



A Planet Fit for the Future: Restoring Trust through Climate Action

**Special event convened by the President of the General Assembly ahead of COP31
10:00 am- 1:00 pm and 3:00 - 6:00 pm on 16 October 2026**

ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Concept note

A. Overview

Ahead of COP31, to be held in Antalya, Türkiye, from 9 to 20 November 2026, the President of the General Assembly will convene a one-day event to provide Member States with an opportunity to exchange views on adaptation and resilience in response to the adverse effects of climate change, with a particular focus on strengthening early warning and preparedness.

B. Background

Weather and climate extremes are being felt across all regions, undermining sustainable development, reversing hard-won development gains and disproportionately affecting developing countries, particularly those that are especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Global temperatures reached 1.4°C above the 1850-1900 level in 2025, capping off a decade that WMO called the hottest on record. Current nationally determined contributions remain insufficient to keep the 1.5°C goal within reach. Indeed, implementing only current policies would lead to up to 2.8°C of warming this century. Least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and low-lying coastal States face particularly acute vulnerabilities, compounded by constrained fiscal space and persistent barriers to accessing adequate, timely and predictable climate finance.

The links between the cryosphere, oceans, and sustainable development are increasingly evident. Climate change threatens food security, energy systems, ecosystems and livelihoods, while also contributing significantly to sea-level rise. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has concluded that continued sea-level rise during the twenty-first century is virtually certain and will continue for centuries to millennia, although rapid and sustained emissions reductions can substantially limit its scale. The United Nations Declaration on Sea Level Rise recognizes sea-level rise as a present and lived reality, driven primarily by ocean warming and the melting of ice sheets and glaciers, and calls for stronger international cooperation, improved scientific observation, anticipatory action, multi-hazard early warning systems and long-term adaptation.

Glacier loss is accelerating worldwide. Since 2000, mountain glaciers have lost about 6.2 per cent of their ice above sea level, including some 1,400 billion tonnes between 2023 and 2025 alone. In 2025, glaciers lost an estimated 408 billion tonnes, equivalent to 1.1 millimetres of global sea level rise, with particularly severe losses in Western Canada and the United States, Iceland and Central Europe. Swiss glaciers alone lost more than 5 per cent of their remaining volume in 2026, and nearly 20 per cent over the past five years.

Recent events in the Himalayan region have brought renewed urgency to these challenges. On 26 August 2026, a sudden rock-ice avalanche in the Langtang region triggered a devastating, fast-moving flood through Nepal's Rasuwa district. The event demonstrated the inadequacy of early warning arrangements and underscored the importance of connecting scientific observation and forecasting, with capacity building, technology, local knowledge, anticipatory action, and trusted and effective last-mile communication.

Multi-hazard early warning systems are among the most effective means of protecting lives and livelihoods, yet coverage and operational capacity remain uneven, especially in vulnerable developing countries. More than 60 per cent of countries now report having such systems, but significant gaps persist in risk knowledge, observation, forecasting, communication and preparedness. Reimagining early warning for a warming world therefore requires moving beyond isolated technologies towards people-centred, end-to-end systems capable of addressing compound, cascading, slow-onset and sudden-onset risks.

C. Objectives

The event will provide an inclusive platform for Member States to exchange views, build political momentum and identify practical areas of convergence ahead of COP31. Discussions will address adaptation and resilience, loss and damage, climate finance, technology transfer, capacity-building and international cooperation. Particular attention will be given to the needs and circumstances of vulnerable countries, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries with low-lying coastal areas.

The event will also consider practical measures to strengthen risk knowledge, early warning, international cooperation, anticipatory action and last-mile preparedness in response to the adverse effects of climate change.

D. Format

The one-day event will comprise an opening segment, statements by Member States and observers, and an afternoon thematic segment featuring a moderated panel followed by an interactive discussion.

The morning segment will have a pre-established list of speakers in accordance with established General Assembly practice. Statements will be limited to three minutes for individual delegations and five minutes for statements delivered on behalf of groups of States.

A moderated panel will be convened in the afternoon on the theme “Strengthening multi-hazard early warning systems in a changing climate”. The session will have focused discussions on how existing early warning systems can be strengthened to identify rapidly changing risks and translate scientific information into trusted, timely and actionable warnings.

Guiding Questions for the moderated session:

1. How can science, technology and local knowledge be combined to detect cascading hazards and deliver timely, actionable warnings particularly in developing countries and in particular countries vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change?
2. What arrangements are needed for effective last-mile communication, preparedness and anticipatory action when warning time may be measured in minutes?
3. How can access to finance, technology and capacity-building for early warning systems be strengthened, particularly in developing countries?

Participants will engage with the panelists through concise interventions and questions. Delegations are requested to provide practical proposals on integrated observation, anticipatory action, community preparedness, international cooperation, and financing for resilient infrastructure and locally led adaptation.

Interpretation in the six official languages and live webcast coverage will be provided, subject to availability.

E. Participants

Participation will include Member States and observers, the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, financial institutions, scientific and technical bodies, Indigenous Peoples, civil society, youth and representatives of affected communities.

F. Outcome

The President of the General Assembly will circulate a concise President’s Summary, reflecting the views expressed by Member States during the special event.