



## International Conference on Water Related Disaster Reduction

Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, 27-28 June 2008

### DUSHANBE DECLARATION ON WATER-RELATED DISASTER REDUCTION

Water-related disasters account for the vast majority of all disasters triggered by natural events. The growing social and economic impacts of disasters are immense, with hundreds of thousands of lives lost and millions of people affected. It is the poorest countries and the poorest people who are disproportionately affected.

Water-related disasters are serious impediments to sustainable development, since they quickly destroy the gains of development. Still, there is a continued need for strengthening of cooperation at regional and international levels, involving actors from the water, disaster risk reduction, climate change and other important socio-economic and environmental sectors.

We, the participants of the International Conference on Water Related Disasters Reduction, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 27-29 June 2008, which was held within the framework of the International Decade for Action «Water for Life», 2005-2015, representing governments, international and regional organizations, academia, the private sector and civil society at large would like to:

**Express** our deep concern about the increase of water-related disasters, such as floods, droughts, landslides and cyclones, which continue to cause heavy losses, taking human lives, and destroying livelihoods, and express our deepest sympathy to the people and communities who suffered from natural disasters;

**Recognize** the urgency of reducing the risks of water-related disasters since they threaten the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

further recognize that the risks of water-related disasters increase as a result of climate variability and change.

**Reiterate** our commitment to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the recommendations contained in the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit;

**Recognize** the important role of United Nations agencies and mechanisms relevant to water-related disaster risk reduction and management and promoting international cooperation for disaster risk reduction;

**Stress** the importance of strengthening regional cooperation among Central Asian countries on water-related disaster reduction;

**Welcome** the continued assistance from development partners for mitigating the impacts of ecological disasters in the Aral Sea Basin.

**Declare** our willingness and being firmly resolved to work together towards meeting the challenges that water-related disasters present to sustainable development and global eco-safety.

We recommend to:

**Devote** the second half of the International Decade for Action "Water for life" to the enhancement of assistance to developing countries for water-related disaster reduction.

**Create** regional and international special funds under the United Nations to tackle the barriers and constraints hampering access to safe drinking water for all and to render assistance to developing countries for water-related disaster risk reduction;

**Include** water-related disaster risk reduction into national development agendas and budgeting frameworks, including the development and adoption of risk reduction and adaptation related policies, legislation, programs and action plans, as called for in the Hyogo Framework for Action.

**Accord** highest priority to the development and implementation of national, regional and international strategies and action plans for water-related disaster risks reduction and management;

**Increase** public and private investments in water-related disaster reduction, with a focus on infrastructure and human resources development;

**Strengthen** the capacities in disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation in the countries affected and vulnerable to water-related disasters;

**Improve** monitoring and assessment on water-related disasters in affected countries and regions based on reliable observing systems and updated data bases and drawing upon scientific evidence;

**Strengthen** development assistance in disaster relief, with particular focus on the victims of water-related disasters;

**Give** particular attention to solutions of the water problems in Central Asia countries, caused by drying of the Aral Sea, regional and global change, including climate and the increase of water-related disasters;

**Construct** hydro-energy complexes based on expert assessments, with water reservoir that prevent floods and mud flows, reduce the impacts of droughts and produce energy, which contributes to the improvement of the social and economic living standards of the population.

**Disseminate and utilize** international experience, knowledge and technology on water-related disasters risk reduction and management;

**Strengthen** cooperation and partnership on water-related disaster risk reduction between affected countries, development partners and including international organizations;

**Increase** research on the impacts of climate variability and change on water-related disasters, especially in Central Asia region in particular with the aim to develop adaptation strategies and mitigation measures;

**Engage** the public in water-related risk reduction through public awareness-raising and people-centered early warning systems;

**Consider** the possibility of establishing a Central Asian Centre on disasters risk reduction in Dushanbe.

We welcome the initiatives of the Republic of Tajikistan, in close cooperation with Central Asian countries, to:

**Propose** a high-level special event to be held during the UN General Assembly, devoted to discussions on the water-related issues at global level, and on concrete steps to resolve existing water problems, in particular water-related disasters;

**Initiate** the establishment of an international consortium on the prevention of the possible break of the mountainous Lake Sarez, which would have impacts on the livelihoods and safety of 6 million people in Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and enable the use of its freshwater resources for water supply of millions of people in Central Asia;

**Develop** Central Asian Water Doctrine, taking into account universal principles of water policy with regard to water related disaster risk reduction, interests of all water consumers and water users, taking into account population growth, global climate change, environmental protection, poverty reduction and sustainable development;

**Organize** an international conference to review the outcomes of the first half of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" in Dushanbe , in 2010.

We agree that the Dushanbe Declaration will be submitted to the the Davos ICDR 2008 and 5th World Water Forum. We also agree to bring the declaration to the attention of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and promote the declaration at national and international gatherings.

We express our sincere gratitude to the government and people of the Republic of Tajikistan for organizing this Conference its hospitality.

28 June 2008

Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan