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From the Director: Summer 2000

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Drought

Network News

Summer
2000

**A Newsletter of the International Drought Information Center
and the National Drought Mitigation Center**

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From the Director

We had a fairly good response to the call in the previous issue of *Drought Network News* for readers to receive future issues online. I would encourage more of you to consider this option, as it will save distribution costs and expedite receipt of the newsletter. If you are willing to receive the newsletter electronically, please contact Kim Klemsz (kklemsz2@unl.edu). Our plan is to notify you via e-mail when each new issue of *Drought Network News* is available. Back issues of *Drought Network News* are also available online.

At this writing, I am making final preparations for the Expert Group Meeting on Early Warning Systems for Drought Preparedness and Drought Management. This meeting, hosted by the Institute of Meteorology, will be held in Lisbon, Portugal, in early September. Co-sponsors of the meeting are the World Meteorological Organization, Secretariat of the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification, and UNDP's Office to Combat Desertification and Drought. The purpose of the meeting is to assess the status of drought early warning systems and determine future needs to better contribute to the increasing demand for drought mitigation and planning efforts.

The specific objectives of the meeting are to:

1. Evaluate the current status and potential future value of drought early warning systems in drought-prone regions.
2. Determine the current and expected future value of seasonal forecasts in contributing to the effectiveness of drought early warning systems.
3. Identify accomplishments or specific examples of how drought early warning systems have reduced the impacts of drought in various country and regional settings.
4. Identify shortcomings or limitations of current early warning systems in providing decision makers with timely and reliable information on drought conditions.
5. Identify how improved delivery of climate information and its use by decision makers can reduce the risks associated with drought.

6. Formulate recommendations that will provide guidelines for governments, international organizations, and NGOs for the improvement of drought early warning systems in support of drought planning and mitigation activities.

Senior experts in several fields have been invited to prepare discussion papers to address the above objectives, and the proceedings of the meeting will be published by WMO. Participants will discuss the papers and develop appropriate recommendations for all organizations involved in drought early warning systems, in particular the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services. A summary of the meeting will be included in the next issue of *Drought Network News*.

Deborah Wood and I, with assistance from M.V.K. Sivakumar (WMO), will edit the proceedings, which will contain the papers presented by the experts as well as recommendations for improving drought early warning systems. This work should serve as a major source of information for all agencies and organizations involved with designing and implementing drought early warning systems. The proceedings should be available in late 2000.

Drought Network News readers may submit articles for the next issue until October 15, 2000. Readers are also encouraged to submit announcements of workshops, conferences, and other information of interest to our network members.

Donald A. Wilhite

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