



**OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY H.E. MRS. TUMUSIIME RHODA
PEACE, COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND
AGRICULTURE, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION, TO THE FIRST
INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR
WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION
14-15 JULY 2014
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

Excellencies,
Heads of delegations,
Distinguished guests and participants,

It is an honour for the African Union Commission to be represented here by myself and my delegation. We join the AU Member States represented here. This is an eloquent expression of the seriousness with which Africa takes disaster risk reduction matters.

Africa has been confronted by a broad range of natural and human induced hazards and associated risks and disasters and, considering their long-term socio-economic impacts, droughts and floods are by far the most damaging of all natural disasters impacting on Africa. According to the Africa Disaster Risk Reduction Status Report, since the turn of the decade (2011 and 2012), 147 recorded disasters including 19 droughts and 67 flood events affected millions of people across Africa and caused 1.3 billion US Dollars in economic losses.

On average, almost two disasters of significant proportions have been recorded every week on the continent since 2000. Climate variability and change will continue to increase the frequency, intensity, spatial extent, and duration of natural and human induced disasters including droughts and floods.

Ecosystem degradation, deep rooted poverty, population growth, urbanization, and dependence on rainfed agriculture are also among those major factors contributing to increased vulnerability and amplifying the effects of disasters especially on livelihoods of most vulnerable groups including women, youth and children, elderly people, and people with disabilities in Africa.

Realizing the fact that natural and human induced hazards and associated risks and disasters are major impediments to the development of the African continent, Heads of State and Government endorsed an overarching Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2004 and the extended Programme of Action in 2011 for its implantation in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action. We believe that as we grapple with the challenges posed by disasters, we also need to collaborate with other regions of Planet Earth for a safe world.

The African Union Commission has been providing political leadership, coordination, and further established and operationalized regional mechanisms like the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to facilitate implementation with engagement and participation of all relevant stakeholders, both public and private, in disaster risk reduction.

It is worth noting that the implementation of the Programme of Action in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action has led to a paradigm shift from crisis management to risk management and heightened political commitment, created public awareness and helped put in place policy, legal and institutional frameworks and other mechanisms for disaster risk reduction on the African continent.

While strengthening efforts towards accelerating the implementation of the Programme of Action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action, the African Union Commission has been working very closely with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction under the able leadership of H.E. Margareta Wahlstrom, and with other partners to facilitate the consultative process towards the development of Africa's Contribution to a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

I am pleased to report that the consultative process culminated at the 5th Africa Regional Platform and the 3rd Ministerial Meeting for Disaster Risk Reduction held from 13 to 16 May 2014 in Abuja, Nigeria with the endorsement of the Summary Statement and Declaration on Africa's contribution to a post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Voluntary Stakeholder Commitment.

Africa's contribution to a post-2015 framework will be deliberated upon by the African Union Summit in January 2015 where it is expected to be adopted at the highest level. The Africa's contribution is based on the following three pillars: (i) **Regional risk factors and institutional frameworks**; (ii) **Integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation**; and (iii) **Investments in disaster risk reduction**.

Given the adverse impacts that Africa endures from disasters and realizing the fact that, if fully implemented, the Africa position on the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction would bring a marked difference in reducing and preventing disaster risks and building resilience on the continent; and considering the critical role it will play in realizing the African Union Agenda 2063, the Africa we Want, a long-term roadmap towards a continent that is peaceful, integrated, people-centered, and prosperous, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena, we request and hope that our contribution will be incorporated into the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

I also wish to report that as part of our continued commitment to advancing disaster risk reduction on the continent and promoting a coordinated and mutually reinforcing approach to the three global agreements in 2015, the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the new universal legally binding climate change agreement, the African Union Commission has prioritized and included disaster risk management among the pillars of its recently launched Africa's Common Position on the post-2015 development agenda.

Furthermore, the African Union Heads of State and Government, at their Summit in June this year in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, issued a Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods calls for mainstreaming of resilience and risk management into policies, strategies and investment plans. They reaffirmed their commitment to transforming the African continent through, among others, managing risk, seizing opportunities and strengthening resilience, thereby ensuring sustainable development on the continent as part of the spirit and drive rekindled by the Theme of the just-concluded 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU, ***Pan Africanism and African Renaissance***.

We trust that this PrepCom meeting will consider Africa's contribution to a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction and facilitate its integration into a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

The Commission wishes also to reaffirm its commitment to enhancing regional and international partnerships and supporting AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities towards accelerating the implementation of the Extended Programme of Action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR and its successor arrangement in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action; and a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction to be adopted at the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction scheduled for 14-18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan.

I thank you for your kind attention.