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**STATEMENT BY MME ROSEBUD KURWIJILA  
COMMISSIONER  
THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION OF**

**AT THE  
HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT  
THE FIRST GLOBAL PLATFORM MEETING  
ON DISASTER REDUCTION  
GENEVA**

**5 TO 7 JUNE 2007**

- **Your Excellency, the UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator**
- **Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Community**
- **Director, UN/ISDR Secretariat**
- **Distinguished Delegates**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. It is indeed a great pleasure and honour for me to represent the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, H.E Professor Alpha Oumar Konare, at the First Global Platform on Disaster Reduction. I wish to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the UNISDR Secretariat for the support it has given and continue to give Africa, at the continental, regional and national levels, in the area of disaster risk reduction in our effort to leverage political commitment towards the integration of disaster risk reduction into development activities at all levels.
  
2. The creation of the Global Platform for Disaster Reduction is indeed an important initiative, which would permit a global dialogue between stakeholders the world over on disaster issues. The Platform will, most especially, provide us in Africa, a forum to share experiences and build stronger partnership towards the building of the resilience of nations and communities in the continent.
  
3. The African region convened its first regional platform meeting in March this year in preparation for this first Global Platform with the support of UNISDR and the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Africa Regional Platform made many recommendations among which were the call upon the Global Platform to help:
  - Strengthen capacities of African platforms to identify, assess, and monitor disaster at national and regional levels for effective development planning, including strengthening of people-centre early warning systems and preparedness.
  - Step up advocacy efforts in order to secure increased commitments of all stakeholders, particularly political leaders, to further enhance DRR globally with special attention to Africa, and.

- Support development and use of indigenous capacities to enhance preparedness for effective response by the regional and sub regional institutions, national Governments and local communities in Africa.
4. Needless to say, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Africa is the one continent where disasters have their most profound impacts on sustainable development. Disasters accentuate poverty by destroying lives and livelihoods. They set back development gains and contribute to environmental instability in the continent. In recognition of the link between disasters and climate variability and climate change, the Eight Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2007, adopted a decision and declaration to develop and implement climate change adaptation mechanisms at all levels in Africa. Africa hopes that the new ISDR system will build on the natural synergy between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and support the developing countries, particularly in Africa, in this respect.
  5. Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, Africa, through the efforts of the Commission of the African Union and NEPAD, and with the strong support of the UNISDR and other UN agencies as well as the African Development Bank, has been able to develop a Regional Strategy and Programme of Implementation for disaster risk reduction, which were approved by the relevant organs of the African Union in 2004 and 2005 respectively. The Objectives of the African Strategy have been aligned with those of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 – 2015.
  6. I am also glad to report that some of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have prepared disaster reduction strategies and policies, while others are working towards doing the same. Furthermore, 25 African countries have established multistakeholder and multisectoral National Platforms, which will address and coordinate disaster risk reduction activities at national level in an inclusive manner. Recently, on May 17 and 18, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held an Expert and Ministerial meetings on ways and means of operationalizing its policy on disaster risk reduction. The UNISDR and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) in the World Bank supported the process.

At the Commission of the African Union, we welcome and deeply appreciate the developing partnership with the Global Facility on Disaster Reduction and Recovery and shall continue to work closely with the UN/ISDR.

I thank you all for your kind attention.