

CEO: Extreme weather events require a transition from response to proactive action



The CEO of the National Center of Meteorology, Dr. Ayman bin Salem Ghulam, stressed the importance of strengthening early warning systems and disaster preparedness in the Arab countries, in light of the acceleration of climate change and the increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather phenomena, stressing that the transition from response to early warning and proactive action has become a necessity to protect lives and property.

This came in his speech during the first Arab Regional Forum for Early Warning and Disaster Preparedness (High-Level), which was held today at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States in Cairo, with the participation of a number of institutions, experts and decision-makers concerned with risk and disaster management in the Arab countries.

Ghulam explained that the Arab region is one of the regions most affected by weather disturbances in the world, pointing to the report on the state of climate in the Arab region that more than 3 million people were affected by extreme phenomena during 2024, and more than 300 people died as a result of heat waves and floods, stressing that these figures do not reflect the true size of human and economic losses.

He pointed out that climate challenges transcend the borders of countries and cannot be dealt with with individual efforts, which calls for building a joint Arab early warning system based on real-time data exchange, unifying technical and operational procedures, and benefiting from modern technologies, including artificial intelligence and advanced numerical models.

The CEO of the Center indicated that multi-hazard early warning systems are no longer a cost, but rather an investment in saving lives and protecting livelihoods, pointing out that about 60% of Arab countries have these systems, which is higher than the global average, but still needs further development and improvement.

He touched on the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in this field, explaining that it was the first country in the Middle East to launch a national early warning system for weather phenomena in 2011, and continued to develop it by integrating artificial intelligence, remote sensing, and advanced data analysis technologies, enhancing forecasting accuracy and speed of response.

Ghulam pointed to the Kingdom's contributions in supporting regional and international action through its climate initiatives, including the Saudi Green and Middle East Green Initiatives, and the establishment of the Regional Center for Dust and Sand Storms and the Regional

Center for Climate Change, which contributes to enhancing the scientific and technical capabilities of Arab countries, and supporting adaptation plans and mitigating the effects of climate change.

At the end of his speech, Dr. Ayman Ghulam affirmed the Kingdom's commitment to supporting joint Arab and regional efforts in the field of early warning, and its readiness to continue cooperation and exchange experiences and technical enablers, in a way that contributes to raising the efficiency of early warning systems and achieving a safer and more sustainable future for the peoples of the region.