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***NCAR's ESIG Convenes International Workshop in Budapest on the Possible Value of El Nino Forecasting to Famine Early Warning Systems***

A very select group of 28 participants from Australia, England, Ethiopia, Haiti, Hungary, Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Switzerland, the United States, Uzbekistan (part of the former Soviet Union) and Zimbabwe will meet in Budapest, Hungary, October 25 to 28, to explore the possible value to famine early-warning systems of information regarding the onset of El Nino events in the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

The workshop will be convened by Michael Glantz, head of NCAR's Environmental and Societal Impacts Group (ESIG), with support from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Agency for International Development's (AID) Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in Washington, D.C. NCAR is sponsored by the National Science Foundation.

The topic will be the value of disseminating information about impending occurrences of the El Nino-Southern Oscillation, or ENSO. Popularly known as El Nino, it is a recurrent change in sea-surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific, whose variations every few years affect weather patterns from southern and eastern Africa across the Indian and Pacific Oceans to Peru and Brazil. Some researchers have noted that statistical correlations suggest possible linkages between droughts in various part of the sub-Saharan Africa and these temperature changes. As a result, there's a strong suggestion that information used in attempting to forecast the onset and severity of an ENSO event may be operationally useful in early-warning systems.

Glantz' workshop will bring together ENSO researchers and forecasters, early warning specialists, and climate impacts researchers to focus on the use of ENSO-related information in early-warning systems designed to identify impending severe food shortages, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Each participant will present a discussion paper. A second workshop, to be convened in early 1994 by Glantz, will be held in Southeast Asia, focusing on a variety of early warning systems for areas affected by typhoons, droughts and floods. Proceedings of these workshops will be published.

Other organizations and agencies involved in the ESIG workshop include the Food Security Project and the National Meteorological Services Agency of Ethiopia; the Land & Agriculture Policy Center in Johannesburg, South Africa; the Ministry of Environment at the Department of International Relations in Budapest, Hungary; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the Kenya Meteorological Department in Nairobi; the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization; the Southern African Development Community's Regional Early Warning System in Zimbabwe; the newly created United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs' Drought Emergency in Southern Africa Programme; the Aral Sea Centre of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Global Programs; and several U. S. and foreign university representatives as well as UNEP, AID and NCAR participants.

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