

Statement from the Scientific, Technical and Academic Communities

(Africa-Arab Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, Tunis, Tunisia).

We participants, drawn from the Science, Technology and Academic community from across Africa, have met and discussed our roles in implementing the Sendai Framework and other development agendas relevant to Africa.

We particularly commend the AUC for progress towards establishing an African Science and Technology Advisory Group for Disaster Risk Reduction.

We also acknowledge our roles in strengthening disaster risk-related science and technology, and in advancing risk knowledge and skilled capacity in managing current and future risks.

Specifically:

1. We will expand our efforts to deepen *understanding of disaster risks*, including climate change projections in Africa and beyond through collaborative, integrated and transdisciplinary disaster risk scholarship and research across all levels, including transboundary and regional scales.
2. We will continue to advance *disaster risk governance* through:
 - a. active participation in local, (sub)national, regional and continental processes, including national platforms and the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction,
 - b. creation of skilled human capital that is 'fit-for-purpose' for Africa's changing risks, and;
 - c. enhancing multi-stakeholder dialogue and sharing of experiences and best practices for integrating actions in DRR in all areas, including the climate change adaptation, and sustainable development domains.
3. We will accelerate *investment in skilled human capital for disaster risk reduction and resilience* through disaster risk-related education and capacity building that prioritises women and youth, especially in post-disaster and post-conflict situations and in contexts facing conditions of duress.

4. We will expand efforts in strengthening capabilities in *disaster preparedness, response and 'building back better'* by:
 - a. drawing on our existing risk knowledge and relationships, as well as active participation in post-disaster needs assessments as well as post-disaster recovery research,
 - b. adjusting curricula, course content and teaching modes to incorporate new risk knowledge, and;
 - c. engaging with decision makers with the view of raising awareness and influencing DRR policies, laws and strategies.

In this context;

1. We call for concrete policies, processes and resourcing, including by the AUC, UNISDR, the regional economic commissions and national governments, for Africa's higher education institutions and research bodies to:
 - a. play greater leadership and technical roles in the full spectrum of *disaster risk research*, and;
 - b. develop *new disaster risk-related curricula* as well as explore innovative teaching methods, including on-line learning and distance education.
2. We call for the development and introduction of *policy and practical implementing mechanisms* at regional and national levels that strengthen synergies between Disaster Risk Management structures and Ministries of Higher Education as well as Ministries of Science and Technology.
3. We call for urgent introduction of *financial support mechanisms for disaster risk-related student funding* (especially for women) to enable sustainable skilled human capital development in at-risk countries.
4. We call for policy revision of resilience-building and 'build-back-better' funding mechanisms to include and prioritise skilled human capital development in disaster reduction.

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