



ARC Briefing Note on the Second Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction Consultative Meeting

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SECOND AFRICA REGIONAL PLATFORM ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION CONSULTATIVE MEETING: 5-7 MAY 2009

The Second Africa Regional Platform (ARP) on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Consultative Meeting was held at the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya from 5-7 May, 2009. The event themed “Accelerate progress in implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR” was organized by the Commission of the African Union (AUC) and the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). More than 150 participants representing governments, UN agencies and development organizations participated in the meeting. The overall objective of the Second Consultative Meeting was to review progress made in the implementation of the HFA, promote regional cooperation, strengthen regional mechanisms and programmes and prepare Africa’s participation in the Second Session of the Global Platform for DRR to be held from 16-19 June in Geneva, Switzerland.

The meeting was divided into nine sessions facilitated by co-chairs and panelists. Five of the sessions addressed the HFA priorities for action on: ensuring that DRR is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation; risk identification, monitoring and early warning; knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels; reducing underlying risk factors; and disaster preparedness. The other four sessions considered DRR at the regional level, DRR at the sub-regional level, the draft revised Africa Programme for Action and the recommendations for the Global Platform 2009. Participants heard presentations in plenary, from keynote presenters as well as contributions from panelists. This was followed by a question and answer session. Participants agreed on a revised version of the Africa Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Strategy for DRR to cover the period until 2015 in line with HFA. Recommendations of the ARP to the Second Session of the Global Platform were also accepted.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF DRR GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

The African Regional Strategy for DRR was adopted at the tenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN-10), held from 26-30 June 2004 in Sirte, Libya, and endorsed at Third Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 6-8 July 2004. The aim of the Africa Regional Strategy is to contribute to the

attainment of sustainable development and poverty eradication by facilitating the integration of DRR into development. The objectives of the strategy are to: increase political commitment to DRR; improve identification and assessment of disaster risks; enhance knowledge management for DRR; increase public awareness of DRR; improve governance of DRR institutions; and integrate DRR into emergency response management.

The First African Ministerial Conference on DRR was held on 7 December 2005 at the AU Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It was preceded by a meeting of experts to prepare for the Conference on 5 and 6 December 2005. Ministers adopted the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR which addresses a number of priorities, namely: policies and regulatory frameworks; institutional arrangements; capacity building; information and knowledge management; resource mobilization; partnership; and monitoring and evaluation.

Regarding institutional arrangements, ministers recommended holding a biennial meeting of ministers responsible for disaster management to monitor progress of implementation of DRR activities. Ministers considered Egypt’s proposal to create a Regional DRR and Management Centre and commended Egypt for the initiative. They agreed on the principle for the creation of a continental center and further suggested the need to establish sub-regional and national DRR and management centers. Ministers requested the AUC in collaboration with Egypt, to convene an experts’ meeting of Member States to undertake further analysis and define working modalities.

The First ARP for DRR Consultative Meeting was held from 26-27 April 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya. The ARP called on the Global Platform to, *inter alia*: strengthen capacities of governments and national platforms to identify, assess and

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monitor disaster risks at national and sub-national levels for effective development planning including strengthening of people-centered early warning systems and preparedness; support development and utilization of capacities within institutions at regional, sub-regional and national levels such as the AU Regional Economic Communities (AURECs) and National Platforms and specialized institutions for implementation of DRR and HFA programmes; accelerate support for addressing risks arising from hazards of particular significance for Africa, especially epidemics, droughts and floods and other hydro-meteorological hazards which are projected to increase as a result of global climate change and variability; and strengthen involvement of Africa in the implementation of the Global Early Warning System including promoting synergies amongst existing institutions for early warning, climate applications in development and risk monitoring.

The AU, in collaboration with UNISDR, launched the ARP for DRR at a meeting of national DRR Focal Points in Nairobi in 2007, as a regional forum for coordinated actions to reduce disasters with the following objectives, to: guide implementation of the HFA, share experiences, lessons learned and tools for implementation; promote regional cooperation, strengthen further coordination mechanisms, understanding, commitment and approaches for DRR in Africa; and prepare African participation at Global Platform meetings. The regional platform as an institutional setup is a link between the Global Platform and the National Platforms and provides a common forum for coordinated national participation in the Global Platform. Consequently, the ARP submitted a report on its 2007 consultation to the Global Platform and Africa DRR ministers tabled the regional platform recommendations at the Global Platform held in Geneva.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

OPENING SESSION

On Tuesday, 5 May, Rhoda Tumusiime, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, the Commission of the African Union (AUC), welcomed participants to the meeting. She highlighted how global challenges could be addressed through collective efforts such as the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and strategies such as the Hyogo framework of action (HFA).

Margareta Wahlström UN-Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), described the meeting as a platform through which the Africa Regional Programme of Action could be updated by extending it to 2015. She said it also provided a forum for considering Africa's position in the context of the forthcoming Global Platform aimed at increasing understanding of how risk reduction helps adaptation to climate risk, representing an essential stepping stone to a post-2012 climate change agreement. She underscored the Africa Regional Platform (ARP) as an important network for understanding and mainstreaming DRR; and for promoting regional cooperation in enhancing Africa's support for HFA.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), highlighted the increasingly inadequate state of preparedness and vulnerability to disasters, particularly in Africa. Describing climate change as "the starkest truth of the twenty-first century," he highlighted UNEP's green economy initiative, based on sound environmental management as a central driver for future economic development.

Inga Klevby, Deputy Executive Director, UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), observed that in 2009 the global urban population will surpass the rural population and emphasized building resilience in cities, towns and villages. She said the HFA calls upon countries to implement five objectives to ensure citizens are aware of opportunities to reduce vulnerabilities and to "build back better."

Aeneas Chuma, UN Resident Coordinator for Kenya, outlined challenges the country is experiencing as a result of the 2007 post-election conflict which 500,000 people were internally displaced. Underscoring DRR to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience, he said consecutive failure of the rains and resulting food crisis, HIV/AIDS and the high poverty incidence were also exacerbating factors.

Rachel Shebesh, African Parliamentary Initiative, emphasized political leadership and commitment in integrating DRR into national policies and plans.

Kremena Ionkova, World Bank, noted the growing understanding of the economic impact of disasters which mainly affect the poor. She said the sustainability of investments would depend on whether they have integrated DRR sector-specific intervention at various levels.

Irabhim Malim, Ministry of Special Programmes, highlighted Kenya's efforts towards developing a DRR strategy.

OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED OUTPUTS: Pedro Basabe, UNISDR, Africa, provided an overview of the background, objectives and expected outputs of the Global Assessment Report and Africa Status Report 2009.

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL LEVELS

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AT THE REGIONAL

LEVEL: This session took place on Tuesday, 5 May, and was chaired by Rhoda Tumusiime and Margareta Wahlström. Sarah Olemba, AUC, presented the draft Africa Regional Programme of Action extended to 2015. Panel contributions were made by Estherine Fotabong, New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Charles Akol UN Economic Commission for Africa, Youcef Ait-Chellouche, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Seth Vordzorgbe, UNDP, who gave an overview of DRR from a regional perspective.

DISCUSSION: Participants highlighted lack of climate data, and called for capacity development and leveraging climate change adaptation for DRR. Summarizing the session, Margareta Wahlström observed that gaps had been identified in institutional mechanisms as well as the need to scale-up implementation of the HFA.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AT THE SUB-

REGIONAL LEVEL: This session took place on Tuesday, 5 May, and was co-chaired by Brad Garaganga, Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Pedro Basabe. It consisted of a keynote presentation and panel contributions from West and Central Africa as well as contributions from Southern and Eastern Africa and the Indian Ocean.

Dominique Kuitsouc, Economic Community of Central African States, gave a keynote presentation on progress made at the sub-regional level in implementing HFA and the African Regional Strategy and Programme for DRR; lessons learned and challenges ahead for the sub-regions.

Panel Contributions for West and Central Africa:

Mohammed Kadi gave a brief overview of the African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development. Mourad Briki, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, discussed his organization's activities. Regional centre experiences were provided by Adenike Voigt, Economic Community of West African States, and Edmond Makimouha, Congo Regional Center for DRR.

DISCUSSION: Participants highlighted the need for meteorological data as well as for the establishment of a network of observatories. The ClimDevAfrica Programme developed to improve climate-related information and services was welcomed as a useful initiative. Summarizing the session, Garaganga noted that participants stressed enhancing existing institutions rather than creating new ones.

Panel Contribution for Southern and Eastern Africa:

Christopher Oludhe, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, Climate Prediction and Application Center, highlighted activities within the greater horn of Africa. Brad

Garaganga discussed the role of the Drought Monitoring Centre under SADC. Tamuka Magadzire, SADC, gave an overview of the current status of DRR within his organization. Denise Azaï-Vely, Indian Ocean Commission, highlighted her organization's activities aimed at implementing the HFA.

DISCUSSION: The issue of whether there was interaction between the different regional economic communities (RECs) was raised. On the appropriateness of the institutional arrangements for implementing the HFA, a participant noted that DRR functions were usually linked to ministries responsible for defense, internal security or home affairs, which was not prudent. The provision of climate data in an understandable format was also highlighted. A participant commented that constraints towards implementing the HFA had not come out clearly during the presentations by REC and climate monitoring centers.

Responding to the issue of providing early warning information during recent floods in Botswana, Garaganga said information was provided to national meteorological services, which had a better interface at the national level, but such information did not always filter through in a timely manner. Tamuka added that flooding was a rapid onset disaster and in this particular incidence had been unprecedented. He explained that SADC was working with development partners to improve forecasting.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HFA AND THE AFRICAN PROGRAMME FOR DRR

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS AND FRAMEWORKS FOR DRR: PROGRESS CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

This session took place on Wednesday, 6 May, and was co-chaired by Margareta Wahlström and Rachel Shebesh. Seth Vordzorgbe gave a keynote address on institutional mechanisms and frameworks for DRR: progress challenges and opportunities. Panel contributions were also made by Rachel Shebesh who discussed the role of political leadership in Africa in the context of DRR, Kremena Ionkova, World Bank, who highlighted the Global Facility for DRR and Jeanine Cooper, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Kenya, who gave an outline of the UN Development Assistance Framework - Kenya 2009-2013. Country experiences from Niger, Kenya and Togo were presented by: Mariama Ousseini, Office of the Prime Minister, Niger; Philip Ndungu, Ministry of State for Special Programmes, Kenya; and Koffi Hounkpe, Ministry of Environment and Forest Resources, Togo. Praveen Pardeshi, UNISDR, provided an overview of national platforms.

DISCUSSION: Participants highlighted the lack of DRR prioritization by governments, the importance of recognizing the role of DRR as a driver for development and working with national planning committees to integrate DRR into national planning policies, as well as linking DRR to climate change adaptation action plans. The involvement of women and the role that civil society could play in complementing the work of governments was also discussed, as well as demystifying HFA at the local community level. On appropriate institutional arrangements for DRR, one participant suggested that this was irrelevant and what was more important is to bring all the relevant sectors together.

On the Global Facility for DRR, one participant enquired about the criteria for designating priority countries and whether this was subject to change. Another participant highlighted his experience in Malawi, expressing concern that funds were only disbursed for conducting studies which had to be undertaken by international consultants. Ionkova explained that the funds were 'soft funds' not targeted at operational activities. She clarified that consultants had to be internationally recruited and could not just be limited to nationals. She said the criteria for prioritizing countries was broad and did not preclude other countries from participating. Francis Muraya, World Bank, providing further clarification, explained that the Bank had decided to focus on studies and a smaller

number of countries because it had been over-stretched in the past and had not been able to provide tangible results. He said the priority countries included nine in Africa and countries not in the priority list could still receive funding from the Global Facility for DRR.

Summarizing the session, Margareta Wahlström said the need for political leadership and appropriate institutional frameworks as well as sharing experiences had been identified. She underscored an institutional mechanism for DRR. On the trend towards designating "Ministers for Climate Change," she cautioned that "the more pieces you add to the coordination puzzle the more complicated it gets."

RISK IDENTIFICATION, MONITORING AND EARLY WARNING: This session took place on Wednesday, 6 May, and was co-chaired by Opia Kumah, UN Development Programme (UNDP) Comoros, and Filipe Domingos Freries Lucio, World Meteorological Organization. Freries Lucio delivered the key note address on risk identification, monitoring and early warning: tools and practices. Other panelists included Michel Matera, UNDP, who highlighted the Global Risk Identification Programme, and Shirish Ravan, UN Office for Outer Space Affairs, who gave an overview of the UN Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response. Country experiences were presented by Pedro de Santa Maria Tomo, Mozambique, Joseline Tamboura, Burkina Faso and Mohamudally Beebeejaun, Mauritius. Julius Kabubi, Kenya, discussed the role of national meteorological and hydrological services in DRR. Benoît Sarr, Niger, presented on the Western Africa Regional Centre for Agrometeorology and Hydrometeorology (AGRHYMET) in Niamey, Niger.

KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATION AND EDUCATION FOR DRR:

This session took place on Wednesday, 6 May, and was co-chaired by Paul Gomis, Regional Programme of Education for Emergencies, Communication and Culture of Peace, and Muhammad Tsowa Usman, University Network for DRR in Africa. Dewald van Nierkerk, African Centre for Disaster Studies, North-west University, South Africa, gave the keynote address on Knowledge, Innovation and DRR as vehicles to build resilience of people. Other panelists included: Francis Dube World Vision, who gave his organization's perspective; Patricia Zweig, University of Cape Town who highlighted Peri Peri U – "Partners Enhancing Resilience to Peoples Exposed to Risks" – a platform for university partnership to reduce disaster risks in Africa; Colonel Alberto Fernandes, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Cape Verde, who highlighted his country's experience; and John Abuya, Action Aid International, who discussed DRR implementation in schools.

DISCUSSION: Several participants highlighted country experiences, noting the inadequacy of resources. One participant pointed to the importance of simulations to test disaster preparedness and response. Pedro Basabe emphasized an African coalition for knowledge management and capacity development, highlighting the need for a systematic approach. Summing up the session, Paul Gomis noted the need to enhance coordination, share information and replicate good experiences. Participants also identified the need to include DRR in school's curricula, the need for research to be broadened in order to encompass a multidisciplinary and trans-boundary component and for DRR to be incorporated into training programmes.

REDUCING UNDERLYING RISK FACTORS, ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND OTHER EMERGING CHALLENGES:

This session took place on Wednesday, 6 May, and was co-chaired by Youcef-Ait-Chellouche, IFRC, and Musonda Mumba, UNEP. Dan Lewis, UN-HABITAT, presented on urban risk. Helen Bushell, Oxfam, discussed livelihoods, pastoralism and DRR. Pedro Basabe, provided an overview of drought risk reduction framework and practices. Panel contributions were also made by Musonda Mumba, Youcef Ait-Chellouche, and Lars Bernd, UNISDR.



DISCUSSION: The issue of coordination and a unified African position during the Fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework on Climate Change (COP 15) was raised as well as ensuring that DRR is integrated into climate change adaptation plans through negotiations leading up to and at COP 15.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: This session took place on Thursday, 7 May, and was chaired by Yvette Stevens, UNISDR, and Mustapha Darboe, World Food Programme. Yvette Stevens gave the keynote address on disaster preparedness and DRR challenges. Kofi Portuphy, National Disaster Management Organization, Ghana, and Arcanjo Mateus Junior, Angola, highlighted their respective country experiences. Jack Myer, US Agency for International Development (USAID,) Benoit Collin, European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office, Kelly David, UNOCHA Regional Office for Southern Africa, Franseco De Re, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and Nancy Balfour, IFRC, gave their organizations' perspectives. Liviu Vedrasco, UN Systems Influenza Coordinator, discussed pandemic influenza coordination.

Summing up the presentations, Darboe emphasized the role of regional and sub-regional organizations in ensuring that the culture of risk reduction is promoted. He also discussed the feasibility of a mechanism to evaluate how effectively DRR is integrated. In the context of preparedness, he said the discussions had highlighted the predictability and cyclical nature of some disasters and emphasized the role of communities in reducing their own risk and concomitantly integrating risk reduction at a community level.

DISCUSSION: Community-based DRR was highlighted as a key recommendation from the perspective of localized disasters that erode poverty reduction gains. The use of and replication of simple tools and techniques at the community level was also proposed.

AFRICAN PROGRAMME FOR DRR TO 2015 AND AFRICAN POSITION FOR THE GLOBAL PLATFORM 2009

DRAFT REVISED AFRICA PROGRAMME FOR

ACTION: This session took place on Tuesday, 7 May, and was chaired by Rhoda Tumusiime and Praveen Pardeshi. Panelists included Adenike Voight, Seth Vordzorgbe, Abdullahil Al Azmai, Estherine Fotabon, Pedro Basabe, and Frank Muraya.

Basabe gave an overview of the revised Programme of Action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR - 2005-2015 and explained that the proposal was to extend the 2005-2010 programme to 2015, incorporating input from participants. Tumusiime then invited general comments from participants, which were provided before the revised Programme of Action was subsequently accepted.

Francis Muraya discussed partnership for DRR in Africa in the context of the Global Facility for DRR. Abdullahil Mamoon Al-Azami, Islamic Development Bank, highlighted the bank's role in DRR.

Outcome: The Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR 2005-2015 consists of sections outlining context, goals and objectives and operational mechanisms. Programme components comprising advocacy and public awareness, knowledge management and capacity building, expected results, partners and proposed activities for the implementation of the strategy are also provided. The overall goal of the programme is a substantial reduction of social, economic and environmental impacts of disasters on African people and economies to facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The operational mechanisms proposed are national level implementation and coordination, regional level implementation and coordination and monitoring and coordination.

Expected results include:

- prioritizing DRR at a regional, sub-regional, national and local levels with strong institutional frameworks, adequate resources and multi-stakeholder participation;
- identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risk taking into account trans-boundary dimensions;
- putting in place people-centered, user-friendly early warning systems;
- ensuring that DRR institutions have sufficient authority and capacity to coordinate across relevant sectors and from national to local levels;
- integrating underlying risk factors and DRR measures into policies, plans and programmes in all relevant sectors;
- integrating DRR measures into post-recovery and rehabilitation processes; and
- establishing and maintaining comprehensive preparedness plans and processes from national to local levels.

AFRICA RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GLOBAL

PLATFORM 2009: This session took place on Thursday, 7 May, and was chaired by Walter Wisner, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Liberia, and Pedro Baseba. Participants were presented with the draft recommendations which were read out. The recommendations were revised and subsequently accepted by participants.

Outcome: The Recommendations of the ARP to the Second Session of the Global Platform for DRR recommends *inter alia* that:

- African governments with the support of sub-regional, inter-governmental institutions, integrate DRR into their development policies and planning processes as well as into emergency response and recovery activities;
- linkages between DRR and conflict should be strengthened and made an integral component of initiatives of post-conflict disaster reconstruction and recovery;
- involvement and participation of disaster-prone communities in the identification and assessment of risk and vulnerabilities as well as for disaster preparedness planning should be ensured through collaboration with civil society organizations taking into account the gender dimension;
- national meteorological, hydrological, geophysical services and, where necessary, regional and climate centers should be integrated into national disaster management mechanisms and their data and information used to inform policies and practices;
- DRR should be introduced into school's curricula and the strengthening knowledge-sharing and the dissemination of good practices, traditional knowledge and lessons learned through regional thematic networks should be promoted as effective tools to reduce disaster risk;
- synergies between DRR and climate variability and change frameworks and processes should be promoted at all levels as part of Africa's efforts in defining its position for the climate change talks in Copenhagen;
- social and economic development infrastructure should take into account climate-related hazards and associated risk in urban centers and;
- Africa should apply a regional readiness framework for responding to rapid-on-set disaster such as pandemics through encouraging preparedness at all levels taking into account critical sectoral inter-dependencies.

CLOSING REMARKS

On Thursday, 7 May, Mohammed Mahamud Ali, Assistant Minister for Special Programmes, Kenya, delivered the closing remarks on behalf of Naomi Shaban, Minister of Special Programmes. Highlighting the devastating impact of disasters, he said the fruitful discussions would provide input for the Global Platform consultative meeting, he declared the meeting closed at 4:27 pm.