



4th Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

**Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania
13-15 February 2013**

Summary Statement

Introduction

Over 250 participants from 45 African countries and partners gathered in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, 13-15 February 2013 for the 4th Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Stakeholders from governments, intergovernmental regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, United Nations, academic and technical institutions, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Government Organizations were joined by mayors and local governments, community leaders, parliamentarians, youth, media and the private sector – all sharing a common commitment to build the resilience of African communities and nations to disaster risk and adapt to a changing climate.

The 4th Africa Regional Platform was held back to back with the 5th Drought Adaption Forum (ADAF5): Reducing Drought Risk in Africa: Measuring Impact Strategizing for the Future, which focused on methodologies and indicators to measure resilience at the community level.

Summary Statement

1. This Statement has been built on recommendations and decisions that reflect the achievements of African institutions and African leadership in meeting the priorities of the internationally agreed Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA). Beyond 2015 (HFA2), Africa is set to lead on a global agenda, fostering new and renewed partnerships with its regions, sub-regions, national governments, cities, private sector, knowledge centres and civil society including youth and women.
2. The 4th Africa Regional Platform (AfRP) reviewed achievements and challenges in implementing the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and its Extended Programme of Action and identified measures for fulfilling shared commitments by 2015. Looking ahead, the AfRP considered the changing character of vulnerability and the government leadership required to lead on an inclusive process of consultations to meet ongoing and emerging challenges.
3. The recommendations put forward in this Summary Statement aim to guide stakeholders within their areas of interest and their institutional mandates. The recommendations specifically aim to inform regional and international action through the African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities in Africa as well as at the 4th session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and in consultations leading to HFA2.
4. The recommendations for regional and sub-regional action, and the focused insights from the featured sessions outlined below, along with the annexed reports of working groups, partners, and stakeholders, establish a pattern of overarching themes.

5. **Africa is a dynamic continent in a period of rapid transformation characterized by changes in economy, society and the environment.** These changes will be aggravated by climate change. While rapid economic growth can augment resources, it can also aggravate vulnerability. Ensuring sustainable approaches to development can have a profound impact on equity and poverty. Integrating DRR and resilience as part of sustainable development strategies is an opportunity to both address root causes of exposure and vulnerability and protect development gains through resilient development approaches. As Africa continues to transform itself, there is increasing commitment to reduce risk at all levels not least in relation to conflict. The 4th African Regional Platform looked beyond 2015 to envision an HFA2 that recognizes that risk is dynamic and that risk affects different segments of the community in different ways.
6. **Communities, in particular women and children, stand at the frontline of disaster risk and play an increasingly influential role in building resilience.** To act in partnership with communities entails a commitment to eliminate illiteracy, promote education, support public health, food security and livelihoods (through formal and informal mechanisms) as these are central to resilient risk reduction and MDGs. New partnerships with media and the private sector can be instrumental in moving the risk resilience agenda forward. All stakeholders and social sectors should be involved in building a resilient future. The engagement of youth and the inclusion of physically-challenged persons bring new energy to disaster reduction at the local level. Strongly supported efforts to strengthen and engage local social institutions, in particular, hold the promise of renewed public commitment to building resilience. Community education and awareness call for coordination across sectors between national and local level, governments and civil society.
7. **Safe and equitable development outcomes in Africa are achievable.** In Africa, poverty eradication, including through access to markets and services, provision of infrastructure, eradication of malnutrition, particularly in the face of recurrent drought, is more likely to be achieved when disaster risk drivers are appropriately addressed. The development sector, including sectorial ministries, private sector and bilateral and multilateral aid institutions are called on to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into their plans, programmes and actions and are called on to be more accountable for their decisions. National efforts to plan for and implement the post 2015 development agenda, Rio+20 and HFA2 can be advanced through integrated approaches by regional sub-regional, national and local governments in dialogue with civil society actors. Most urgently, humanitarian response and development actors should share responsibility by aligning their policies and coordinating their efforts.
8. **Substantive knowledge and technical and human resources are already available nationally and locally.** These must be recognized, and leveraged in our collective efforts to reduce disaster risk. African academic and research institutions have been under-utilized for resilience building at grass-roots and other levels. Local knowledge, local leadership and community relations play a pivotal role in strengthening coping capacities. Improved communications vertically, between national and local level and horizontally among government sectors, can drive public awareness and sensitization about disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The media and civil society are essential partners. Regionally and sub-regionally, African countries, Inter-Governmental Organizations and partners must continue to share their knowledge and learn from each other. To further cooperation and partnership, Intra-Africa and South-South collaboration should be vigorously pursued.

9. **Targeting progress in disaster risk reduction efforts at all levels helps governments** better plan, assess progress and learn lessons in a more systematic and informed way. Efforts that support information sharing and transparency are highly recommended to be adopted at national level. Currently, the monitoring of HFA progress is not adequate. In many instances, DRR policies and plans lack good indicators and targets, and only a few countries systematically account for disaster losses and estimate the impact of disaster on the overall economy and society. At the same time, those most vulnerable to disasters need good information about what disaster risk is and what happens to their lives and livelihoods when disaster strikes.
10. **The HFA** has been the central policy guidance for DRR alongside the Africa Strategy for DRR and its Programme of Action. While continuing to pursue HFA1 priorities beyond 2015, HFA2 should build on the progress and lessons learned while providing a broader vision that embraces innovation and changing conditions. HFA2 should work for those most at risk and anticipate the risks faced by emerging future groups. Women and children in particular are disproportionately affected by disasters most often as a result of pre-existing inequalities. Targeting the vulnerable to ensure equitable planning and resourcing of disaster risk reduction measures is strongly recommended as a key issue to be addressed for a post-2015 framework in Africa.
11. **Disaster risk reduction is now on the agenda of every government in Africa.** Governments have the responsibility to create the constitutional, institutional and policy environments, and legal frameworks, for building resilience and protecting the vulnerable. This includes decentralisation of disaster risks and strengthening of local and community structures. It is encouraging that as many as 40 countries in Africa have established national platforms or coordination mechanisms. These advances must be sustained and the growing popular awareness of disaster risk reduction must be converted into actions to systematically enhance implementation of the Extended Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy and national, regional and international commitments.
12. **Private sector engagement.** In a parallel event on Private Sector Partnership, five essentials for Business in disaster risk reduction were agreed including to promote public-private partnerships for disaster risk reduction, analyze the root causes of continued non-resilient activities (and develop frameworks to address these causes), develop financial risk-sharing mechanisms, and leverage sectorial private sector expertise and strengths to advance collaboration for disaster risk reduction among others. For more information, please refer to the full report in the annexes to this statement.
13. Therefore, the 4th African Regional Platform calls for a commitment to focus on the following issues discussed in the six thematic sessions:

14. Session 1

Disaster Risk Reduction at the Regional Level

Africa has seen high rates of economic growth in recent years with some African countries counted among the fastest growing economies globally. However, the role of disasters in reversing development gains cannot be ignored. While several disaster risk reduction initiatives and efforts have been undertaken, more needs to be done to strengthen them. Against this backdrop, Session 1 focussed on strengthening DRR at regional level with the following specific observations and recommendations:

1. Integrate disaster risk reduction into development and humanitarian agendas in a coordinated and multi-sectorial
2. Leverage existing efforts while initiating new ones.
3. Situate disaster risk reduction as part of the global sustainable development framework and revisit the human development agenda. Actors of development sectors (agriculture/food security, water resources, environment, climate service providers, planning and finance) should be engaged in DRR policy dialogue.
4. Strengthen cooperation with civil society organizations to reach local communities.
5. While high economic growth has increased vulnerability and exposure to risk in Africa, it likewise provides opportunities to advance sustainable development goals through disaster risk management
6. It has been estimated that over $\frac{2}{3}$ s of disaster risk reduction and management funding comes from humanitarian actors. There is a need to balance this with development, including disaster risk reduction and management.
7. The audience welcomed the reconstitution and action of the Africa Working Group on DRR to provide coordination and support implementation of DRR frameworks and programmes for DRR (Ref: Ministerial Recommendation No. 2, 2010).
8. A number of African academic and research institutions already focus on disaster risk reduction. They could form the basis for a network of capacity-development institutions for training, research and information and knowledge management (Ref: Ministerial Recommendation No. 3, 2010).
9. Parliamentarians have taken the initiative to establish a network for the furtherance of the Nairobi Plan of Action to advocate DRR through legislation.
10. More emphasis needs to be put on the institutionalization of multi-sectorial national platforms for disaster risk reduction and management (Ref: Ministerial Conference, Recommendation No. 1, 2010).

15. Session 2

Disaster Risk Reduction at the Sub-Regional Level

Session 2 outlined the achievements made and challenges faced at sub-regional levels in Africa. These ranged from policy formulation and coordination to comprehensive disaster risk reduction implementation. The following observations and recommendations were made by representatives of Regional Economic Communities:

1. It is encouraging to note that as many as 40 countries in Africa have established national platforms or coordination mechanisms. These must continue to be nurtured and strengthened through the development of strong linkages with government decision making processes.
2. Significant progress has been made on policy formulation, however, legislation and its conversion into adequately-resourced programmes still remains an issue.
3. Disaster risk reduction needs to be mainstreamed into poverty reduction strategies and programmes.
4. There is a growing need for systematic, multi-hazard, trans-boundary and standardized risk assessments, people-centered early warning systems and preparedness planning. Greater support should be given to risk data management and sharing risk information.
5. Incentives, such as technical support and funding, need to be provided to education sectors to integrate more systematically disaster risk reduction in school curriculums.
6. Accountability should be enhanced through the addition of disaster risk reduction indicators in sub-regional monitoring frameworks.
7. Investments in capacity development at all levels, including communities and disaster risk reduction research need to be enhanced.
8. Investment in urban risk management and resilient cities should be accelerated.
9. There is an urgent need for strengthening coordinated resource mobilization in the different African regions.

16. Session 3

Increased Political Commitment and Disaster Risk Reduction Investment

There is a broad awareness in Africa regarding the significance of disaster risk reduction and its role in ensuring sustainable development and awareness. However, this awareness is yet to be fully translated into action by the commitment of human, technical, institutional, political and financial resources. Session 3 outlined concrete examples of disaster risk reduction investment and its shift in focus from response and relief to resilience. The following observations and recommendations were made:

1. It was reiterated that political commitment is critical for making disaster risk reduction a national priority.
2. Parliamentarians should work more closely with the executive to achieve better fiscal management.
3. Donor commitment to long-term disaster risk reduction funding needs to be reconsidered in line with new and emerging risks and evolving humanitarian and development agendas.
4. Enhance efforts to engage more with the private sector in disaster risk reduction, in particular building on their role in investment in Africa and leveraging their

technical expertise through partnerships

5. Disaster risk reduction financing should not be the only concern but appropriate linkages and policies with relevant actors should be developed.
6. Disaster risk reduction should be considered as an investment rather than expenditure.
7. An integrated approach to disaster risk reduction implementation is central to enhancing disaster risk reduction investment.
8. To finance disaster risk reduction efforts, mobilisation of local resources should be considered to complement national and external support.
9. Systematic implementation of the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction is required.
10. The institutional integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change remains a major challenge. Clear responsibilities need to be identified and outlined.

17. Session 4

Risk identification, Monitoring and Early Warning

Risk knowledge contributes to achieving HFA targets through providing strategic policy guidance and informing disaster risk reduction implementation. However, gaps between risk information and its end-users have been observed, while both generation and dissemination of risk knowledge remains a challenge. Session 4 made the following observations and recommendations:

1. Communities should be at the centre of decision-making on disaster risk reduction as they know how risk develops and how it affects them. Community education and awareness on disaster risk reduction should be integrated across sectors and coordinated between government, civil society and the general public.
2. Resilience is a coping mechanism of the society. Disaster risk profiles at local levels inform what makes communities resilient.
3. Greater support should be given to quantify risk and measure resilience of communities.
4. There is a need for standardization of risk assessments in the continent while acknowledging that the review of multiple methodologies provides a more complete picture of risk.
5. There is a need for the creation and strengthening of risk databases and wider dissemination of resulting information on risk by change agents (media, national and local governments, civil society, private sector, women and youth groups.).
6. Existing regional and sub-regional technical centers in the continent can support replication of risk assessment and early warning systems.
7. Disaster preparedness is more effective when backed by contingency funds.
8. Translating early warning into early action remains a challenge.

18. Session 5

Resilient Cities in Africa

Africa has witnessed extremely high urbanization rates that parallel its economic growth and, at the same time, pose critical challenges for disaster risk reduction, exacerbated by climate change. Session 5 highlighted initiatives undertaken and future-looking recommendations to address urban risks in the region by building urban resilience. The following observations and recommendations were made:

1. Urban centres of infrastructure and assets are, at the same time, growing centres of disaster risk that deserve high multi-sectorial (including health, education, and infrastructure) disaster risk reduction attention.
2. Informal settlements and slums in urban areas are exposed to the highest level of risks, while women and children living in such areas are the most vulnerable to such exposure.
3. There is a need for the development of robust operational urban risk management architecture and initiatives among multi-sectorial groups through the building of skilled human capital.
4. Intra-country coordination between national and local authorities needs to be enhanced, including decentralization of urban governance.
5. There is a need for coordinated urban risk assessments and mapping as part of a comprehensive urban risk information system for development planning.
6. Urban structural measures and services (drainage and sewerage systems) should be complemented by non-structural measures like development of and adherence to building codes for urban planning.

18. Session 6

Reducing risk: Climate change adaptation and emerging regional challenges

Most disaster losses in Africa are associated with weather-related shocks. Climate change has a direct impact through disasters but also through increasing socio-economic vulnerabilities of communities and their eco-systems. Session 6 aimed at identifying and assessing the challenges and opportunities for integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Africa. The following observations and recommendations were made:

1. Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation integration are vital to achieve synergized programme implementation and develop integrated institutional mechanisms.
2. Institutional segregation of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction poses practical implementation challenges. Therefore, there is a need to further develop conjoined policies that integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, hence pave way for institutional and policy integration.
3. There is a need to enhance skills for short-term weather predictions and medium-term forecasts through strengthening of regional and national institutions and leveraging existing global and regional climate information facilities. This in turn should inform disaster risk reduction strategies and programmes.
4. User-friendly and user-customized climate information enhances effectiveness of its application better supports informed decisions.

5. Note and support existing regional programmes and initiatives in Africa that contribute to disaster risk reduction mainly Climate Outlook Forums organized by ACMAD, SADC-Climate Service Centre and ICPAC. These include ClimDev, World Meteorological Organisation's Global Framework Climate Services (GFCS), African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET), and the World Health Organisation's Health Sector Regional Strategy.
6. Integrate gender-responsive perspectives, protection and equity into disaster risk management: Women play a pivotal role in household-level food security. They are among the foremost agents of change whose inputs must inform disaster risk reduction and CC adaptation strategies. Develop the capacity of women and women's groups to reduce risks; and to strengthen dialogue between community-based women's organizations and local and national government officials.
7. Voice an uncompromising commitment to children and youth, by encouraging them to contribute and assist in resilience building initiatives and decisions. Make a strong effort to provide them with information and support to further develop their capacities as agents of change.

Annex Index

Reports related to Recommendations of the 2nd Africa Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction produced for the 4th Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, 13-15 February 2013, Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania

1. [Summary of the Africa Status Report: "Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa", 2013.](#)
2. [Report on the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa.](#)
3. [Report on survey on Centres of Excellence for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa.](#)
4. [Study on Disaster Risk Reduction Investment in Africa.](#)

Reports from Regional Economic Communities consolidated at Sub-regional platform meetings on the implementation of the HFA, Africa strategy and Programme of Action and Post 2015 DRR framework (HFA2).

5. [Economic Community of West African States \(ECOWAS\).](#)
6. [Economic Community of Central African States \(ECCAS\).](#)
7. [Southern African Development Community \(SADC\).](#)
8. [Intergovernmental Authority on development \(IGAD\) and East African Community \(EAC\).](#)

Reports emanating from partners and parallel events at the 4th Africa Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction 13-15 February 2013, Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania.

9. [Results of the 5th Africa Drought Adaptation Forum.](#)
10. [Report of UNISDR Parliamentarian Group in Africa.](#)
11. [Report on Round Table HFA2: Post 2015 DRR Framework.](#)
12. [IFRC Africa recommendations for the Post 2015 DRR Framework.](#)
13. [Report from Oxfam: 'The Post Framework: What's next for Disaster Risk Reduction?'](#)
14. [Media Statement to the 4th Africa Regional Platform.](#)
15. [Report of parallel event: Private Sector Partnership.](#)
16. [Recommendations on DRR by African Youth Representatives.](#)

This event was organised thanks to the support of our partners.

