Terms of Reference

for Early Warning Systems Task Team

**[TEMPLATE TO BE ADAPTED]**

**Background**

The Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 identify strengthened early warning systems as a critical component of building the resilience to disasters and crises and, by extension, contributing to sustainable development.

Early warning systems (EWS) are key elements of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, as they help reduce or avoid the detrimental impacts of hazardous events. To be effective, early warning systems need to be risk-informed, target communities most at risk, disseminate messages and warnings efficiently and accessibly, ensure preparedness and support early action. Early warning systems must rely on a sound scientific and technical basis and focus on the most at risk people and sectors. This implies the adoption of a system-based approach incorporating all relevant risk factors, whether arising from the climate-hazards or social vulnerabilities, and from short-term or long-term processes. Early warning systems include four pillars: 1) risk knowledge, 2) observation, monitoring, analysis, and forecasting, 3) warning dissemination and communication and 4) preparedness and response capabilities.

Multi-sector and multi-stakeholder coordination, involvement of communities at risk, having an enabling institutional and legislative environment, clear roles and responsibilities, and adequate operational capacities, are essential for effective and consistent Early Warning Systems.

Early Warnings for All (EW4All) is a special initiative of the UN Secretary General, which aims to spearheading action to ensure every person on Earth is protected by early warning systems by 2027.

[PLACEHOLDER for national context and background: regulations on early warning systems, existing EWS frameworks and gaps]

**Purpose and objectives**

The purpose of the Task Team is to provide guidance and technical support towards the development and implementation of an effective Early Warning System, covering all four pillars. The Task Team will work towards the following objectives:

* Identify and assess existing EWS systems in the country and make recommendations for improvement.
* Develop and propose national frameworks for EWS, incorporating best practices, standards, and guidelines.
* Foster collaboration and coordination among stakeholders involved in EWS, including government agencies, civil society organizations (including Organisations of Persons with Disabilities), academia, the private sector, and international organisations.
* Facilitate and coordinate EWS-related activities at national and sub-national level, including capacity development, technical support, awareness-raising, and knowledge sharing.
* Coordinate the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of national EWS and recommend improvements as needed.

To effectively implement and deliver the MHEWS and to rapidly scale up programming, multi-stakeholder partnerships at the regional, national, and local levels are crucial. The Task Team aims to build or enhance collaborative partnerships across all levels of government, civil society, academe, private sector, and other stakeholders. It seeks to promote transparency in decision making and prioritises information sharing.

**Structure and Membership**

***Proposed criteria for inclusion of members****:*

*a) Organizations that provide information, advisory and data products aimed at informing early warning systems, and disaster risk reduction.*

*b) Public and private sector institutions that have specialized research and innovative products related to climate, hazards, natural resources, meteorology, agriculture, disease control and demography.*

*c) Parastatal institutions involved in developing products for use in early warning systems and disaster management applications.*

*d) Research-based organizations, especially that have focus in relation to hazard monitoring and mapping.*

*e) Civil and non-profit based organizations, especially those that represent at-risk groups, including persons with disabilities, women’s organisations, and representatives of indigenous groups, amongst others.*

The Task Team consists of members from relevant Ministries, UN Country Team representatives, NGOs, private sector, academia, civil society, and representatives of communities engaged in multi-hazard early warning systems.

*Where relevant*: The Early Warning Systems Task Team is an integral part of the National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction[[1]](#footnote-1).

[*List of Task Force members to be provided here*]

**Roles and organisation**

a) Members shall be nominated and appointed to the Task Team by their respective organization.

b)The national Early Warning Focal Point shall serve as Chairperson of the Task Team. The Chairperson shall designate a Representative to chair the Task Team in his or her absence.

c)  Members of this Task Team shall regularly attend the Task Team sessions and provide an early substitution notice should they be unable to participate in the functions of the Task Team.

d)  The Secretariat and associated functions for the Task Team will be designated by the Early Warning National Focal Point.

e) Whenever applicable, external specialist(s) with the appropriate skills and expertise to add value to the discussions and workshop processes shall be invited to the Task Team.

**Schedule of Sessions**

a)  The Task Team shall conduct its sessions following an agreed regular schedule. Meetings may also be held as often as considered necessary, agreed by the members of the Task Team.

b) The Chairperson may call extraordinary sessions to discuss urgent matters concerning the Task Team and must determine the venue (if in person), date, time and agenda. The Secretary shall notify Task Team members at least a week before the date of the session. Such a session shall only discuss the matter for which it has been convened**.**

**Agenda, Minutes and Reporting**

a)  A formal agenda, minutes and supporting documents will be distributed to all persons who are invited to a meeting, at least three (3) days prior to the meeting.

b)  Formal minutes of the proceedings of the Task Team will be signed and kept by the Chairperson.

c)  A formal report on the recommendations and conclusions by the Task Team will be submitted to the Chairperson following each session.

d) The Task Team shall produce an annual report on its proceedings.

**Key Responsibilities**

The task team shall have the following responsibilities:

1. Convene regular coordination meetings at an agreed interval, supported by regular communication from the Chairperson, Task Team Secretariat, and its Members.
2. Serve as the primary coordination mechanism of all activities under the Early Warning for All Initiative at national and sub-national level and link, as relevant to regional mechanisms.
3. If necessary, develop national roadmap to identify priority areas of programming to achieve a minimum core capability in early warning/early action
4. Identify roles and responsibilities of members and include task and commitment monitoring among members of the task team. Some indicative responsibilities include:
   1. Identification of key hazards in the country and their hotspots at localised scales.
   2. Establishing information sharing protocols on a real-time/expedited basis for members to be updated on the latest hazardous events and potential impact.
   3. Agree on thresholds of early warning and actions to be taken at each threshold.
5. Ensure ongoing and integrated programming on all four pillars of the Early Warning Value Cycle.
6. Identify and coordinate relevant capacity-development activities
7. Develop monitoring system and produce quarterly progress reporting/tracking of implementation of MHEWS programming
8. Ensure linkages between national and local early warning/early action coordination mechanisms.
9. Further responsibilities and activities may be proposed and agreed by the Task Team.

**Conclusions**

This Terms of Reference shall be reviewed by the Task Team at least once a year or whenever required to ensure alignment to the changing needs and priorities related to early warnings and early action, subject to consultation with the relevant authorities.

1. See guidance on establishing national DRR platforms: <https://www.undrr.org/publication/guidelines-national-platforms-disaster-risk-reduction> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)