

## **Africa Working Group (Extended) for Disaster Risk Reduction**

●ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria●11-12 March 2014●

### **SUMMARY STATEMENT ON AFRICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE POST-2015 FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**

Members of the Extended Africa Working Group for Disaster Risk Reduction, including governments, regional economic communities, development partners including donors, United Nations, Non-Governmental Organisations, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, academic institutions, and other international organisations, came together with representatives of youth, gender and media to review the progress of disaster risk reduction in Africa and consolidate a draft Africa's Contribution to the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The meeting was chaired by the African Union Commission; the host ECOWAS Commission acted as the vice-chair and UNISDR acted as the Secretariat.

The members suggested that disaster risk reduction should be addressed as a rights-based issue especially in relation to the most vulnerable groups, and agreed on the following elements comprising Africa's contribution to the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, which should be read in conjunction with the summary statement released by the consultative meeting in November 2013, Nairobi, Kenya.

The recommendations are summarised below:

#### **A. Regional Risk Factors and Institutional Frameworks**

1. Few countries have adopted policies and legislation addressing disaster risks. The legislation process should be enhanced for all countries and backed by strengthened institutional capacity to enforce legislation. Institutions should enhance the inclusion of disaster risk reduction into municipal and decentralized policies, so that risks can be effectively addressed through regulatory framework from national to local and municipal levels. Public participation should be enhanced in policy development to address vulnerabilities associated with marginalised people such as: girls, boys, women, disabled, elderly, etc. Decentralisation should be complemented by increased accountability and transparency in implementing disaster risk reduction through allocation of responsibility and resources at the local level.

2. Plans and policies should be budgeted and supported by multi-sector and multi-hazard strategic programme and investment framework that works as a pragmatic solution to translate policies into actionable programmes. This requires capacity building and capacity retention. Effective linkages between policy and community practitioners should be established. The role of national platforms should be strengthened to ensure that there is a proper interaction and discussion of policy, planning and financing at national level.
3. Disasters do not follow administrative boundaries and hence trans-boundary policies and programmes are essential to address such risks. The post-2015 framework needs to consider disaster-induced (both fast- and slow-onset disasters) population movements that may lead to or result from conflicts.
4. Disaster risk reduction should be placed at a higher level in the national government structure for better coordination and implementation. Examples of successful disaster risk management models, and multi-sector national institutions should be leveraged and replicated.
5. Disaster risk reduction should be integrated in education systems including curricula at all levels and comprehensive school safety frameworks to ensure uninterrupted safe education processes that contribute to reducing disaster risks. Higher attention needs to be paid to centres of higher research and professional education on disaster risk reduction. Community education and awareness on disaster risk reduction (DRR) should be integrated across sectors and coordinated between government authorities, civil society and the general public.
6. National and sub-regional platforms should be strengthened for effective coordination to ensure prevention and early action.
7. Africa is a rapidly urbanizing continent. To address urban risks and build urban resilience, risk governance in urban settings should be enhanced. While promoting the management of existing risks in cities, accumulation of further risks should be prevented through disaster-sensitive physical planning of growing cities for preventing risks over the long-term, based on city resilience profiling. Attention should be given to areas at risk, especially informal settlements, basic service provision, and social protection for children, women, disabled and elderly.
8. Recognizing the current lack of capacities in several fast-growing cities in Africa, technical capacities of city managers and practitioners to address risks should be enhanced. There is need for making use of national experience and expertise, city-to-city exchange, technical centres and institutes, academia and other entities
9. Africa has a significantly large and vibrant young population. Given this and its high socio-economic vulnerabilities to the impacts of disasters, girls, boys and youth must be

meaningfully involved in future disaster risk reduction planning and possible implementation. National and regional policies and strategies should include risk assessments that promote children's protection.

10. New approaches should be adopted to address chronic vulnerabilities and slow-onset disasters in Africa, including through working with the media.

## **B. Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation**

The Hyogo Framework for Action mentioned integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, but achievements were limited. The year 2015 will be marked by major landmarks in the form of the adoption of post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (March 2015), post- 2015 framework on development goals (September 2015) and another climate change conference (December 2015). This provides a valid platform for integration of the three agendas.

1. Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction integration form the building blocks for current and future risk prevention, leading to resilience. Availability and access to information on risks, losses and damages associated with climate-related hazards and disasters should be enhanced.
2. Redirected focus on reducing underlying causes of risk (Priority for Action 4) is needed. This requires that adequate information on risks, losses and damages associated with climate related hazards is made available. Availability of regional and local climate data, information and knowledge should be enhanced.
3. Coordination needs to be increased at institutional level between the disaster risk reduction and climate change communities including through developing synergies between relevant frameworks and conventions at global level. The post-2015 development framework can provide a valid platform for this integration. This approach needs to be in turn integrated into basic social service systems and delivery approaches including education, health, water etc., while co-benefiting resource mobilisation for both.
4. Roles and responsibilities of national agencies for hazard monitoring and issuance of warnings as well as those responsible for emergency management need to be clarified through policies, legislation, and institutional coordination mechanisms. More systematic linkages should be established between technical agencies (such as meteorological, hydrological and climate services) and disaster risk management agencies. Early warning outreach should be enhanced to different sectors and community level and relevant communication systems and channels should be strengthened.

### C. Investments in Disaster Risk Reduction

Rapid economic growth in Africa provides opportunities for increasing investment in disaster risk reduction.

1. An enabling investment environment for disaster risk reduction should be created through comprehensive risk profiles, and disaster damage and loss information to inform investment decisions. Funding mechanisms need to be aligned for the development of disaster and climate-related information. There is a need for strengthening technical capacities of the institutions responsible for monitoring and analysing hazard, exposure, and vulnerability components of risk.
2. Appropriate tools for analysing the benefits of disaster risk reduction should be developed for the purpose of influencing policies, plans and budgets. Investments on integrated early warning systems should be enhanced to bring scientific and indigenous knowledge under a common framework of understanding and linked to early warning and early action.
3. A people-centred approach to disaster risk reduction is essential for achieving the objectives of developing resilience for disaster risk reduction. Needs of groups with specific vulnerabilities should be understood in terms of specific and multiple hazards. Linkages between community-based disaster risk reduction, national and sub-national policies and procedures should be developed.
4. Public-Private Partnerships should be enhanced to bring more investment to disaster risk reduction. This should also be leveraged to enhance accountability for private sector and the relevance of their investment to benefit vulnerable communities while preventing future risks.
5. National governments should allocate adequate resources for scalable and flexible adaptive basic social services, social protection systems including safety nets, to enhance community resilience. Safety net programmes should be used as effective medium for risk prevention, and not limited to risk reduction and emergency response.

#### Enhancing Commitments

Members recommended making the post-2015 framework more action oriented with valid grounds for generating commitments from all actors and stakeholders by undertaking the following:

1. Disaster risk reduction should be implemented in line with rights-based approaches to generate a high level of institutional accountability.

2. Strengthening awareness and knowledge at all levels for all stakeholders is a key to generating the right commitment for implementation of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. This should include a focus on capacity building at all levels to foster communities of disaster risk reduction practitioners.
3. Governments should allocate an agreed proportion of public budgets for disaster risk reduction informed by economic analyses and risk assessments.
4. Technical guidelines to integrate risk reduction into public investment should be developed in a systematic way.
5. Higher engagement should be promoted with civil society and community based organisations.
6. Advocacy efforts should be leveraged to mark the shift from ‘awareness’ to ‘how-to-do-it’ (e.g. implementation of 10 essentials for city resilience) including through support of specialized dedicated technical assistance provided by national governments, technical centres with a focus on disaster risk reduction and urban resilience, universities and consortia of universities and the inclusion of disaster risk reduction modules into sectorial curricula relevant to city management (e.g. architecture and physical planning, engineering, geography etc.).
7. Clear accountability mechanisms with monitoring and reporting of progress will help generate commitment for implementation of the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction. Reporting mechanisms for governments on investments in disaster risk reduction should be strengthened. Public reporting mechanisms could be put in place for national, sub-national and community level disaster risk reduction programmes (e.g. parliamentary reporting, open-information websites, community meetings, etc.).
8. Institutions within the countries responsible for implementing disaster risk reduction strategies and actions need to be strengthened to monitor data and information such as hazard and sectorial loss and damage that are critical for reporting progress.
9. Possibility of establishing a regional monitoring and reporting unit should be explored to track implementation of commitments made. UNISDR’s capacity should be enhanced for strengthened policy advocacy and coordination.
10. Commitments to empower youth and children with specific skills that will enable them to better apply their special insights as youth and children for disaster risk reduction, resilience building and building-back-better after a disaster.

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