

**Briefing session at the Dedicated Friday's of the Commission,  
4 May 2017, African Union Commission**

**Note to File**

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## **BACKGROUND**

A briefing session, organized jointly by AUC and UNISDR, was held on 4 May 2017 at the African Union Headquarters under the theme *'From Sendai to Cancun: with a renewed commitments to disaster risk reduction for resilience'*. The session, which was organized as part of the regular forum of the African Union Commission-Dedicated Fridays of the Commission- was co-chaired by AUC and UNISDR (who also delivered the opening remarks) and featured presentations and debates around the Sendai Framework and its Africa Programme of Action as well as Africa's preparation for the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The briefing session was attended by over 50 participants from the African Permanent Missions (14), Regional Economic Communities (COMESA, ECOWAS), African Union Commission, other Embassies (Turkey, Norway, Ireland, Netherlands, Mexico, Indonesia), Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States to AU/UNECA, the EU Delegation to the AU, US Mission to AU, UN organizations (UNISDR, FAO, UNICEF, OCHA, IOM), the World Bank, Norwegian Refugee council, Oxfam International, and others (Ethiopian institutions and academia and Non-Governmental Organizations). Apart from facilitating the briefing session and mobilizing the African Member States and other partners to participate in the event, UNISDR provided support to AUC in preparing all the necessary documentation (concept note, agenda, and presentations) for the session. The Deputy Head of Mission of Mexico in Ethiopia also took the opportunity to brief participants on the preparatory work being done by the Mexican Government, besides requesting those who need Mexican visas to submit their applications to the Embassy as early as possible.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The main objectives of the briefing session was to: (i) familiarize participants with the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa; (ii) provide update on the status of preparation for the 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction; and (iii) solicit additional comments on the draft Africa Common Position to be presented at the 2017 Global Platform.

## **OUTCOME**

- Participants were familiarized with the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa, which was endorsed by the African Union Executive Council at the January 2017 Assembly of the Union.
- Participants were informed of the status of preparation, including Africa's participation, for the 2017 Global Platform. Appreciating the progress made thus far in mobilizing the African Union Member States, participants called on AUC, UNISDR and other concerned bodies to continue their support to ensure a broader participation of Africa at the Platform.
- The draft Arica Common Position was generally well received. Appreciating a participatory and inclusive approach followed in its development, participants requested to follow the same approach moving forward with the consultation process, which is expected to culminate at the meeting of the African delegates on the margins of the Global Platform.
- Few comments and suggestions made on the draft Arica Common Position are as follows:
  - Remove the figure (over 40 million people) from paragraph 1 under # 1 (**Preamble**) as it might be controversial and is expected to change by the time when this document is finalized and presented;

- Indicate those additional five targets in # 3 (**Baseline situation...**);
  - Modify # iii as follows: *Strengthen partnerships with civil society, youth, women, local actors, private sector, academia, and other actors for coherent and coordinated support in the implementation of the Programme of Action;*
  - Include the need for **strengthening implementation capacity on the continent** under # 4- commitments; and
  - Include a call for support (technical and financial) from the international community (especially from developed countries) for effective DRR in line with the Sendai Framework and the Programme of Action.
- The event was also a great opportunity for us to bring together two structures of the Commission-Rural Economy and Agriculture and Political Affairs-which are critical for ensuring effective implementation of Sendai Framework and Programme of Action. Economic Affairs, Communication Unit and other structures of the commission were also directly or indirectly involved in the organization of the event.

## **FOLLOW UP ACTION**

- Continue to work closely with AUC and the African Permanent Missions to ensure broader participation of Africa at the 2017 GP; and
- Follow-up on the finalization of the Africa Common Position to the 2017 Global Platform (including by incorporating the above inputs from the briefing session).

## **CONCLUSION**

The briefing session was generally a great success, including in terms of reaching out to all targeted audiences. The turnout in particular was very good, indicating a growing interest in disaster risk reduction among a wide range of stakeholders. Above all, the forum was a great opportunity for UNISDR to increase its visibility. Given the importance of such a forum in supporting our future work, it's important that we ensure its continuity by organizing a similar event at least twice a year.

*Mathewos Hunde, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017*