors. Ideally, this data should be also harmonised to the extent possible. This would allow an exchange between various users. In this context, gaps between developing and developed countries in terms of capacity and access to data are of utmost importance. Therefore, it is important to get the feedback from users and fill in gaps with targeted and necessary information.

Local and international cooperation should be reinforced, including through synergies between science, policy makers and practitioners. Global centres should support and provide

services predicting extreme events and warn population. National actors should have access to international platforms and enhance the dialog at national level. It is important to consider transparent relations with donors, who not only want to monitor the implementation but also want to have a clearer overview to best allocate available funding. This includes coordination and involvement at governmental level. In addition, combining experts covering different fields could be a key to co-design and introduce more innovative approach, especially in the context of new challenges linked to the climate change.

Building capacity in the use of data in all phases of the risk management cycle is crucial. Therefore, it is important that even the local staff be trained on how to use EWS tools. An example coming from Regional Forum in West and Eastern Africa shows that through mutual visits practitioners not only exchange experiences but also gain more trust in data coming from other countries. Furthermore, education and training should already appear as part of higher education. This could be achieved e.g., through collaboration between practitioners and universities, incl. providing seminars and lectures. Nevertheless, capacity-building programmes should be coordinated to avoid targeting the same population and diversify the scope of participants. It should also consider a potential multiplication of hazards, what could be seen e.g., during the recent COVID-19 situation.

Since anticipatory actions are crucial, all actors (incl. academics) should be involved in developing models to limit the exposure, but also speed up the reaction. Such reaction should cover direct in-field actions but also budgetary support, like insurance or safeguarded access to finance after a disaster. Awareness raising actions among local population and communities about the imminent risk especially in the coastal areas should be promoted. Additionally, analysis and information on events should also indicate a potential “impact” of the event, which would facilitate anticipatory actions. In this context, it is also important to address displaced population, often not integrated in classic channels of communication.