



Statement from the Scientific, Technical and Academic Communities in Disaster Risk Reduction (5th African Regional Platform, Abuja, Nigeria)

Overview

The Science, Technology and Academic Communities consultative session was convened by the Periperi U (Partners Enhancing Resilience for People Exposed to Risks) Consortium, with the participation of approximately 60 delegates. Those attending represented a diverse and inclusive range of disaster risk-related disciplines, professions and related practice fields, drawn from across the continent and beyond.

We acknowledge that:

1. Africa faces a diverse range of increasingly complex and interlinked risks that have potential to undermine its development potential, and that require enhanced human resource capacity to address.
2. Scientific knowledge related to DRR includes natural, social, health and engineering sciences as well as other bodies of knowledge and should be used to address “real world” disaster risk-related problems at local, sub-national, national, regional and continental scales.
3. There are emerging successes in the use of appropriate technologies to protect lives and build resilience to recurrent threats (including agricultural innovations, mobile phone and other accessible technologies).
4. Africa’s Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) constitute key resources for strengthening disaster risk-related science, technology and increasingly play crucial roles in advancing relevant risk knowledge, research and skilled capacity in the management of current and future risks.
5. Opportunities are also expanding for improving the exchange of risk knowledge and collaboration across the continent and internationally.
6. Despite evidence of progress in disaster risk-related capacity building and expanding risk-research capability in many countries, there are highly vulnerable areas that remain under-resourced (for instance, in Central Africa and francophonic African countries).

Therefore, we call for:

1. Urgency to systematically advance skilled human resources in disaster risk management at local, sub-national, national and regional scales, through greater engagement with the continent’s institutions of higher learning.
2. Urgency to systematically support expansion and resourcing of existing academic networks to build and strengthen human capacity, for example, through consortia and

partnerships such as Periperi U. Furthermore, there is need for more active engagement of other science partners including health and agriculture that are vital in managing disaster risks.

3. Regional academic networks that strive towards greater integration and cooperative research. It would be favourable to establish one African academic research community; this would bring African academics closer to share findings and adopt best practices.
4. The establishment of an African Science Advisory Committee to advise on the programmes and activities in HEIs for DRR/DRM; and,
5. The establishment of an International Science Advisory Mechanism for DRR to strengthen resilience.
6. Commitment to providing evidence based information to strengthen practice, leadership and governance in DRR.

Conclusion

We would like to emphasise the urgency for skilled human resources in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) at local, sub-national, national and regional scales and need for greater engagement with the continent's institutions of higher learning to address DRM capacity gaps. This recognises crucial roles increasingly played by many African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in advancing relevant risk knowledge, research and skilled capacity in the management of current and future risks.