

**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
SECRETARIAT**



2017 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction

Cancun, Mexico 22-26 May 2017

STATEMENT OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates; Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is an honor to be given the opportunity to speak at this 2017 Global Platform on DRR.

On behalf of the EAC Secretary General, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko, I wish to thank the UNISDR for inviting the East African Community to this conference. The EAC Secretariat wishes to congratulate the Government of Mexico for the excellent hosting and the reception accorded to participants during the 2017 Global Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction here in Mexico. We appreciate the invitation extended by UNISDR in conjunction with the government of Mexico and are pleased to participate and contribute to the on-going process of implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR.

The East African Community is one the Africa Regional Economic Communities composed of the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan; and the United Republic of Tanzania, with a population of more than 160 million people. The EAC is anchored on a Treaty for its establishment signed in the year 2000 and four pillars of Integration which include; Customs Union signed and ratified by all Partner States by 2004, Common Market Protocol by 2009, Monetary Union by 2013 and ultimately a Political Federation for which negotiations are ongoing and expected to follow as the highest level of the integration process. Implementation of the first three Protocols is ongoing.

The region is prone to multiple disasters, high vulnerability compounded by low coping and adaptive capacities. Disasters are increasing in number, frequency and severity in the region because of escalation of hazards related to hydro-meteorological events such as droughts, floods and landslides, hailstorms in particular. These hazards are predicted to increase with climate change and natural phenomena that will further worsen the incidence of associated disasters in the region.

The year 2015 presented an excellent opportunity for synergizing on disaster risk reduction through the anticipated global frameworks and agreements on the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction with adoption of the Sendai Framework (2015-2030).

As Nations have embraced the implementation of the Sendai Framework, it is important to recall progress made by EAC towards its achievement to date. They tackle various dimensions of disaster management and demonstrate the region commitment and priority as much as they can afford.

Chairperson,

EAC Recognizes that Disaster Risk Reduction is key to Sustainable Development and value the need to emphasize on building resilience to Communities and that the achievement of key sustainable development objectives, like the end of extreme poverty, as highlighted by the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), cannot be achieved without effective management of risk. EAC therefore committed to championing DRR as a cross-cutting matter in the Eastern Africa region as has been demonstrated by the high level political will and action from EAC Policy organs (HOS Summit, Council of Ministers and the East Africa Legislative Assembly)

EAC has made significant achievements and milestones on addressing disaster risk reduction in accordance with the EAC Treaty for the establishment of the Community and its related Protocols mainly, the Protocol on Environment and Natural Resources Management of 2006 (Article 35) and the Peace and Security Protocol of 2013 (Article 9) amongst others.

We have laid elaborate Strategies for Mainstreaming DRR Issues and established key institutions and mechanisms to carry forward the work. We also developed programme portfolios on DRR in key areas pertinent to the DRR and development agenda of the region. EAC has also in place Early Warning systems (Food Security, Conflict management and Meteorology) , climate hotspots maps , a Climate Information Network and User Interface that can assist to respond to the needs and priorities and guide the implementation of the Sendai Framework.

EAC has instituted disaster risk reduction frameworks by establishing and operationalization a DRR Sub-regional Platform and Working Group under the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources and a DRR Sub-regional Platform and a Disaster Risk Reduction Unit established by the Council of Ministers to be hosted under the Secretary General's Office for timely action.

Key milestones include development and enactment by the East African Legislative Assembly of the East African Community Disaster Risk Reduction Bill, 2016, making EAC the 1st Regional Economic Community to legislate on Disaster Risk Reduction, paving way for the region to take necessary disaster preparedness, management, and protection and mitigation measures as well as in handling disasters in a more co-ordinated way. I am pleased to inform you that the EAC DRR Bill, 2016 was passed by EALA on 10th March,

2016; the next stage is the process of Assent by the EAC Heads of State in line with Article 63 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. In that regards, the EAC DRR Bill is currently under consideration by Partner States officials.

Chairperson,

However a number of challenges still remain as economic losses and damage continues to increase, especially in hazard-exposed areas (earthquake and landslide prone areas; drought and floods prone areas). Hence disasters have remained a challenge, poorly planned and managed urban development, environmental degradation; poverty and inequality continue to drive rapidly-increasing loss and damage associated with extensive risk. This is exacerbated by climate variability, which is impacting key sectors including water, agriculture, health, wildlife and tourism, energy and infrastructure.

At national and regional Levels, resources are limited to support: DRR/M Programmes including ; the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction into education curriculum; the development of regional emergency response plans; the development of web portal for depositing Disaster Risk Reduction and other related emergencies; (iv) the operationalization of the established Disaster Risk Reduction Unit at the EAC Secretariat; strengthening and harmonizing existing regional early warning systems; mapping out disasters evacuation centers in Partner States.; and harmonise mechanisms and coordination in addressing transboundary hazards.

Chairperson,

EAC wish to reiterate its commitment to create the necessary conducive and enabling environment to strengthen resilience of communities to disasters to ensure sustainable development and poverty eradication, and to integrate, as appropriate both disaster risk reduction and building of resilience into policies, plans and programmes.

We are ready and committed towards supporting implementation of the Sendai Framework by supporting EAC Partner States through the process of signature of the EAC DRR Bill to pave way for its early entry into force, and aligning its existing DRR Instruments to the Sendai Framework as well as fast tracking the process for enacting a Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Bill with Heads of States.

The East African Community calls upon all our partners, to join EAC in walking the talk in order to have more actions to support the communities that have entrusted us to serve them. EAC also wishes to recognize with appreciation the continual support on implementing DRR at the sub-regional level provided to the RECs through the UNISDR Africa Regional Office, the African Union Commission, the Government of Japan and other Partners and look forward to continuous cooperation and support from international mechanisms and Partners.

Thank you for your kind attention.