



Seventy-third session  
Agenda item 20 (c)

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2018

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/73/538/Add.3)]

### 73/230. Effective global response to address the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* its resolutions [69/218](#) of 19 December 2014, [70/110](#) of 23 December 2015 and [71/227](#) of 21 December 2016 and Economic and Social Council resolutions [1999/46](#) of 28 July 1999, [1999/63](#) of 30 July 1999 and [2000/33](#) of 28 July 2000, and taking into consideration all other relevant resolutions,

*Noting* that the El Niño phenomenon has a recurring character and can lead to extensive natural hazards with the potential to seriously affect humankind,

*Noting also* that technological developments and international cooperation have enhanced the capabilities for the prediction of the El Niño phenomenon and thereby the potential for the preventive actions that may be taken to reduce its negative impacts,

*Reaffirming* the Sendai Declaration<sup>1</sup> and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,<sup>2</sup> adopted at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction,

*Reaffirming also* its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated

<sup>1</sup> Resolution [69/283](#), annex I.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, annex II.



manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

*Welcoming* the Paris Agreement<sup>3</sup> and encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>4</sup> that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

*Noting* that further research on the impacts of climate change, including the effects of arctic changes on the El Niño phenomenon, can support more effective planning for resilience and recovery,

*Noting with concern* the scientific findings contained in the special report entitled *Global Warming of 1.5°C* of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,

*Reaffirming* its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

*Reaffirming also* the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, from 17 to 20 October 2016,<sup>5</sup>

*Reaffirming further* its vision of cities and human settlements that adopt and implement disaster risk reduction and management, reduce vulnerability, build resilience and responsiveness to natural and human-made hazards and foster mitigation of and adaptation to climate change,

*Noting with concern* that the El Niño phenomenon has posed a serious challenge to the hard-fought development gains of developing countries, particularly in terms of diverting resources from national development plans and programmes,

*Conscious* of the importance of enhanced concerted efforts by the World Meteorological Organization with relevant national, regional and international monitoring centres to deliver, effectively and in a timely manner, more regionally focused climate services as well as training and capacity-building related to the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon, and noting the role of the International Research Centre on El Niño at Guayaquil, Ecuador, in this regard,

*Recalling* that the peak of the 2015/16 El Niño phenomenon was comparable in strength to the 1982/83 and 1997/98 events and, therefore, one of the strongest on record, and affected more than 60 million people during 2015 and 2016, in particular in developing countries, with significant short- and long-term impacts on the health of individuals, the economy and food production locally, regionally and globally, particularly affecting people whose livelihood depends on agriculture, fisheries and livestock activities,

*Noting with concern* that, as a consequence of the 2015/16 El Niño phenomenon, heavy rains, floods and, conversely, cold waves and heatwaves, wildfires, coral bleaching and drought episodes adversely affected countries and peoples, in particular in Latin America, Eastern and Southern Africa and South-East

<sup>3</sup> Adopted under the UNFCCC in [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

<sup>5</sup> Resolution [71/256](#), annex.

Asia and the Pacific, including by increasing the spread of diseases and the number of people displaced, affecting food security and infrastructure and hampering the ability of those countries and peoples to achieve sustainable development,

*Noting with appreciation* that some countries were able to partly reduce the adverse economic, social and environmental impacts of the 2015/16 El Niño phenomenon by designing and implementing government-led early action plans that included the establishment of resilient multipurpose dams and other infrastructure projects, reinforcing existing social and productive infrastructure, revitalizing health services to combat vector-borne diseases, and strengthening social support services, safety nets, appropriate and preventive agriculture practices, income-generating public works and welfare programmes,

*Acknowledging* the importance of humanitarian assistance provided to countries that were most affected by the adverse effects of the 2015/16 El Niño phenomenon, while stressing the need to transcend this approach in favour of a multidisciplinary and articulated development-based response to strengthen national institutional capacities and effectively address these adverse consequences,

*Noting* that the World Meteorological Organization has predicted a 70 to 80 per cent chance of a weak El Niño/Southern Oscillation phenomenon prevailing during the winter of 2018/19 and a 55 to 60 per cent chance of its continuing into the spring of 2019 to be the most likely scenario,

*Noting also* the work of the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General on El Niño and Climate in calling attention to the severe short- and long-term impacts of the 2015/16 El Niño phenomenon, which culminated in the submission of the report entitled “Preventing El Niño Southern Oscillation episodes from becoming disasters: a blueprint for action”,

*Noting with appreciation* the inclusion of the discussions on the important contributions of science, technology and innovation to building resilience to the socioeconomic and environmental impacts of the El Niño phenomenon held during the multi-stakeholder forums on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals,

*Noting* that the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in Geneva, from 13 to 17 May 2019, on the theme “Resilience dividend: towards sustainable and inclusive societies”,

*Noting also* the climate summit called for by the Secretary-General, to be held in New York in 2019,

*Reiterating* the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

*Recommitting* to ensuring that no country or person is left behind and to focusing our effort where the challenges are greatest, including by ensuring the inclusion and participation of those who are furthest behind,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,<sup>6</sup> which include a section on an effective global response to address the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon;

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<sup>6</sup> A/72/259 and A/73/268.

2. *Urges* the effective implementation of the Sendai Declaration<sup>1</sup> and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030;<sup>2</sup>

3. *Reaffirms* the importance of developing multi-hazard strategies at the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels by 2020, in line with the Sendai Framework, that aim to prevent, mitigate and repair the adverse economic, social and environmental impacts of the El Niño phenomenon, while recognizing ongoing national initiatives by affected countries to strengthen their capacities;

4. *Recognizes* the continued efforts by the Governments of Ecuador and Spain, the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to support the International Research Centre on El Niño, and encourages them and other members of the international community to continue to make such contributions for the advancement of the Centre;

5. *Welcomes* the activities undertaken so far to strengthen the International Research Centre on El Niño, through collaboration with international monitoring centres, including national oceanographic institutions, and encourages further efforts to enhance regional and international recognition of and support for the Centre and to develop tools for decision makers and government authorities aimed at reducing the impact of the El Niño phenomenon;

6. *Notes* the assistance provided to Governments by the International Research Centre on El Niño and by other Governments and institutions in the development of early warning systems that allow for the implementation of anticipatory risk reduction measures that contribute to the reduction and prevention of the potential human, economic and environmental impacts of the phenomenon;

7. *Recognizes* the contributions of the United Nations system, namely, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Food Programme and the World Meteorological Organization, to guidance on and action planning for El Niño, as a phenomenon that causes impacts of a multisectoral nature, including on food security, livelihood, health and water and sanitation, and encourages strengthened collaboration also with other relevant institutions;

8. *Also recognizes* the technical and scientific support of the World Meteorological Organization in producing regionally coordinated monthly and seasonal forecasts, in particular its establishment of a consensus mechanism for the development of updates on El Niño/La Niña conditions, which receives contributions from several climate centres, and further recognizes various initiatives undertaken by different countries to strengthen national and regional capacities;

9. *Encourages* the World Meteorological Organization, in this regard, to continue to strengthen collaboration and the exchange of data and information with relevant institutions;

10. *Encourages* Governments to promote the full, equal and effective participation and leadership of women, as well as of persons with disabilities, in the design, management, resourcing and implementation of gender-responsive and disability-inclusive policies, plans and programmes on the preparation for and response to the El Niño phenomenon, and recognizes in this regard that women and girls are disproportionately exposed to risk, increased loss of livelihoods and even loss of life during and in the aftermath of disasters, and that disasters and the consequent disruption to physical, social, economic and environmental networks and support systems disproportionately affect persons with disabilities and their families;

11. *Stresses* that during neutral El Niño and La Niña years it is critical to prepare for, build resilience to and reduce the risks of the next event, including through integrated plans;
12. *Encourages* responses to the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon not only to address the immediate needs but also to support longer-term sustainable development and build the resilience of livelihoods, especially in the agricultural sectors and in rural areas;
13. *Calls upon* the international community to provide financial, technical and capacity-building support to countries affected by the El Niño phenomenon, prioritizing resources to developing countries;
14. *Encourages* the United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, the annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development to consider further discussing recommendations on how to better identify requirements and options for the adequate provision of science, technology and innovation elements to enable countries to address the impacts of the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon, as appropriate;
15. *Encourages* the annual Global Infrastructure Forum to identify and address, as appropriate, infrastructure and capacity gaps and needs to enhance preparedness and promote early actions in countries affected by the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon;
16. *Encourages* the sixth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to include in its discussions ways to enhance preparedness, build resilience, promote early actions, reduce risks and address the impacts of the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon, as appropriate;
17. *Requests* the United Nations system, through existing coordination mechanisms and platforms, to take into consideration, where appropriate, the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon when designing risk reduction and development strategies, in particular in the context of the United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience: Towards a Risk-Informed and Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development;
18. *Encourages* interested Member States, with the support of the United Nations development system, to develop integrated, coherent and comprehensive government-led strategies to mitigate the adverse impacts of the El Niño/La Niña phenomenon and to collaborate in support of affected countries;
19. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to ensure that no one is left behind and no country is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution;
20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his reports to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth and seventy-fifth sessions, under the sub-item entitled “Disaster risk reduction” of the item entitled “Sustainable development”, a section on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to consider at its seventy-fifth session the topic “Effective global response to address the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon” under the sub-item entitled “Disaster risk reduction”, unless otherwise agreed.

*62nd plenary meeting  
20 December 2018*