



Press Release
SECOND RIMES MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
10 July 2015, New Delhi
(Draft)

New Delhi 10 July 2015 - The Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India is hosting the Second RIMES Ministerial Conference in New Delhi, India.

The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) was established on 30 April 2009 under the Agreement on the Cooperation on Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Afro-Asian Region, for strengthening capacity of its Member States to provide user-relevant early warning services. RIMES is governed by a Council, composed of heads of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) presently chaired by India. Council decisions are carried out by the RIMES Secretariat, which is currently Maldives. RIMES programs and projects are implemented by the Program Unit, which also operates and manages the regional early warning facility, located near Bangkok, Thailand.

The RIMES Council established a Ministerial Consortium for obtaining highest-level political endorsement and guidance for mobilizing resources to fund Master Plan implementation and RIMES delivery of core services. The Ministerial Consortium comprises of Ministers that have purview of the NMHS or national scientific and technical agency that generate multi-hazard early warning information in RIMES Member States.

RIMES Consortium of Ministers first met in New Delhi in June 2012 and the present Ministerial meeting was the Second. Twenty-three countries were represented in the conference today, with participation of Ministers and Ambassadors, and Senior Officials. The nations represented were Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Comoros, India, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

The inaugural session of the Conference was presided over by Dr. Hasrth Vardhan, Honorable Union Minister for Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences. He welcomed all the delegates describing the event as a “privileged moment” as the subject touched many lives and livelihoods, saving people from disasters. He said that RIMES movement has grown, and achieved respectable standards. While there is a need for sharing the fruits of science to serve the people and save the humanity from hazards, it is important to work carefully and in a coordinated manner. He described RIMES as a good example, starting with humble beginnings and carrying out coordinated work in the region. The 2004 Tsunami caught us unawares – but today we are much better equipped – India has now world class – best in world early warning systems capable of disseminating alerts and warnings within 10 minutes, not only our own country but to neighbors too. It is important to reach all such early warning information to end-users like farmers, fisherman and people at risk. Good information,

communicated in easy to use manner can impact significantly contributing to economy and GDP growth. He said that all RIMES countries could feel proud that they are partners to this pioneering system.

Further, it was assured that India would continue to support RIMES in efforts to assist in providing country specific early warning services. Acknowledging the support of international agencies like WMO, ECMWF, IOTWS-IOC and UN ESCAP, he wished that the enthusiastic participation from countries and UN and other international agencies would make this successful in times to come as well.

Today Hon'ble Minister also launched the integrated ocean information services and level 3 country specific Tsunami warning services for Sri Lanka and Seychelles at the ministerial conference. This service was developed by ESSO-INCOIS in collaboration with RIMES. Such a service to Maldives has already been operationalized.

Dr. Shailesh Nayak, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences and Chair, RIMES Council reiterated the need for developing systems that can use state-of-the-art knowledge to serve humanity. Ministry of Earth Sciences is supporting for expansion of the targeted efforts, under RIMES umbrella, towards research, education, communication, and the application of proven knowledge science and technology. Strategic investments, of human and capital in such matters, as they relate to hazards, offer the promise of producing significant reductions in the loss of life and property from natural, technological and human-induced disasters.

Mr. Murato, UN ESCAP welcomed India's contribution to the Trust Fund and also acknowledged other donors. He recognized unmet needs and gaps, and emphasized the need for local level information and integration of these at local government level policies and plans. He commended the countries that have supported, including Government of India's great leadership as the Chair of the RIMES Council. Maldives and Mongolia's support as Secretariat, and Royal Thai government initial support were also acknowledged. He further assured the continued support from UN ESCAP.

The 2nd RIMES Ministerial Conference reviewed the update on the status of implementation of the First RIMES Ministerial Conference recommendations and provided guidance to RIMES policies and programs and adopted the Second Master Plan for the 2016-2020 period. The conference also articulated a Declaration that further strengthens technical and funding support to the RIMES to enhance capacities of Member country National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) to provide standardized high-quality customized products for managing climate risks.
