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HFA

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN AFRICA

STATUS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF AFRICA REGIONAL STRATEGY AND
HYOGO FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



Humanitarian Aid
and Civil Protection

The 'Status Report on the Implementation of Africa Strategy Objectives and Hyogo Framework for Action' is a product of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Regional Office for Africa, and partners, and forms part of the regular HFA monitoring exercise of the Office. This also contributes to the recommendation of the 2nd African Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (2010) that requests the African Union Commission, regional and sub-regional organisations and Member States to continuously monitor the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and its Programme of Action in line with the HFA.

The present document is a summary of analysis based on HFA reports received from 37 countries since the beginning of the HFA monitoring process. It has been complemented with information provided by the African Union Commission, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), United Nations / intergovernmental organisations, international non-governmental organisations / civil society and donors. The report has been prepared with financial support from the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO).

The full report is currently under consultation prior to its launch. Comments on the report can be sent by 15 June 2013 to pedro.basabe@unep.org and animesh.kumar@unep.org.

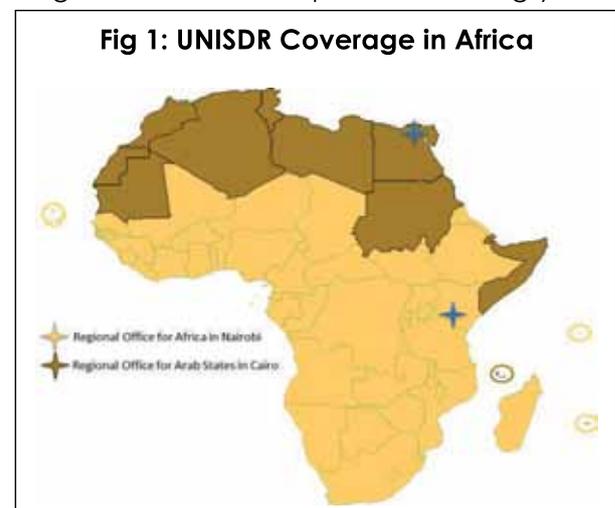
Introduction

Disasters in Africa are evolving in geography, frequency and impact. Since the turn of the decade (2011 and 2012), 147 recorded disasters – including 19 droughts and 67 flood events – affected millions across Africa and caused US\$ 1.3 billion in economic losses¹. On average, almost two disasters of significant proportions have been recorded every week in the region since 2000². Few of these ever hit the global headlines but they silently and persistently erode the capacities of Africans to survive or prosper.

An average of 125 events occurred in Africa each year between 2001 and 2010, the largest proportion of which were hydro-meteorological (floods or wet mass movement). Although hydro-meteorological events are typically responsible for one third of the total economic damage by disasters in Africa, over the past two years alone, they have caused 90% of the economic loss.

Judging by the number of fatalities, however, biological hazards are ravaging the continent in much greater numbers than other hazards: 5 out of 7 of the total deaths (averaging 6,833 each year) are due to epidemics.

In Africa, multiple and inter-dependent forms of vulnerability have the potential to transform even minor hazards into human disasters. Around 400 million people in the region live below the poverty line³, and 200 million are considered to be under-nourished⁴. Income poverty and food insecurity play a major role in land degradation, as the poor and hungry are



¹ EM-DAT: The OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database – www.emdat.be – Université Catholique de Louvain – Brussels – Belgium.

²For a disaster to be entered into the CRED database, at least one of the following criteria must be fulfilled: 10 or more people reported killed; 100 or more people reported affected; declaration of a state of emergency; call for international assistance.

³Chen, S. and Ravallion, M. 2008. *The developing world is poorer than we thought, but no less successful in the fight against poverty*, World Bank.

⁴Kidane, W. Maetz, M. and Dardel, P., 2006. *Food security and agricultural development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Building a case for more public support*, FAO, Rome.

forced to over-exploit natural resources to meet their immediate needs for survival.

Furthermore, poor health status, and in particular the high prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS in parts of the region, significantly increases underlying vulnerability to natural hazards.

Both vulnerability and hazard occurrence are subject to dynamic global forces, such as urbanization and climate change that are creating new patterns of disaster risk in the region.

Africa currently has the highest rate of urbanisation in the world. Almost 40% of Africans now live in cities or urban environments, and, if current trends continue, half of Africa's population will be urban by 2050.⁵ Rapid, unplanned urbanisation, including the alarming rate of growth of urban slums, is creating dangerous patterns of risk accumulation and exposing an increasingly large proportion of the population to floods, landslides, epidemics and other hazards.

Global climate change will significantly affect the risk profile in Africa. In 2012 alone, over 34 million Africans were affected by climatological hazards (drought and extreme temperatures). Climate change also exacerbates other hazards (i.e. storms and disease transmission) as well as existing vulnerabilities. It likewise triggers decreases in water availability, agricultural yields and suitable land for pasture that will threaten the viability of traditional livelihoods.

For the inhabitants of coastal cities, climate change poses a real threat. Half of Africa's 37 cities with populations above one million are within low elevation coastal zones and therefore vulnerable to sea level rise, coastal erosion, storms and flooding.

Figure 1 informs about the UNISDR coverage in Africa.

At the regional level, Member States of the African Union first demonstrated their

commitment to DRR by adopting the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR at the 10th meeting of the Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) in 2004 (Box 1). The Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Strategy for DRR (2005-2010) was subsequently formulated and adopted at the First African Ministerial Conference on DRR in Addis Ababa in 2005. A revision was discussed

Box 1: DRR TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS IN AFRICA AND RESULTS

2003/4
Africa Working Group, DRR assessment, June
→ Africa Regional Strategy (adopted by AU Assembly, June)

2005
World Conference on Disaster Reduction, Jan
Africa Advisory Group established, meeting in June
1st African Ministerial Conference on DRR, Dec
→ African Programme of Action for DRR (2005-10) adopted

2007
1st Africa Regional Platform on DRR;
→ Agreed Africa position for 1st Global Platform on DRR, June

2009
UNISDR African Consultative Meeting, Feb.
2nd Africa Regional Platform on DRR, May
→ Agreed Africa position for 2nd Global Platform on DRR, June

2010
3rd Africa Regional Platform on DRR, April
2nd African Ministerial Conference on DRR, April
→ Extended Programme of Action for DRR (2006-15) adopted

2011
Africa Working Group on DRR (AWGDRR) reconstituted, Inaugural meeting: Oct
→ TOR and membership defined
→ Agreed Africa position for 3rd Global Platform on DRR, May

2012
2nd Meeting of AWGDRR (Core Group), May
3rd Meeting of AWGDRR (Core Group), September
→ Communiqué adopted on 'Continental Project' to accelerate the implementation of the Africa Strategy and Programme of Action for DRR

2013
4th Africa Regional Platform on DRR, Feb.
→ Summary Statement and 16 reports from partners and UNISDR to the 4th Global Platform
4th Meeting of AWGDRR, April
4th Global Platform on DRR, May

⁵UN-Habitat State of the World's Cities 2008/09.

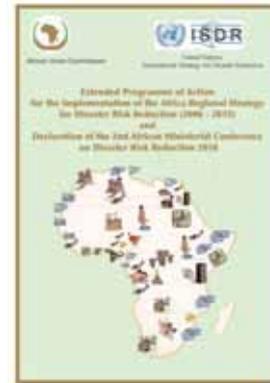
and agreed upon at the Second Africa Regional Platform in Nairobi in May 2009, to better reflect current challenges and gaps, extend the timeframe to 2015 and align it with the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Platform also agreed on strengthened regional, sub-regional and national mechanisms to accelerate implementation of the Programme.

The Extended Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR (2006-15) was subsequently adopted at the 2nd African Ministerial Conference on DRR in April, 2010.

At the regional level, Africa has made great strides in following the 18 recommendations at the 2nd Ministerial Conference on DRR (Fig 2). In terms of institutions, the National Platform toolkit was updated and 19 National Platforms were studied. The Africa Working Group for DRR was established in 2011 and is now functional. Two Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have established DRR units. UNISDR has facilitated DRR expertise to the AUC, and has received and analysed the reports of a total of 37 different African countries since 2005. UNISDR has also drafted a study to explore cost effectiveness of DRR in the Health and Education Sector.

At the sub-regional level, several RECs have also engaged with DRR issues. At least five RECs (ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and EAC) have defined DRR policies and/or

Fig. 2 The DRR Programme of Action (2006-2015)

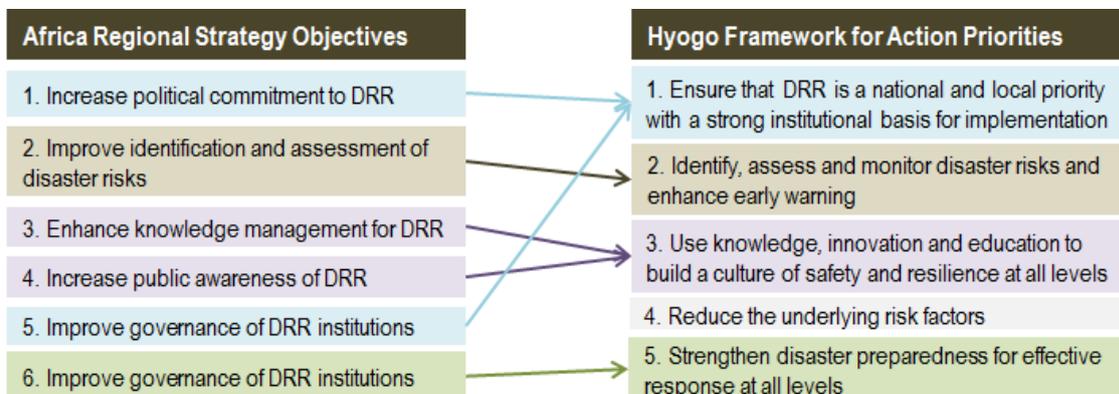


strategies with UNISDR support based on the priorities for action of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR which are aligned (Fig 3).

Recent achievements include the creation of ECOWARN by ECOWAS. There have also been recent initiatives by OSS for South-South cooperation to build on successful experiences from within the African region.

Specialised sub-regional institutions, such as the IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), the Southern African Development Community's Drought Monitoring Centre (SADC DMC), the AGRHYMET⁶ Regional Centre (ARC) and the African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD) are responding to a major global and regional

Fig 3: Alignment of the Africa DRR Strategy Objectives and HFA Priorities



⁶Agro-meteorology and Operational Hydrology and Their Applications

aggressively advanced. Countries like Ethiopia have undertaken massive risk assessments to produce risk profiles at lowest administrative units to inform DRR planning and early warning. African universities have been key players in the assessment, such as in Mozambique. Trans-boundary assessments and systems are the weakest link to date in risk identification.

Public awareness and knowledge management strategies for DRR are flourishing across the continent but there are major gaps in developing research tools for DRR.

With respect to public **education**, a growing number of countries have already integrated DRR into their educational curricula (Madagascar, Sierra Leone and Mauritius are rising stars), but there is a lot of work to do. A thorough study is underway on the impact of DRR in schools. There is a growing movement to establish university degree programs with a concentration on disaster risk science and sustainable development.

Greater recognition of the relationship between poverty and vulnerability to natural hazards has resulted in the incorporation of DRR objectives into an increasing number of sectorial development policies and plans to address **underlying risk factors** in Africa. Strategies to implement such policies are included in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) of some countries of the region.

However, most governments are not yet implementing effective programmes to reduce the underlying risk factors of disasters, due to financial constraints or limited technical and operational capacity. Furthermore, development strategies in many countries are not keeping pace with physical and demographic growth in informal, unplanned urban settlements where multiple risk factors are present. Urgent and concerted action is required to

tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability to disasters, and to track vulnerability in step with the monitoring of each hazard.

In terms of **preparedness for effective response and recovery**, institutional capacities have been strengthened in most countries due to emergency planning exercises, contingency funding mechanisms and improved information management systems. This is one of the highest performers of reporting countries. However, in most countries, emergency preparedness could be significantly improved through the participation of a broader stakeholder base in planning and evaluating responses.

Regarding international cooperation, there is support for a number of HFA priorities but little attention to assure that DRR programs meet the needs of national governments in ways that make final products genuinely "owned" by those governments.

It is now essential for donors, civil society and above all national and regional governments to seize the momentum described in this status report by manifesting political will at the highest levels (Fig 3).

By effectively addressing the above-mentioned issues at regional, sub-regional and national levels, all relevant stakeholders should now accelerate implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy and the Programme of Action for DRR, in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Conclusions & Recommendations of the Report

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS AT THE REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL LEVELS

The goals of sustainable development, poverty reduction and human security are stated in the core mandates of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities included in this report on the status of DRR in Africa. As a key component of all strategies to reach these goals, DRR is firmly anchored in the founding principles

and statutes of the principal governmental institutions of the region and its sub-regions.

Furthermore, the key governing bodies of these institutions have led or endorsed the formulation of DRR plans and policies. The African Programme of Action (2006-15) to implement the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR and the corresponding initiatives of the RECs represent substantial commitment to DRR objectives. They have also recently included initiatives for South-South cooperation to build on successful experiences from within the Sub-Saharan African region. These programmes have secured recurrent funding and are now implementing and reassessing their strategies. The Africa Working Group works as an effective mechanism to ensure sustainability and accountability to all stakeholders in the DRR process.

DRR measures have been incorporated into the environmental policies of ECCAS and ECOWAS, thus representing a significant achievement towards mainstreaming DRR into wider development processes. However, a similar, integrated approach is still needed in other development sectors.

In fact, each REC has a DRR portfolio of very different nature and level of progress. Highlighting the successes of each and enabling the exchange of good practice between RECs will go far to promote DRR in the region.

Regional institutions for climate risk management, such as ICPAC and the SADC's Drought Monitoring Centre, are responding to major global and regional challenges through enhanced services for DRR and climate change adaptation. Continued support to these institutions is critical, given the significant impact of climate change anticipated in the region.

A regional and sub-regional network for knowledge management (including traditional knowledge) needs to be developed, in line with the 3rd recommendation of the 2nd African

Ministerial Conference on DRR, besides developing capacities for DRR, to meet Africa's expanding need for regionally tailored expertise.

To consolidate early achievements and ensure sustainable progress, the efforts of regional and sub-regional governmental institutions should focus on:

- Maintaining and further strengthening regional mechanisms to support the implementation of DRR strategies and programmes at regional, sub-regional and national levels, and to monitor the progress of these. More holistic trans-boundary assessments and early warning systems need to be promoted.
- Forge political, administrative and operational synergies between DRR and climate change adaptation frameworks and processes.
- Mainstreaming DRR objectives into social and economic development policies remains a priority.
- Securing and allocating regular delegated (non-project or response) funding for full implementation of DRR plans and programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND GOVERNANCE

Across the region, there is a positive trend in the establishment or reform of institutional, legislative and policy frameworks for DRR, although in some cases the lead institution for DRR may not yet hold sufficient authority to influence all relevant sectors of government.

Decentralised models of governance and administration are in place in most countries of the region, thus providing a potentially effective structure for multi-level DRR, but the majority of countries still lack resources

and capacity to engage with communities at risk and implement local initiatives.

While national platforms or equivalent structures have been created in 38 countries (Fig 4), some of them meet irregularly, and participation in others is limited to governmental actors, with insufficient involvement of representatives of civil society organizations, UN agencies, media and the private sector. It is important to promote multi-sectorial, multi-stakeholder participation in national platforms, and empowering them to influence DRR policy development, programme design and resource allocation.

In order to ensure that DRR is a national and local priority for all relevant governmental and non-governmental actors, efforts should now be directed at consolidating the vertical and horizontal coordination capacities of the institutions responsible for DRR. Furthermore, DRR legislation and policy should be translated into adequately resourced programmes of action to deliver tangible benefits for communities at risk. This would include:

- A revision of the mandates and the quality of supporting legislation to ensure that these empower DRR institutions to engage with and influence the full spectrum of relevant governmental and non-governmental actors on issues of DRR.
- An assessment of DRR capacities, followed by a multi-sectorial capacity-development plan, for key governmental institutions.
- Adequate, assured and sustained financing, accessible for all relevant sectors, to integrate risk analysis and DRR measures into development programmes. As the most commonly expressed constraint to DRR progress (along with political will), further sustainable progress is

unlikely without dedicated DRR budgets at national levels.

- Clear incentives, in terms of opportunities to influence DRR policy development, programme design and resource allocation for all relevant stakeholders, to actively participate in National Platforms for DRR. Incentives and the corresponding authority are also required for decision makers to engage in early (protective) action when warnings are issued, in spite of uncertainty.

RISK IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT

There is increased capacity in some countries of the region to carry out comprehensive, multi-hazard risk assessments and operate effective early warning systems. However, in the majority of African countries, hazard mapping is incomplete and is not yet complemented by corresponding data on vulnerability, thus limiting the function or scope of monitoring or early warning systems.

Risk assessment should be the cornerstone of DRR. Reliable data on hazard identification and monitoring, and analysis of vulnerabilities are needed to inform, target and measure the impact of DRR efforts. It also provides clear evidence to influence other sectors of the need for, and potential benefits of incorporating DRR actions within development programming.

Furthermore, multi-national efforts to reduce risk depend on the systematic collection and management of risk data.

In order to improve national capacities to systematically assess risks for disaster management and development purposes, significant investment is needed in the following areas:

- Development of the capacity of national institutions to carry out risk assessments guided by the national

experts (and not organised independently by external consultants), involving the identification and assessment of hazards, vulnerability and capacities, including those related to climate change and climate change adaptation. Assessment methodologies should include both scientific data and traditional knowledge.

- Further development of national and decentralised systems to collect, compile and analyse data (starting with disaster loss databases), and to provide information to multiple sectors.
- Above all, more attention to people-centred community early warning systems that complements national systems when they function and set up community-powered systems when they do not. It is time to move away from top-down early warning systems towards empowering communities as disaster preventers-- before they become first responders.
- More beneficial collaborative alliances with civil society organisations working at the local level, to contribute to the collection and dissemination of risk data and to bridge the wide gap between technical or scientific information and communities.
- Disasters know no boundaries. Much greater investment in systems and processes that span national borders.
- Increased investment in biological hazards, as yet the most fatal disaster in Africa.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

As one of the strengths of the regional portfolio, public awareness strategies for DRR, based on a variety of modern and traditional media to communicate information, are in place in most countries of the region, although some of these do not

reach remote or rural population or those without access to radio, television and electronic media.

To achieve much greater progress in countries where changes to educational curricula are not yet evident, efforts should be directed towards the sensitisation of educators to integrate concepts and information about DRR, coupled with technical and financial support to adapt educational materials.

Across the region, there is very little reported activity in terms of research and tool development for disaster risk assessment methodologies and cost-benefit analysis of DRR. Synergies with the growing number of national university programs and regional knowledge centres with DRR focus should be channelled to provide these tools, in partnership with the governments.

Despite growing understanding of the impact of climate change in Africa, few initiatives integrate DRR and Climate Change Adaptations systematically –for example, into longer term early warning systems that embrace both sudden and slow onset hazards. Too often, two entirely separate ministries manage DRR and CCA portfolios.

To stimulate activity in professional training and academic research, financial incentives should be made available to educational institutions and students.

To increase the coverage and impact of public awareness strategies, governments should seek alliances with civil society actors, particularly those with a presence in remote or rural areas, or with access to sectors of the population most at risk.

REDUCING UNDERLYING RISK FACTORS

Although policies and plans exist in some countries to protect key industries from disasters, the economic and productive sectors appear to be relatively disconnected from national DRR efforts.

Urgent action is required to tackle the underlying causes of vulnerability to disasters. Such actions involve:

- Strong political leadership on DRR to galvanise multi-sectorial coordination at all levels of government and with inter-governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.
- A sustained synergistic approach to integrate DRR and climate change adaptation into development policies, planning and programmes.
- Coordinated and strategic support to governments from agencies within the UN system and civil society, viz. International Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) movement and NGOs, to foster a holistic approach to DRR.
- Increased availability of funding from multi-lateral and bi-lateral donors for integration of DRR objectives within poverty-reduction, sustainable development and climate change adaptation programmes. Donors should serve as good humanitarian examples, systematically assigning portions of all response funding to DRR, doing a better job at linking relief and recovery to development.
- Increased financial, political and technical support for innovative projects addressing disaster risk in urban contexts.

PREPAREDNESS FOR EFFECTIVE RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Countries have progressed well in terms of preparedness measures. Nevertheless, gaps remain which can be addressed through:

- More accentuated and concise link between the growing wealth of early warning information and early preventive action. The financial reserves highlighted in this HFA priority need to be reserved and accessible to those

engaging in early action to prevent disasters.

- Decentralised responsibilities and participatory processes to involve vulnerable or disaster-affected populations in the formulation of disaster preparedness plans for all relevant hazards.
- Coordinated preparedness planning processes between governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental stakeholders of National Platforms.
- Explicit inclusion of benchmarks and indicators for DRR in ex-post evaluations of disaster management.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS AT THEMATIC LEVEL

Despite impressive investment in drought risk reduction in Africa for more than twenty years, early warning and preventive action are still unable to ward off the impact of erratic or insufficient precipitation. Lessons learned about failed warnings point more often to inadequate political will or untimely action than to deficiencies in data and information. Also incriminated is the absence of systems that track vulnerability alongside the hazards, as one essential component of the function of risk.

As the group of the Global Alliance in the Greater Horn and others rally to rethink resilience in Africa and propose innovative solutions (such as weather-indexed insurance schemes linked to an 'eye in the sky' or new varieties of short cycle crops) to age-old problems, it is important to make sure that, at the head of each solution, is a set of trans-disciplinary African champions who genuinely believe in its value added -- for the greater good of African communities.

Urban centres in Africa are on the rise for better or for worse. As long as drought and land degradation persist in Africa, so may rapid uncontrollable urbanization. Urban risk

is compacted and accentuated, and urban vulnerability, fuelled also by high proportions of Internally Displaced People, is the striking face of globalisation.

Urban risk can be managed, in part, by enabling rural communities to thrive where they are, in the fatherlands. Beyond that, urban risk must be managed with new tools (adapted from their rural cousins) that appeal to more sophisticated sets of communities with often higher demands and greater access to technology. Urban leadership and local governments must continue to be channelled and kept at the head of urban risk reduction.

There are no quick fixes for drought and urban risk, but building resilience and community DRR outreach into primary school curricula is likely to establish a whole new generation of Africans who are ready to make a sustainable difference.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

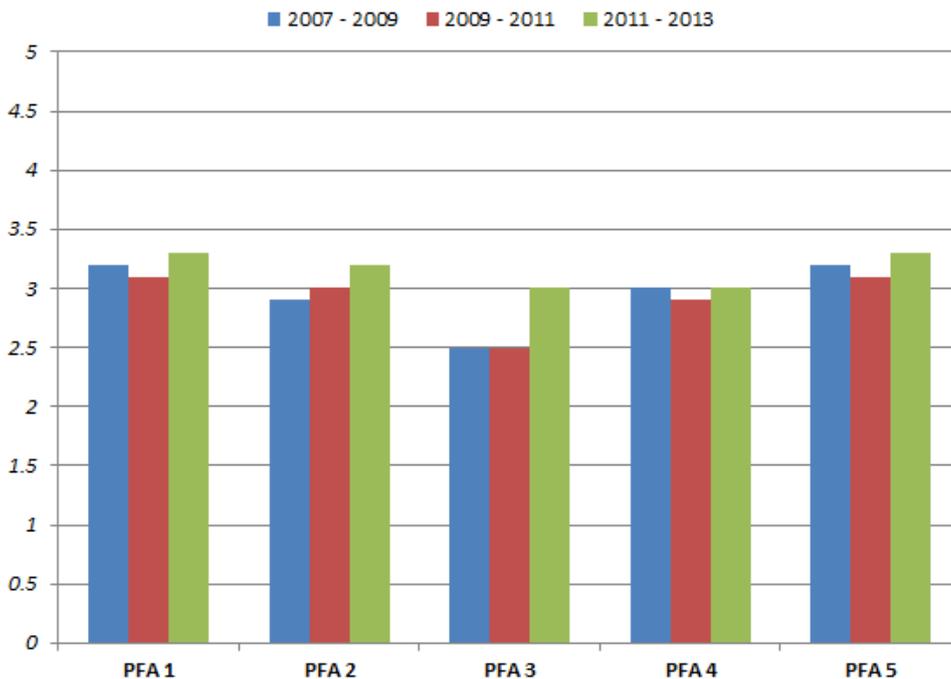
Under both the Hyogo Framework for Action

and the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR, States and international organisations (including RECs, AUC and the UN system) are required to compile regular reports of progress. Specific guidelines and tools have been developed by the UNISDR to monitor the implementation of the HFA, and a biennial global reporting mechanism has been established.

There was a positive trend in the number of countries submitting HFA reports for the first three reporting periods (Fig 5). For this reason, the present report assesses the most recent submissions of all reporting countries (37). A decline in the most recent reporting indicates that more work is required to engage African governments in this task. It is not intended as a reporting task, but more importantly, a tool for governments and their National Platform to use for meaningful trans disciplinary planning.

The quality of the HFA reports is generally good, although most tended to focus on governmental activity or just the activity of the institutions responsible for DRR, rather than demonstrating and capitalizing on the

Fig 5: Progress of African Countries on HFA Priorities for Action (PFA), 2007 – 2013



Source: Computed (only for reporting countries) from HFA Monitoring Reports, (Cycles: 2007-09, 2009-11 and 2011-13)

collective efforts of many sectors and partners in the country.

Further progress requires:

- The submission of biennial HFA reports, using the standard formats and tools, by all countries of the region. Differentiated support may be required from UNISDR, depending on the capacity of each country.
- Rethinking the reporting process by, for example, engaging the RCRC National Societies (already present in nearly every country), in partnership with the UNISDR, to channel energies through their existing auxiliary role to the respective governments to support them in completing the HFA reporting every period. If approved by the African Union, the in-country National Society disaster manager would require little more than HFA training to be equipped to cascade that capacity through his/her government counterparts, the HFA focal points. Because the HFA focal points are in a constant state of flux, this role for the National Society would provide a certain level of continuity. A feasibility study should be made on this Red Cross-UNISDR-government partnership.
- Participatory processes to collect monitoring data from multiple stakeholders. Reports on the status of DRR efforts should reflect progress achieved by the five main stakeholder groups of a national community⁷ and relevant inter-governmental organizations.

Further exploration of the HFA indicators is required as there are still a few whose measurement is very closely related. The indicators should be rewritten to be more genuinely specific, measurable, achievable, reliable and time bound (SMART).

⁷ These are: the public sector, the private sector, NGOs and other civil society bodies, academic and research institutions, and the media.

The process of validation of each indicator needs to be further explored. Although thorough lists of documents and steps are offered to guide the scoring of each indicator, it is still possible to give oneself the highest score with no need to submit tangible proof. Rules may need to be added that indicate, for example, no score of higher than three will be accepted without the uploading of official documents attesting to the score, etc. The post-HFA DRR framework (HFA-2) is expected to address some of these issues.

Finally, the national platforms or DRR coordination mechanisms need to be further strengthened

THE WAY FORWARD

DRR has gained momentum in Africa-energy that needs to be sustained. There are plentiful opportunities for African Union Commission, Multilateral Development Banks, African RECs and countries to seize to become major players in disaster prevention and risk reduction (CCA included). Given its size, natural resources, rich history of exposure to multiple hazards and economic challenges, it is a living laboratory for exploring resilience.

Above any other step, however, political will and the sustainable DRR funding mechanisms that are proof of the political will, are a *sine qua non*. Other steps should include:

- Strengthening national mechanisms, legislative frameworks and capacities at national levels for mainstreaming and implementing DRR strategies and frameworks, including climate change implications systematically.
- Translating policies, frameworks and experience into practical tools for decision-makers and practitioners to facilitate the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy, Programme of Action, and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

- Identifying the most experienced young Africans for each Africa Strategy objective (or HFA priority indicator) and giving them the opportunity to exchange and teach other Africans, creating a culture of south-south capacity building that will cascade into indelible DRR growth.
- Equipping communities with mechanisms to better understand or even monitor hazards they are exposed to themselves --making them champions of DRR by inculcating in them DRR reflexes and community-led early actions, starting with the primary school curricula.
- Developing partnerships and mobilizing resources to contribute to the implementation of the Africa Programme of Action and specific projects.
- Embedding a holistic approach to the systematic incorporation of risk reduction measures into the design and implementation of disaster preparedness, response and recovery programmes.

Efforts by all stakeholders must now be scaled up, accelerated and coordinated in order to achieve the Programme's goal of a substantial reduction of social, environmental and economic impacts of disasters on the people and economies of Africa by 2015.

Several regional consultations for the Post-HFA agenda have been organized in Africa. These include the 4th Africa Regional Platform (Tanzania, Feb 2013), African Cities consultation (Senegal, Dec 2012), two Central Africa DRR Platforms (Cameroun, Oct 2012), and the 32nd Climate Outlook Forum (Tanzania, Aug 2012) and the 16th Southern Africa climate outlook forum (Zimbabwe, Aug, 2012), besides focused HFA-2 consultations in Nigeria, Gabon and Uganda. Together the continent

highlighted their goals for the future of the HFA.

African stakeholders reconfirmed that the HFA has proved its value as a central framework for DRR in Africa, alongside the Africa Strategy and Programme of Action, and should remain in force post-2015 with continued improvements related to mechanisms for coordination and dialogue, definition of indicators and ways to monitor and report. Special emphasis has to align the future of HFA more seamlessly with the post-2015 UN sustainable development and climate change adaptation agendas.

The most frequently articulated themes meriting accelerated attention and action in a post-2015 framework included: rapidly increasing urbanization and related risks, engendering disaster risk, engaging local actors and youth, the inter-linkage between social protection and poverty reduction, conflict and natural hazards. To achieve disaster resilience, strategic partnerships need to be built and sustained between government and communities, development and humanitarian actors at all levels. African leaders also highlighted that the elements that are key to future DRR advances include people-centred communities of resilience, integrated approaches for development and sustainable enabling environments.

Though advocacy on the HFA has paid huge dividends worldwide, more needs to be done to sensitize African government ministries on the current and future benefits of the Africa Strategy Objectives and HFA in building resilient countries and communities --especially in the face of mass urbanization. Conflict-prone areas need special attention as evidence supports that disasters can and do increase the risk of conflict and, in turn, conflict heightens the risk of vulnerability.

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