



Ministry of Civil Affairs
People's Republic of China



United Nations
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Sino-African High Level Seminar on Drought Risk Reduction

25-27 September 2011,
Beijing, China

Context:

The Action Plan of the Sino-African Fourth Ministerial Conference for 2010-2012 has clearly underlined that strengthening cooperation and collaboration between China and African countries is an effective way to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development. Although both China and Africa are satisfied with their on-going cooperation, they emphasized the importance of information and experience sharing and technology transfer in the areas of disaster risk reduction, especially regarding drought risk reduction.

In Africa, drought has been one of the major threats among natural hazards to people's livelihood and socio-economic development. Prolonged and severe drought in recent years has had complex impacts, of course in agriculture especially – upon which the majority of the African poor depend for a livelihood. It is estimated that more than 90% of farmed land has no access to irrigation, but depends on rainfall. Drought therefore has a profound impact on food security in sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2009, prolonged drought pushed more than 20 million East Africans to the brink of starvation. Today, severe drought causes hunger for 10 million in East Africa. In addition, funds available to socio-economic development have to instead be used for food relief. The impact of drought is one of the key factors slowing African socio-economic development.

Drought is affecting many parts of China now. Early in 2010, China experienced one of the worst droughts in decades – affecting a number of provinces, including Guizhou, Yunnan, Guangxi, Sichuan, Henan and Shanxi. The drought has affected an estimated 18 million people, 8.3 million hectares of farm land and 12.4 million head of livestock. The estimated loss for agriculture alone was in the billions of dollars.

There has been a growing effort to address the complex impacts of drought and be proactive about reducing people's risks and vulnerabilities to drought – among Governments, UN agencies, research institutions and civil society. Some such initiatives have focused on early warning, reduction of vulnerability and underlying environmental, economic and social causes. Others have worked on drought policies, capacity building, drought resilient crops and drought relief.

To make a contribution to the drought risk reduction process and to build the resilience of people to the impact of severe drought, at the Sino-African Fourth Ministerial Conference in November 2009, Governments agreed to hold a Sino-African Seminar on Drought Risk Reduction to share information, technology and experience on drought management and drought risk reduction. The Seminar is to be held in 2011, with the support of the UNISDR Secretariat.

Overall Objective

The Sino-African Seminar on Drought Risk Reduction aims to contribute to the on-going international process of building drought resilient nations and communities,

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the Sino-African Seminar on Drought Risk Reduction are to provide a forum for governments to:

- Share information, knowledge and lessons learnt in drought risk reduction;
- Share experience, and scientific and practical methods for building drought resilience, especially related to drought monitoring, early warning, water resource management and agriculture; and
- Identify priority areas and ways for Sino-African cooperation and collaboration in drought risk reduction.

Main Themes

- National policy and existing mechanisms for drought management and risk reduction
- The efficiency and effectiveness of national early warning systems for managing drought risks and disasters
- Good practices and lessons learnt in reducing the socio-economic impact of drought, especially in the sectors of water management and agriculture
- Main elements for effective Sino-African cooperation and collaboration in developing an effective drought early warning system and drought risk management

Expected Results

- Improved understanding of national policies and existing mechanisms of drought management and risk reduction
- Improved understanding of the major elements required for effective drought early warning systems
- Improved knowledge on approaches and technologies that are being used in China and Africa for early warning and for reducing the impact and risk of drought disasters, especially in water resource management and agriculture.
- Consensus on areas of priority to advance collaboration and cooperation between China and Africa in drought risk reduction

Co-organizers

The Sino-African Seminar on Drought Risk Reduction will be co-organized by the Government of China and the UNISDR Secretariat. The former is responsible for providing the financial resources to cover the expenses of the meeting and the latter will provide guidance to the overall organization of the meeting and technical assistance.

Languages: English and Chinese

Venue: Grand Concordia Hotel (鹏润酒店)

Tentative agenda

24 September, 2011

Participants' arrival

25 September, 2011

9:30-10:00 Opening remarks

- Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, South Sudan
- Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Uganda
- Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly, EALA
- Minister of Civil Affairs, P. R. China

10:00–10:30 **Group Photo and *Coffee Break***

10:30–12:30 National policy and existing mechanisms for drought management and drought risk reduction

- National policy and practical mechanisms on drought risk management in China
- National landscape of Drought Risk: Summary of a Work Bank Assessment in Uganda
- National policy and implementation on drought risk management, Kenya

Questions and Answers

12:30 – 14:00 ***Lunch Break***

14:00 – 16:00 Effectiveness of drought early warning: Progress and Challenges

- Introduction of the drought early warning practice in West Africa
- Early warning system and drought risk reduction in Tanzania
- Early warning system and drought risk reduction in Ethiopia
- Application of space technology in drought early warning

Questions and Answers

16:00–16:30 ***Coffee Break***

16:30–18:30 Good practices and lessons learnt in reducing the socio-economic impact of drought through early warning, water resource management and agriculture

- Experience of Drylands Coordination Group in developing improved technology for traditional dry land farming in Sudan
- Experience in water resource management in drought-affected in China
- Management of drought and food security in Tanzania
- Experience in reducing the impact of drought on agricultural practices in China

Questions and Answers

26 September 2011

9:30 - 10:00 Recap of the main points of Day One from presentations and discussions

Questions and clarifications

10:00–10:30 Main practical elements for effective Sino-African cooperation and collaboration in developing an effective drought monitoring, early warning system for effective drought risk management.

- Challenges and opportunities for Sino-African cooperation in drought early warning in East Africa
- Challenges and opportunities for Sino-African cooperation in drought risk management to increase food security in drought prone communities

10:30–10:45 ***Coffee Break***

10:45–12:30 Plenary Discussion on Sino-African Cooperation in Drought Risk Reduction

12:30–14:00 ***Lunch Break***

14:00–15:00 Presentation, finalization and validation of a Action Plan of Sino-African Cooperation in integrated drought risk management, including drought monitoring, early warning, water resource management and agriculture

15:30–16:00 Closing remarks and assessment

27 September 2011

Field visit to be determined