



A UN-WATER INITIATIVE ORGANIZED BY:



Convention on
Biological Diversity



Capacity Development to Support National Drought Management Policies

Summary Report

Workshop for the Eastern and Southern Africa Region

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

5-8 August 2014

Background of the Initiative

Drought affects all climatic regions. It is often ranked first among all natural hazards in its long-term impact and its effect on food security, social stability, livelihoods, the environment and economies at large. While the impacts of drought can be significantly reduced through risk-based drought management policies and practices, to date most countries continue to pursue emergency and recovery strategies and respond only after droughts have taken their toll. Such reactive and 'piecemeal' approaches often prove to be ineffective. Proactive and risk-based national drought management policies and practices would greatly assist countries to build societal resilience to drought.

With the aim of supporting developing countries and countries in transition in building their national capacities for developing proactive and risk-based drought management policies, some of the Members of UN-Water requested the UN-Water, through its Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC), begin a capacity development initiative on supporting the development of drought management policies at the national level. The UN-Water Member organizations comprise the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The initiative was launched at the occasion of the High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy (HMNDP) held in March 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) joined the initiative at a later stage in December 2013.

So far, four regional workshops have been carried out: for the Eastern European region, from 9-11 July 2013 in Bucharest, Romania; for Latin America and the Caribbean, from 4-6 December 2013 in Fortaleza, Brazil; for the Asia-Pacific region, from 6-9 May 2014 in Hanoi, Viet Nam, and most recently for the Eastern and Southern Africa region, the subject of the current report, which took place from 5-8 August in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A regional workshop for countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is set to be conducted in November 2014.

Regional workshop for Eastern and Southern Africa countries (5-8 August 2014)

As a regional hub for many regional offices on the continent, Ethiopia was selected to be the location of the regional workshop for the Eastern and Southern Africa region. We had two local partners: the Ethiopian Ministry of Environment and Forest and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The workshop was hosted by the ECA.

The workshop, held from 5-8 August 2014 at the ECA premises, was attended by 29 participants from 12 countries in the Eastern and Southern Africa region (Botswana, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe). In addition, seven outside observers from the Oxfam and the World Food Programme (WFP) offices in Ethiopia were also present. The participants of the workshop were primarily experts who are engaged in drought and drought-related issues in their respective countries and high-level policymakers in government. Most of the countries were represented by at least two participants from various ministries including agriculture, environment and meteorology, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of drought. The ministries were invited to nominate a participant based on the following criteria:

- Ability to work jointly in multisectoral teams for organizing and coordinating a network of stakeholders at country level,
- Ability to influence policy development and contribute to subsequent activities at country level, and
- Willingness and capability to produce (together with workshop participants from the same country), a country report on the status of drought and the management strategy in their respective countries, including existing capacities and perceived capacity needs (which had to be submitted ahead of the workshop).

The four-day workshop started with an opening session by his Excellency, Mr Kebede Yimam Dawd, State Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forest in Ethiopia. In the opening session, the relevance of drought issues and the increasing frequency of drought in the horn of African region in general and the Ethiopian case in particular were highlighted, and the need was stressed for timely and effective measures for improved preparedness and mitigation measures.



Following the opening session, Dr. Donald Wilhite, Professor at the University of Nebraska, USA and founder of the National Drought Mitigation Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, gave a keynote speech on

'Managing drought risk in a changing climate: the role of national drought policy'. A step-by-step process towards developing drought management policies was presented, highlighting as examples the countries in the Africa region. Next, participants were exposed to the biodiversity aspect of drought and the impact of drought on ecosystem services, which was presented by a representative from CBD. The rest of the session was dedicated to presentations and discussions of country reports by the participants from the 12 countries. The country reports mainly assessed the state of the national drought management practices of the respective countries. Preparing the country reports in advance provided participants from the same countries an opportunity to work together ahead of the workshop, creating a network among different ministries and sectors.

The sessions that followed focused on a set of key elements of national drought policy which fall under the following three areas: (i) Drought Monitoring and Early Warning Systems; (ii) Vulnerability Assessment and Impacts and (iii) Mitigation and Response. As situations vary significantly from country to country, no prescriptive or stringent set of elements of a national drought policy was defined, but participants were exposed to a suite of strategies guiding the drought policy development in each country's individual and specific situation. The workshop's thematic presentations were streamlined to follow the above-mentioned three key areas. Each thematic presentation was followed by extended round-table discussions in breakout groups.

The UN-Water entities engaged in this initiative were represented by Dr Mohamed Bazza (Senior Officer, FAO); Dr Robert Stefanski (Chief of Agricultural Meteorology Division in the Climate and Water Department, WMO), Dr. David Coates (Environmental Affairs Officer, CBD), Dr Sergio Zelaya (Special Advisor on Global Issues, UNCCD) and Dr Daniel Tsegai (Programme Officer, UNW-DPC).



Workshop Outcomes

The thematic presentations and the breakout group discussions covered several key areas and exposed the participants to a wide spectrum of drought management policies and their context-specific relevance. Issues discussed in depth ranged from drought monitoring and early warning systems to various drought indices and data issues in drought monitoring systems. The major components of drought monitoring systems were emphasized, namely timely data and acquisition, impact data and synthesis/analysis of data used to 'trigger' actions and the need for efficient dissemination networks (web, media, extension, etc.). Approaches of drought monitoring were clarified, ranging from single index/parameter, to multiple indices/parameters and composite index. The steps on drought vulnerability and risk assessment and the typologies of different drought risk management measures were also discussed, including drought preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery. A range of risk management options were underlined in order to build societal resilience through national drought policies and preparedness plans, which comprise short and long-term measures. Most notably, the steps towards drought plans were discussed: (i) drought characterization; (ii) monitoring and early warning; (iii) vulnerability and impact assessment and (iv) mitigation and response options. The generic 10-step process of formulating drought policies formed the backbone of the entire discussion during the four-day workshop. The cost of inaction on

drought and the long-term cost effectiveness of risk-based drought management strategies when compared with the cost of disaster response and crisis management were also highlighted. On the fourth day, a field visit organized by the Ethiopian Biodiversity Institute (EBI) was conducted to *Debre Zeit* town, 63 Kilometers from Addis Ababa. The field visit highlighted the importance of coordinated, grassroots level community-based afforestation activities as a way of tackling drought.

In general, the achievements of the workshop can be summarized as follows:

- The workshop improved the awareness of participants in drought management issues, and specifically the needs and strategies for national drought policies based on the principles of 'risk reduction'.
- The workshop equipped participants with tools and strategies for improved decision support, risk assessments of vulnerable sectors, population groups, regions and, most importantly, mitigating drought effects.
- The workshop furnished participants with up-to-date methodologies to develop/improve drought monitoring, seasonal forecasts, and early warning and information delivery systems.
- The workshop also improved participants' understanding and the long-term benefits of risk-based drought management policies versus crisis-based policies.

As in the past, the workshop was able to promote national and regional networks of stakeholders working in various ministries including agriculture, environment and meteorology and encouraged mutual learning, which can help ensure the effectiveness of measures to address drought impacts and pave the way for formulating comprehensive risk-based national drought policies in their countries.