

Africa Common Position to the 2019 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 13-17 May, Geneva, Switzerland

13 May 2019

1. Preamble

Over the last decade, Africa has recorded significant socio-economic growth. This positive development is projected to continue in the years to come. Nonetheless, the continent remains highly vulnerable to natural and human induced hazards with related risks and disasters affecting millions of people, leading to loss of lives and livelihoods, causing conflict, migration, displacement, human insecurity and humanitarian challenges, which reverse development gains. This was evidenced when more than 1000 people were killed across Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe due to Cyclone Idai. Preliminary estimates indicate that the direct economic losses from Cyclone Idai could be over USD 750 Million. Cyclone Kenneth followed Idai in quick succession. This time Mozambique was struck again in addition to Comoros. The response and recovery operations were ongoing at the time of writing. Epidemics including Ebola are also a serious concern on the continent. The differentiated impact on men and women, vulnerable groups, minorities and migrants across the continent is exacerbated mostly by climate change, environmental degradation, unplanned urbanization, inequality, as well as disaster induced displacement and conflicts.

In recognition of the importance of disaster risk reduction in addressing these recurrent challenges, the African Union Heads of State and Government took concrete steps including by adopting, in 2017, the *Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 in Africa*. This is the guiding continental framework to advance the disaster risk reduction agenda in coherence with the sustainable development, climate change and other related actions for resilience.

To further consolidate these actions and accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Action, Ministers and Heads of Delegations responsible for disaster risk reduction in Africa adopted the *Tunis Declaration on Accelerating the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction* at the Africa-Arab Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in October 2018. This Declaration includes decisions and priorities that the continent needs to take forward to reduce existing risks, prevent new risks, and strengthen preparedness for effective response, thus building resilience and contributing to the realization of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

2. Status of the implementation of Sendai Framework in Africa

Guided by the Programme of Action and the Tunis Declaration, Africa has taken significant steps to translate the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 into actions across the continent. These actions include:

- i. The alignment of regional and national disaster risk reduction policies, strategies and plans, that take into consideration climate change and sustainable development priorities, with the Sendai Framework and the Programme of Action by some countries and Regional Economic Communities;
- ii. The development of a monitoring and reporting framework for the Programme of Action in line with the Sendai Framework Monitoring System, and enhancing capacities to implement the global and continental monitoring and reporting tools to measure progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework and the Programme of Action;
- iii. The strengthening of capacities for multi-hazard and impact-based hydro-meteorological early warning systems, disaster loss accounting and risk profiling in a number of countries with a view to enabling them to promote and advance risk-informed development and investment for a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable development;
- iv. Increasing awareness and understanding of disaster risk reduction, which contributed to the increased involvement of cities and local governments in disaster risk reduction, integration of disaster risk reduction into various sectors, including the education system, and development of risk financing strategies by some Member States and Regional Economic Communities;
- v. Establishing and strengthening national, regional and continental disaster risk reduction platforms; and
- vi. Strengthening existing partnerships and commitment, including through developing and/or operationalizing new partnership mechanisms such as the Africa Science and Technology Advisory Group, the Youth Advisory Board, and the Cluster on Humanitarian Matters and Disaster Risk Management under the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa.

Progresses in the implementation of these initiatives was facilitated with the support of our partners, especially the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and other partners and UN and non-UN partners.

In spite of this progress, the continent faces some major challenges, including:

- i. Increased frequency and intensity of natural and manmade hazards exacerbated by climate change, with differentiated impact on hazard prone countries including Small Island States;
- ii. Limited understanding of the nexus between climate change, disasters, displacement, conflict, migration and peace and security;
- iii. Inadequate institutional capacity for planning, coordination and implementation in most countries and regions (due to limited political and practical commitment and support);

- iv. Slow progress in developing and implementing national and regional disaster risk reduction legal frameworks, policies, strategies and plans in line with the Sendai Framework and the Programme of Action;
- v. Limited awareness and support for integrated implementation of disaster risk reduction, climate change, sustainable development and other related frameworks and plans;
- vi. Limited capacity for the generation and management of disaster risk reduction related data and information, disaggregated by gender and other vulnerable groups, affecting evidence-based decision making at all levels; and
- vii. Inadequate domestic resource allocation for disaster risk reduction, limited capacity for resource mobilization, and limited options for risk transfer mechanisms.

We recognize that African countries and Regional Economic Communities are at different levels in terms of the implementation of the Sendai Framework and the Programme of Action, calling for more concerted efforts in advancing the implementation of these global and continental frameworks, as well as in further understanding of root causes and aggravating factors hindering such progress

3. Commitments to accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Action

Despite the resource limitations and challenges Africa is facing in implementing and monitoring the Sendai Framework and the Programme of Action, we remain committed to the **Tunis Declaration**. In this regard we will prioritize the following actions:

1. Take concrete actions at all levels to enhance relevant institutional capacities and policy and regulatory frameworks to effectively coordinate, monitor, and review the implementation of the *Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework 2015-2030 in Africa*;
2. Accelerate the development by 2020, as per target E of the Sendai Framework, and implementation of inclusive national and sub-regional disaster risk reduction, policies, strategies, plans and legal frameworks, as well as risk financing mechanisms with special emphasis placed on vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly people, and persons with disabilities, disproportionately affected by disasters. In developing DRR strategies, plans or programmes, emphasis will also be placed on increasing understanding of the interlinkages between climate change, disasters, displacement, conflict and development, as well as finding durable solutions to forced displacement and to build resilience in hazard prone countries including Small Island States;
3. Enhance, through national platforms for disaster risk reduction, the understanding of climate and disaster risk to promote and support risk-informed development and investment by establishing and updating national disaster loss databases and risk profiles, as well as performing risk assessments and national budget analysis and capturing indirect costs of disasters;
4. Ensure coherence across disaster risk reduction, climate change and sustainable development policies, strategies and actions;
5. Develop effective mechanisms to integrate disaster risk reduction into national adaptation and development plans;

6. Strengthen the capacity of the African Science and Technology Advisory Group and the Youth Advisory Board, as well as multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms and partnerships for effective disaster risk reduction and management of transboundary risks including through full engagement of the private sector and civil society organizations;
7. Increase annual national budgetary allocation to support the implementation of the Sendai Framework and the Programme of Action;
8. Foster multi-hazard and impact-based early warning systems, including by improving climate services and enhancing their outreach, with the involvement of volunteers and through enhancing risk awareness and tailoring messages and information to specific end users, for effective preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction at all levels;
9. Increase investment in the strengthening of capacities of the science and technology community, higher learning and other training institutions, including primary education to expand technical expertise of the DRM workforce and produce robust climate and disaster risk related data including those needed for recovery and reconstruction interventions; and
10. Develop bankable disaster risk reduction projects to attract investment for African countries, institutions, private sector, and other partners.