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High-Level Segment – Extraordinary Congress of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) "Early Warnings for All" Initiative Geneva, 20 October 2025

Statement by Uroš Vajgl, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Climate and Energy of the Republic of Slovenia

Excellencies, Ms. Secretary-General, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to address this distinguished gathering of the *Early Warnings for All* initiative at the halfway point toward the 2027 goal.

We share the conviction that effective multi-hazard early warning systems are among the most powerful and cost-effective measures of climate adaptation — protecting lives, livelihoods, and development gains.

As the impacts of climate change intensify, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more severe. For Slovenia — a small, mountainous, and water-rich country — this challenge is already a lived reality. Namely in August 2023, Slovenia was struck by the most catastrophic floods in its history. The economic damage exceeded 10 billion euros, affecting large parts of our territory. Our Environment Agency managed to issue timely and accurate warnings, supported by a well-maintained observation network and advanced numerical weather prediction models. Throughout the event, regular joint press conferences were held with all key institutions. This unified approach ensured that warnings were consistent, trusted, and actionable.

Despite the material damage there were no casualties, which is crucial. We attribute this outcome to years of investment in a strong National Meteorological and Hydrological service, robust inter-institutional coordination, and clear and transparent communication with the public.

The Environmental Agency is constantly looking for ways to improve its services. In this regard it is already succeeding in harnessing the potential of artificial intelligence to enhance the effectiveness of its warning systems. It has developed an AI-based model for coastal flood forecasting - HIDRA, which has already been integrated in operational use. This system has a strong potential to contribute to the global Early Warnings for All initiative, as it can be transferred to any region with available observational data. Currently, the model is being tested for coastal flood forecasting in the Baltic Sea region.

We all are aware that weather related hazards do not stop at borders. Regional cooperation is therefore essential for delivering on the *Early Warnings for All* vision. Nevertheless, opportunities for enhancing regional cooperation remain and merit further consideration. For example, some areas have limited communication infrastructure for timely warnings, and there are insufficient real-time monitoring and predictive modelling capabilities.

In Slovenia we are addressing this by actively contributing to some regional mechanisms under the auspices of the WMO. Let me mention three:

First, we are an active partner in the **South-East European Multi-Hazard Early Warning Advisory System (SEE-MHEWS-A)** — a project jointly implemented by WMO and the countries of South-East Europe. This initiative supports forecasting and warning services across 18 countries. Slovenia played a leading role in negotiating the regional data exchange policy, which now enables real-time sharing of observations across the region. Furthermore, our Agency operates the ALADIN numerical weather prediction model, covering 18 countries, Türkiye, and parts of the Middle East. Forecast products are provided to all partner services, strengthening regional preparedness and response.

Second, we host the **Flood Forecasting and Warning System (Sava FFWS)**, established under the International Sava River Basin Commission. This platform supports regional coordination of hydrological forecasting and enhances the capacities of participating countries to prepare regular forecasting reports and warnings.

Third, we host the **Drought Management Centre for South-East Europe (DMCSEE)**, established with the support of WMO and the Desertification Convention. The Centre monitors and assesses drought conditions across the region and is increasingly focusing on emerging "flash droughts" — rapid-onset events that must be integrated into modern early warning frameworks.

These regional initiatives illustrate how cooperation, data sharing, and mutual support can multiply the effectiveness of national systems — making early warnings stronger, faster, and more inclusive.

Excellencies,

Slovenia firmly believes that *Early Warnings for All* is not only a technical objective, but a political and societal commitment. It calls for partnership between science and governance, between countries and communities.

We commend the leadership of WMO and its partners, and we fully support the Secretary-General's *Call to Action*. Achieving universal coverage will require intensified efforts to strengthen national services, to close the digital divide, and to ensure access to modern technologies, including artificial intelligence, for all countries.

Slovenia will continue to:

- Strengthen its national early warning capabilities;
- Support regional and global cooperation under WMO; and
- Share knowledge and expertise, especially within South-East Europe.

We will also continue to promote inclusive approaches that ensure early warnings reach those most at risk — children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.

In conclusion, Slovenia stands ready to contribute to this collective mission. We are confident that, through renewed commitment, innovation, and solidarity, we can ensure that every person — everywhere — is protected by early warning systems by 2027.