**OFFICIAL STATEMENT**

**H H.E. SAMATE CESSOUMA MINATA**

**COMMISSIONER**

**POLITICAL AFFAIRS**

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**Date: TBD**

**Room: TBD**

**International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG) and Varembe Conference Centre (CCV), Geneva, Switzerland**

**Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed**

**Introduction**

I am honored to address this important meeting of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. I wish to take this opportunity to convey greetings from the AU Commission’s Chairperson, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, who could not participate in this gathering due to other equally important commitments.

**Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Africa is the continent that bears the brunt of climate-and human induced hazards the most. Africa’s risk to natural hazards is compounded by a combination of factors, key of which is rapid and unplanned urbanization which are interwoven with multiple vulnerabilities.

Notwithstanding the burden the continent faces, progress has been made by African governments, peoples and partners in reducing the continent’s risk to disasters. The African Union has made significant progress with regards to policy development on Disaster Risk Reduction.

In 2004, the African Union developed a regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. In addition, a Programme of Action was developed which guided Disaster Risk Reduction efforts within the continent.

Soon after the adoption of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015, the African Ministers responsible for Disaster Risk Reduction held a High Level Ministerial meeting in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in July 2015, which sanctioned the revision of the African Programme of Action (PoA) for the implementation of the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction to align it with the Sendai Framework. The PoA was revised accordingly and endorsed by the 28th AU Summit in January 2017.

Importantly the AU has established a dedicated unit for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2017 based on the Yaoundé Declaration. The establishment of the unit has improved the capacity of the Commission and the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture to provide the much needed leadership oversight for Disaster Risk Reduction on the continent.

Furthermore, the Commission has developed a Monitoring and Reporting System for the programme of Action. This system will not only facilitate development of Inaugural Biennial Report for Disaster Risk Reduction, but strengthen monitoring and reporting capacity of the commission on DRR for informed decision.

The AUC is providing an oversight role of a multi-million Euro Disaster Risk Reduction Programme, entitled “Building Disaster Resilience to Natural Hazards in Sub-Saharan African Region, Countries and Communities” funded by the European Union through ACP Group of States, the first DRR Programme of such magnitude to be implemented in Africa.

The AUC conveys its gratitude to our Member States, development partners, and our major donor the EU and ACP Secretariat for this major programme.

**Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Progress notwithstanding, Africa still remains the most vulnerable continent to multiple hazards. This is because African countries and communities still lack the required capacity to manage disaster risks.

Today, the Continent suffers approximately 2 disasters per week, 8 deaths per day, billions of economic losses and nearly 1 million people affected monthly. With expected increase in climate change and variability, the frequency and intensity of disasters would increase exponentially.

A couple of weeks ago, a major disaster hit Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi as a result of Cyclone Idai. The disaster led to over 900 confirmed deaths. Nearly the entire city of Beira was wiped out by the Disaster. Few days later, Mozambique and Comoros were hit by Cyclone Kenneth, killing over 30 people. The economic costs and other losses are yet to be quantified.

The African Union, SADC and development partners are providing humanitarian support to the affected countries. The humanitarian needs are overwhelming. I wish to take this opportunity to thank our partners who are providing the support. I also wish to call upon the international community to support the affected countries to rebuild their resilience.

I thank the African countries who generously provided material and financial support to the affected countries. If there is anything we have learnt from these disasters, it is the need to mobilize domestic resources to build resilience.

In that light, the African Union Commission wishes to encourage member states to increase domestic resources allocation for disaster risk reduction. The Commission would continue to advocate and work with African friends to solicit support for the continent to ensure effective implementation of the Africa Programme of Action for the implementation of Africa Regional Strategy and the Sendai framework in Africa.

**Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Over the next couples of years, the African Union Commission will continue to work with RECs, Member States and partners to ensure:

* Regional and National policies are aligned with the Programme of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Sendai Framework 2015-2030;
* Strengthening capacity of multi-sectorial platforms for effective coordination and implementation of Disaster Risk Reduction interventions;
* Enhancement of national and sub-national disaster early warning and preparedness systems;
* Increased understanding of hazards and vulnerabilities facing the continent, and device specific risk reduction programme;
* Improved reporting of disaster risks and disaster management interventions at all levels; and
* Increased disaster risk financing through promotion of existing mechanisms and instruments for risk financing.

I thank you for your kind attention