

GWP and WMO's Associated Programme on Flood Management Launch HelpDesk

A HelpDesk for Flood Management will be launched on June 17 at the 2nd Meeting of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The HelpDesk will assist countries in implementing an integrated approach to flood management and will provide guidance on flood management strategy and policy.

The HelpDesk has been created by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) through its Associated Programme on Flood Management, a joint initiative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the Global Water Partnership (GWP), and is supported by some 20 partner organizations from governments, academia and international bodies.

The GWP provides oversight to the Integrated Flood Management (IFM) HelpDesk through its role as chair of the Advisory Committee and the Management Committee of the APFM. GWP is also contributing technical expertise through its work to strengthen the flood management provisions within national plans for integrated management of water resources.

“The HelpDesk is an especially timely initiative, given the increase in climate variability and the needs in many parts of the world for more help and advice on coping with floods” says Dr. Ania Grobicki, Executive Secretary of GWP. Integrated approaches to flood management will promote increased resilience in affected communities, minimize the loss of life from flooding, and maximize the efficient use of flood-prone land in support of livelihood security. Attempts to control floods and provide safety from flooding have failed in numerous places, and flood awareness and preparedness levels in many flood risk areas are strikingly low. Human loss of life from flooding is at an unacceptable level in many parts of the developing world, despite the availability of approaches to reduce flood risks. Economic losses from flooding are also high. Increased climate variability poses additional risks by affecting the magnitude and frequency of severe weather events. Therefore, the shift from a ‘flood control approach’ to Integrated Flood Management has to be fostered in a sustained manner.

The HelpDesk will offer on-line visitors several entry points, such as a:

- “Help yourself” section which include Flood Management Tools, Database References and Virtual Discussion platforms
- “Get help” section providing assistance for flood management policy, law and strategy and capacity building programs.

The HelpDesk website address is: <http://www.apfm.info/helpdesk.htm>. Links to the HelpDesk can also be found on the GWP website (www.gwpforum.org) and the GWP ToolBox website (www.gwptoolbox.org)

GWP together with WMO, the Stockholm International Water Institute, and CapNet is co-convening a side event at the 2009 Stockholm Water Week entitled “Country assistance for robust flood management policies: the HelpDesk for Integrated Flood Management.”