



DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN AFRICA

STATUS REPORT - 2015

Executive summary



UNISDR
United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Executive summary

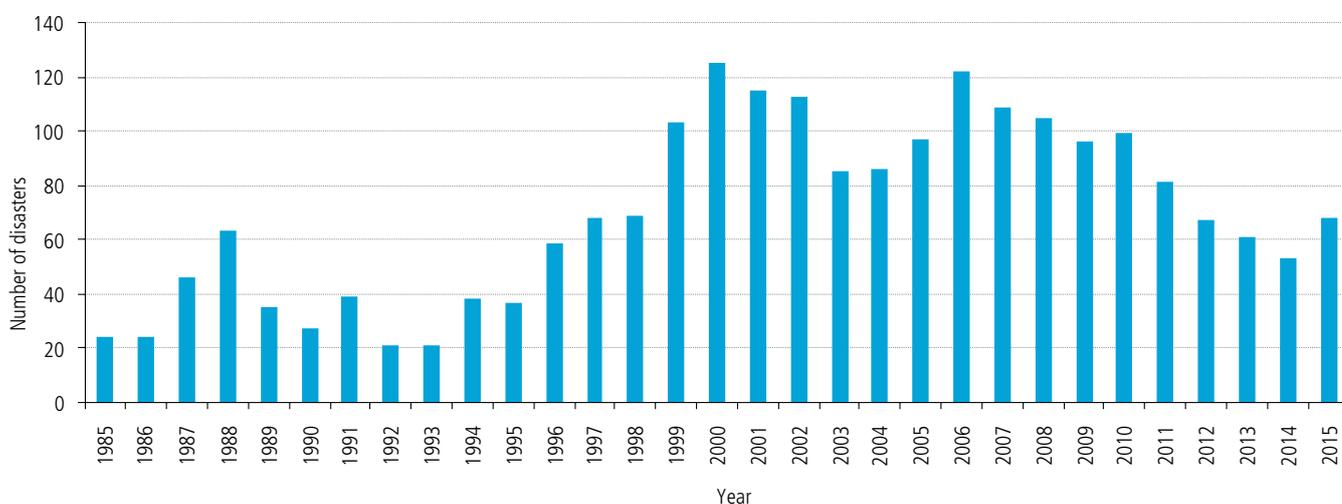
Africa holds half of the world's most risk-prone countries, and is experiencing a rising number of disasters. The continent's progression towards sustainable development requires that government and development actors recognise and react to the importance of disaster risk reduction (DRR). Historically, a pattern of progress and setbacks has occurred, where droughts and floods – two of the most common natural hazards – cause significant displacement of populations, losses in agriculture and infrastructure, and present challenges to planning in the face of increasing urbanisation across the continent. All of these have negative impacts on the continent's development achievements.

Global concern for DRR, particularly in developing countries, has led to the establishment of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). Its mandate, defined by UN General Assembly resolutions, includes its designation as the focal point in the UN's system for coordinating disaster reduction, and ensuring regional organisations in the socioeconomic and humanitarian fields work together to the greatest effect. The importance of managing risk and building resilience has been high on the international agenda and was highlighted in 2015 and 2016 by Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on climate change and the World Humanitarian Summit.

This report, produced by Development Initiatives on behalf of UNISDR, profiles the frequency, location and severity of natural hazards across the continent. It examines risk drivers that exacerbate natural hazards' impacts on populations, and analyses the state of Africa's preparedness against the risk of disaster in relation to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA, 2005–2015). The authors consider the roles of other stakeholders, such as the private sector, as well as the financing and investments supporting countries to prepare for disasters. The report concludes by looking forward to how preparedness will be measured by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030).

FIGURE 1

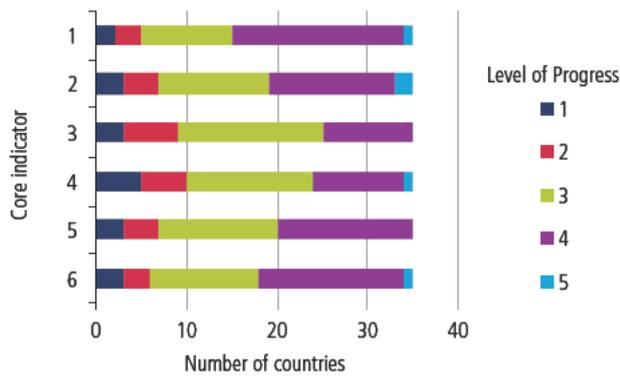
Number of reported intensive natural hazards per year in Africa, 1985–2015



Source: Development Initiatives based on EM-DAT: International Disaster Database

FIGURE 2

Level of progress across HFA 4 core indicators, 2013–2015 period



Source: Development Initiatives based on National Progress reports

Core indicators for HFA priority 4

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 DRR is an integral objective of environment related policies and plans, including for land use natural resource management and adaptation to climate change</p> | <p>4 Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes</p> |
| <p>2 Social development policies and plans are being implemented to reduce the vulnerability of populations most at risk</p> | <p>5 Disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post disaster recovery and rehabilitation process</p> |
| <p>3 Economic and productive sectoral policies and plans have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities</p> | <p>6 Procedures are in place to assess the disaster risk impacts of major development projects, especially infrastructure</p> |

Level of progress

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>1 Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policies</p> | <p>4 Substantial achievement attained but with recognised limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/or operational capacities</p> |
| <p>2 Some progress, but without systematic policy and/or institutional commitment</p> | <p>5 Comprehensive achievement with sustained commitment and capacities at all levels</p> |
| <p>3 Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial</p> | |

Development Initiatives has used documentation provided by UNISDR, as well as data from the international Emergency Events Database: EM-DAT, national disaster (loss) databases: DesInventar, and the INFORM Risk Index. The authors have delved deeper into countries' own assessments on progress in implementing the HFA by conducting additional fieldwork.

The authors find that the number of reported disasters as a result of natural hazards has increased in Africa over the last 30 years, with floods, epidemics and drought occurring most often. The most hazard-prone countries in Africa are Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Mali, Niger, Sudan and Uganda. Overall losses in human lives dropped between 2005 and 2015, while the number of people needing immediate assistance or injured rose during the same period.

This report identifies climate change, poorly planned urbanisation, environmental degradation, poverty and inequality as well as fragility and conflict as the biggest disaster risk drivers across the continent. Africa faces a significant challenge from climate change; over 20 African countries are highly vulnerable to its effects. Most (61.7%) of Africa's urban population lives in slums. Such informal settlements are often located in the most hazard-prone urban areas. Close to half (45%) of land area is affected by desertification and 55% of this area is at high or very high risk of further degradation. It is estimated that central and eastern Africa will lose 12 million hectares of forest by 2030 due to deforestation. Poverty and socioeconomic inequality increase vulnerability and undermine resilience.

Progress in implementing the HFA has been slow. Many of the issues and

challenges in the 2011–2013 reporting period remain present in the 2013–2015 reporting period. While African countries report having integrated DRR into national plans; limited political commitment and limited domestic resource allocation towards it inhibit proper implementation.

While DRR in Africa is financed through national budget allocation, the private sector and international sources, it is clear more needs to be done. The barriers for implementing and prioritising DRR under the

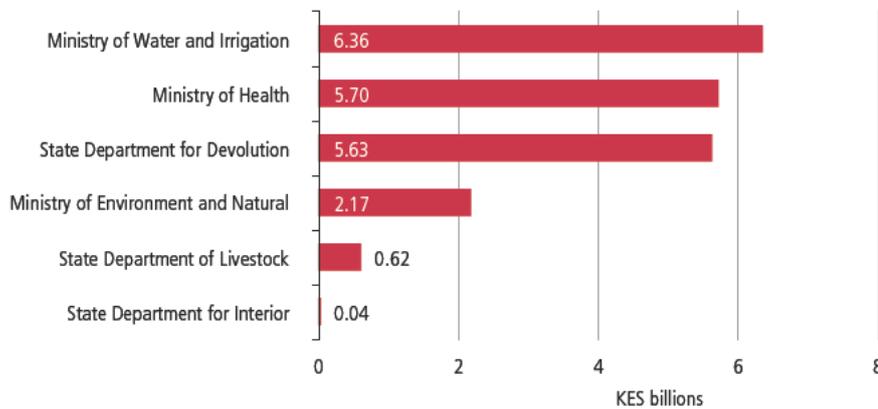
HFA are: low priority given to risk reduction in national budgets; a preference (or habit) of focusing on emergency response to hazard events; and the lack of a standard DRR budget monitoring system. There are difficulties with tracking DRR-related expenditure, and this can make it difficult to assess whether investments are sufficient to manage multiple risks in a country.

Looking forward, there are opportunities to improve the accessibility and interoperability of

data on DRR in Africa. At present, about 50% of countries report that national disaster information systems do not exist in the public domain. In addition, half the countries report that DRR information is not disseminated proactively. Many countries in Africa carry out multi-hazard risk assessments and these inform planning; however, the standards vary across countries making cross-country comparisons difficult. In addition, comparisons across reporting periods are also limited by data availability.

FIGURE 3

DRR funding in Kenya by ministry and department, 2016



Source: Kenya national budget 2016/17

If governments were to track their investments in DRR better, this would provide a useful indicator for assessing countries' progress during the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction period (2015–2030). The establishment of the Open-ended Intergovernmental Expert Working Group, with support from UNISDR, is a significant development. The working group will develop global indicators, which will allow countries to demonstrate their progress in DRR against quantifiable goals.



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