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The Institutional Basis for Disaster Risk Reduction in
Africa: Progress, Challenges and Opportunities

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1. Progress in developing the institutional base for DRR in Africa – some trends

1.1 Key features

- Uneven progress in institutional landscape: policy/strategy, legislation, plans/programmes
- Few countries have full complement of institutional instruments
- Diversity of institutional homes for DRR units at national and sub-regional levels
- **Most progress:** national disaster management organizations (including mechanisms that function as National Platforms):
  - government institutions with low multi-stakeholders involvement
  - more focused on response
  - most lack policies and programmes
  - weak capacity and low resources
- **Least progress:** policies/strategies and legislation
1.2 Legislation

• all countries have some existing legislation that contain issues relating to disaster management

• legislation is scattered over many pieces of law in different sectors

• most are establishment legislations

• most of the existing legislation covers mainly disaster response and emergency management

• most lack/ have inadequate:
  – provisions of clear responsibilities, entitlements, sanctions and remedies for DRR actions by different actors and various levels
  – provisions for coordinated implementation across sectors and location
  – benchmarks for action
  – procedures/systems for feedback and evidence-based monitoring and assessment.
1.3 **Programmes**

- recognize roles of non-state entities and communities
- limited devolution of responsibilities, authority, competencies resources
- programme management relies on command and control and authoritarianism instead of self-consent and appeal to personal interests

1.4 **Regional and sub-regional levels**

- AUC making progress in integrating DRR in programme of NRM, agriculture and rural development, climate change
- AU, AMacen, AMCOW have DRR as themes for Ministerial Conferences.
- Regional Platform established
- RECs have/are developing sub-regional DRR strategies/policies, programmes and mechanisms, including staffing DRR units
1.5 Diversity of institutional homes for DRR units at national and sub-regional levels

National level: location of the national disaster management authority within the administrative structure of government

• Office of the President/Prime Minister
• Statutory establishments or departmental agencies under ministries
  – the most common: interior/home affairs – DRR as issue of national security
  – defence
  – social affairs
  – local government
  – agriculture and food security
• Autonomous statutory bodies
• Civil protection department

Gabon: only country with ministry created specifically and exclusively for DRR.

Sub-regional level:
• ECOWAS: Humanitarian and social affairs
• ECCAS: Economic sphere
• SADC: Political and defence affairs
2. Challenges

2.1 Development of institutional mechanisms, instruments, processes

- Developing comprehensive policy frameworks that establish an integrated and multi sectoral approach to addressing risks from multiple hazards

- Transforming/orienting civil protection Acts into disaster reduction legislation

- Making DRM plans follow formats/structures of conventional management plans: objectives, strategic focus, resources, activities, responsibilities, timeframe, plan risks, and, monitoring and evaluation

- Ensuring national platforms are
  - multi-sectoral and inter-disciplinary
  - providing policy guidance for national disaster risk reduction.
  - actively and effectively coordinating DRM actions at all levels of the national territory
2.2 Improving effectiveness and efficiency of institutional mechanisms

2.2.1 Cognition and conviction

- Knowledge/understanding of DRR: by policy makers, planners, expenditure managers, legislators, educationists, private sector, civil society

2.2.2 Capacity

(a) Growing human and institutional skills, competencies and capabilities

(b) Physical and financial resources

(c) Developing the community of practice

(d) Making a convincing case for investing in DRR mechanisms/programmes

  - beyond the evidence of cost of disasters and value of DRR to decision-making on funding of DRR

(e) Leveraging complementary opportunities, resources and capacities

  - harnessing/strengthening traditional and local resources
  - integrating DRR and CRM
2.2.3 Governance

- Emphasizing rights, responsibilities, enforcement, accountabilities
- Recognizing the centrality, responsibility and role of the individual in reducing risk
- Re-orienting top-down institutional approach and agency-centered/implemented DM programmes:
  - decentralized multi-stakeholder partnerships that balances institutional roles and capacities with those of the individual and groups

2.3 Regionalism

- inter-country risk information exchange
- common resource management (e.g. riverbasin/watershed management)
- cross-border pandemic control coordination
- sub-regional institutional roles/support
- development of sub-regional disaster reduction centres
3. Opportunities

• Expanded knowledge base with increasing accessibility
• Increasing national awareness of DRR and need to invest
• Improving regional milieu (AUC; RECs;)
• International supportive environment; including GFDRR; Track II support focus countries; EU DRR Strategy; UN system, bilaterals
• Climate change and CRM opportunities (awareness; risk knowledge; capacities and resources)