



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

THIRD UNITED NATIONS WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (WCDRR 15) 14-18 MARCH, 2015 SENDAI-JAPAN

EAC Statement by Hon. Jesca Eriyo Deputy Secretary General Productive and Social Sectors

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates; Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is an honour to be given the opportunity to speak at this 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. On behalf of the EAC Secretary General, Amb. Dr. Richard Sezibera, I wish to thank the UNISDR for inviting the East African Community to this conference. The East African Community is one of the Regional Economic Communities and Building Blocks of the African Union; composed of the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, with a population of more than 143m 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 2010, Common Market Protocol by 2011, Monetary Union by 2014 and ultimately a

Political Federation for which negotiations are ongoing and expected to follow as the highest level of our integration process. Implementation of the first three Protocols is ongoing.

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates; Ladies and Gentlemen;

Disasters pose a huge threat and risks to efforts towards socio-economic development and realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The frequency and intensity of climatic based disasters as well as resource scarcity based disasters is on the rise as a result of climate variability and change shocks. Other underlying factors include poverty, low levels of awareness on disaster risks and responses; and weak and uncoordinated policy measures and limited capacities in disaster preparedness amongst others across the world.

The EAC 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 will further worsen the incidence of associated disasters in the region. In addition to disasters.

The year 2015 presents 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

As the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) draws to a close, and in developing the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, it is important to recall progress made by EAC towards its achievement to date. They tackle various dimensions of disaster management and humanitarian action and demonstrate the political commitment and priority as much as they can afford.

Hence the EAC Mission which is to widen and deepen Economic, Political, Social and Cultural integration in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments. The EAC prioritises the Economic integration through the implementation of the Custom's Union and Common market Protocol as a result, the region today registers an average of 5% annual economic growth.

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.

Our countries have made some progress across all HFA Priority Areas including Policy, Institutions, National Meteorological Services and Early Warning Systems

At the regional level; the EAC has enacted and ratified the EAC Protocol on Peace and Security; the EAC Climate Change Policy and Food Security Action Plan; the EAC Climate Change Master Plan; the Draft DRRM Bill and Draft Climate Change Bill are at advanced stages of completion. The East African Legislative Assembly committee on Agriculture Tourism and Natural Resources is actively involved in legislative work.

We therefore have laid elaborate Strategies for Mainstreaming DRR Issues and established key institutions and mechanisms to carry forward the work. These include the East African Science and Technology Commission, the Lake Victoria Basin Commission, the inter-University Council for East Africa, the Civil Aviation Safety

and Security Operation, the East African Early Warning Mechanism, the East African Maritime Security Operations Mechanism among others.

The EAC has established the EAC Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group, the EAC Disaster Risk Reduction Platform and EAC Disaster Risk Reduction Unit

However a number of challenges still remain;

Economic losses and damage continues to increase, especially in hazard-exposed areas (Coastal 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.

I am also pleased to note that there is already a consensus on the need for the new framework to build on the existing elements of the HFA and to introduce the necessary innovations to address the challenges of increasing risks over the next 20 to 30 years including integration of climate change adaptation.

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 welcomes the draft framework that recognizes the roles and responsibilities of each and every country and the need for

engagement for Financial and technical support, especially to vulnerable communities as crucial to reducing the risks and building Resilience of Communities.

The document should ensure commitment on development cooperation, the principle of common but differentiated responsibility and Should Include poverty and hunger eradication commitments.

Chairperson,

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 for Agriculture and Rural Economy and JICA.

EAC wishes to express her commitment in 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)and hopes and welcomes for continuous cooperation and support from international mechanisms and Partners.

As I conclude, I take this opportunity to congratulate the co-chairs for their leadership and the Government of Japan for hosting this Conference.

“Ganbappe” (Let us make it), Sendai, “Ganbappe” Sekai (world).

Thank you for your kind attention.