

4. The UN's Early Warnings for All (EW4All) Initiative – I R

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) at its Extraordinary Congress in Geneva, rallied its 193 Member States to commit to universal early warning coverage by 2027 under the UN's Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative. An Early Warning System (EWS) is an integrated approach that combines hazard monitoring, forecasting, disaster risk assessment, communication, and preparedness to enable timely action for saving lives, livelihoods, and assets at risk

Overview of EW4All Initiative

Launch and Leadership – The Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative was launched in 2022 by UN Secretary-General António Guterres. It is co-led by multiple UN and international agencies –

1. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
2. UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)
3. International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
4. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Primary Goal – To ensure that every individual, regardless of geographic location, receives life-saving alerts for hazards such as cyclones, floods, heatwaves, and droughts. Aims to reduce mortality, economic losses, and social disruption caused by weather, water, and climate-related hazards.

Scope and Focus

Addressing Multi-Hazard Threats –

Covers weather-related hazards – cyclones, storms, floods, and extreme rainfall.

Covers water-related hazards – droughts, flash floods, and riverine flooding.

Covers climate-related hazards – heatwaves, wildfires, and prolonged dry spells.

Strengthening the Early Warning “Value Chain” –

Monitoring and forecasting hazards – Using scientific tools, satellites, radar, and hydrological models.

Risk assessment – Identifying vulnerable populations and potential economic losses.

Dissemination of alerts – Ensuring timely communication via multiple channels (SMS, radio, social media, community networks).

Community action – Ensuring that people understand and can act on the alerts effectively.

Importance of Early Warning Systems

Disaster Risk Reduction – Timely warnings (issued within 24 hours) can reduce disaster damage by up to 30%. Countries without multi-hazard early warning systems experience six times higher mortality and four times greater impacts from disasters.

Economic Significance – Since 1970, economic losses from extreme weather events have exceeded US\$4 trillion globally.

Human Impact – Over the last 50 years, climate-related disasters have killed approximately 2 million people, with 90% of deaths in developing nations.

Challenges in Early Warning Coverage

Inequitable Access – As of 2024, only 108 countries have some capacity for multi-hazard early warning systems, up from 52 in 2014. Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and conflict-affected regions remain most exposed.

Higher Vulnerability – In countries without adequate early warning systems, disaster mortality is six times higher, and four times more people are affected.

Technical and Institutional Barriers – Weak observing networks and limited data sharing. Insufficient financing for system setup and maintenance. Lack of community trust and understanding, leading to poor response.

Climate Inequalities – Vulnerable populations in developing nations are disproportionately affected due to limited infrastructure, low adaptive capacity, and poor emergency preparedness.

Progress and Global Action

International Endorsement – At WMO's 2025 Congress, 193 Member States endorsed a Call to Action for

universal coverage of early warning systems by 2027.

Country-Led Improvements – National assessments and partnerships are enhancing hazard monitoring, forecasting, and governance structures.

Alignment with Sendai Framework – EW4All supports the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030), reinforcing global disaster risk management goals.

Use of Technology and Innovation – Integration of AI, big data, and predictive modeling to improve accuracy of forecasts and hazard communication.

Suggestions and Way Forward

To meet the 2027 target for universal coverage, the UN and WMO recommend –

Embedding early warning systems in national policies – Incorporate into climate adaptation and disaster management strategies.

Securing long-term financing – Predictable funding ensures sustainability and maintenance of early warning systems.

Empowering national meteorological services – Provide clear mandates, authority, and resources to monitor, forecast, and issue alerts effectively.

Inclusive communication – Combine scientific knowledge and indigenous/local knowledge to ensure community understanding and trust.

Harnessing AI and technological innovation – Improve prediction accuracy, risk assessment, and real-time alert dissemination.

Community-Centric Approach – Strengthen local capacity, disaster preparedness, and response planning at grassroots levels.

Significance of EW4All

Represents a global commitment to leaving no one behind in disaster risk reduction. Reduces mortality and economic losses by ensuring timely alerts for all hazards. Promotes equity by focusing on vulnerable populations such as LDCs, SIDS, and conflict-affected regions. Integrates science, policy, and community action to strengthen the entire early warning value chain. Serves as a blueprint for universal disaster resilience, aligning with SDG 13 (Climate Action) and Sendai Framework targets.

Source – <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/climate-change/no-one-should-die-for-lack-of-warning-wmo-issues-call-to-action>