Africa Common Position to the 2022 Global Platform for DRR

24 May 2022, Bali, Indonesia
1. **Preamble**

Africa has made significant progress over the past three years since the last Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) held in 2019. Key policy decisions were made that further promote the DRR agenda on the African continent. These include the appointment of H.E. Filipe Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique as African Union Champion for Disaster Risk Management and the adoption of the **Nairobi Declaration on accelerating the path to achieving the goals and targets of the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa adopted** by the High-Level Ministerial meeting on DRR held on the side-lines of the 8th African Regional Platform for DRR.

In 2021, the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action Systems (AMHEWAS) Situation Room was operationalised along with two other situation rooms in African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD), based in Niamey, Niger and the IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC)'s Disaster Operation Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, respectively. The three situation rooms are part of the pilot phase of the AMHEWAS Programme. The next phase of the programme is being rolled out in African regions and countries in a networked approach. Forming the basis of the programme is an Africa’s Framework for Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action, which was endorsed by the respective African Union organs and finally adopted by the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government in February 2022. Significant progress was recorded in the other Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well. The Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) launched the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC). The Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS) also launched its Regional Climate Centre in Cameroon. Such achievements in the face of COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the indispensable role the Africa Centre for Disease Control (CDC) played in leading the continental response to the pandemic, signify progress towards resilience of African institutions in managing complex risks. More than ever, the African Union Heads of State and Government provided extraordinary leadership and political commitment, including making resources available for the response to COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected African countries whose vulnerability was exacerbated by other ongoing disasters. For example, in 2019 to June 30, 2020, the Ebola Virus Disease was ongoing in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) which recorded 3,740 cases with 2,287 deaths and 1,170 people cured, thanks to coordinated actions by the DRC government and partners. In March and April 2019, Southern Africa experienced two successive cyclones, Idai and Kenneth, which caused more than 1,000 direct deaths, a large number of injured people and disruption of livelihoods. In May 2021, Mount Nyiragongo volcano in the DRC erupted, causing about 32 deaths and affecting more than 280,000 people. Between January and March 2022, Mozambique was hit by Tropical Storm ANA, Tropical Depression DUMAKO and Cyclone GOMBE, which caused one hundred and fifteen (115) deaths and about nine hundred and forty-five thousand (945,000) affected people, in addition to several units of destroyed public and private infrastructure. A series of wildfires that occurred in Algeria during August 2021 killed more than 90 people. In February 2022, Madagascar was hit by four deadly cyclones, following each other in quick succession. The continent has also experienced recent floods in South Africa that have claimed hundreds of lives and caused damage to homes and infrastructure, leading to disruption of key socio-economic activities. Ongoing droughts in southern Angola and Greater Horn of Africa are reflection of the complex disaster risk challenges the African continent has to grapple with in short, medium and long-term.

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1 africacdc@africa-union.org
2 https://reliefweb.int/disaster/vo-2021-000059-cod
3 https://reliefweb.int/report/algeria/algeria-forest-wildfires-emergency-appeal-mdrdz007
In addition to the health impacts, the COVID-19 has had multi-faceted ripple effects on the economies, systems and communities of African Member States (MS). Most countries reported a drop in their GDP, significant loss of jobs and livelihoods, increased inflation, commodity shortages, decline in the tourism industry, rising poverty and inequality, drop-outs in school among other negative effects.

While the COVID-19 pandemic had induced significant socio-economic challenges, it also offered lessons and opportunities for African MS to strengthen their DRR policy and institutional architecture and coordination mechanisms. Seizing the opportunities COVID-19 pandemic, the continent developed an overarching COVID-19 Disaster Recovery Framework for Africa and Green Recovery Action Plan (GRAP). The implementation of these frameworks is expected to strengthen resilient recovery to COVID-19 and other disasters that the continent has experienced in recent years.

2. **Reflection on implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR**
Since the last Global Platform for DRR held in 2019, Africa has recorded significant progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR. Progress was made in the implementation of the commitments in the Africa Common Position presented to the 2019 Global Platform for DRR, decisions and priorities in the Tunis Declaration (2018), as well as the priorities of action of the Sendai Framework for DRR and the Programme of Action (PoA) for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR in Africa. Key achievements recorded include the following:

i. The Africa Regional Platform for DRR and the 7th High Level meeting on DRR were convened in 2021, resulting in the adoption of the *Nairobi Declaration on accelerating the path to achieving the goals and targets of the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa* which will further guide the continent in its implementation of the Sendai Framework. The Declaration includes decisions on the adoption of two key guiding documents:
   a. The Matrix of the Programme of Action (2021-2025) to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa; and

ii. The African Union launched the inaugural Africa Biennial Report for DRR on the 5th of August 2020. The report assessed progress in the implementation of the PoA. In addition to the production of the first biennial report, the AU Regional Module, covering indicators of the PoA, was created on the Sendai Framework Monitor. This was an outcome of the strong partnership and working relationship between the AU and the UNDRR Africa Regional Office. The launch of the inaugural report and the incorporation of the Regional Module into the Sendai Framework monitor mark an increased capacity in the continent to monitor and report on the Sendai Framework.

iii. In a positive development towards achievement of Sendai Framework Target G, as mentioned above, the 7th High-Level Meeting on DRR adopted the Africa Framework for Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems and Early Action. Further, the AU Decision making bodies adopted an institutional and operational framework for this first continental Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System, in which a detailed roadmap for a seven-year Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action Programme is enshrined. The continent also established a situation room for the Multi-Hazard Early warning situation room, which is now operational, producing continental watch and situation reports on a regular basis.

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iv. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hit the continent with multifaceted negative consequences, the AU, in collaboration with UN organisations operating in the continent, developed a COVID-19 Disaster Recovery Framework, which seeks to facilitate sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

v. The continent has drawn lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and MS and RECs in Africa have started to revise their DRR policies to reflect cognizance of the systemic nature of risk.

vi. There has been a notable improvement in the understanding of disasters particularly the interface between conflict and disasters. For this reason, countries are considering this aspect in their DRR policies, strategies and plans. Furthermore, the AMHEWAS Situation Room is in process of linking with the existing Continental Early Warning System on conflict and also with Epidemic Surveillance and intelligence.

vii. The increased awareness and understanding of disaster risk reduction has also contributed to the development of risk financing strategies and the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in various sectors. From cyclone-proof housing in Mozambique to Kafu Channel, an innovative drought resilience programme in Southern Angola - African MS have stepped up exemplary leadership in providing sustainable solutions to disaster risk. These programmes provide opportunities for learning and exchange of information among MS.

viii. Positive developments have also been noted in the area of policy, legal and institutional frameworks for DRR in Africa. The capacity of national DRR agencies and coordination platforms is being strengthened. National and sub-regional legislative and policy frameworks are being revised to mainstream DRR into development plans and climate adaptation and resilience initiatives.

ix. Due to increased advocacy and outreach initiatives, there has been an increase in partnerships for DRR initiatives at all levels. More partners have been supporting DRR activities and more resources have been channeled to DRR. There has been increased appreciation of the importance of the role of civil society, researchers, communities and other technical and financial partners in the implementation of DRR activities.

In spite of the progress, Africa still faces some challenges, key of which are the following:

i. Weak institutional capacity and inadequate legal frameworks in some of MS hinder effective implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa.

ii. Limited financial investment in DRR despite the positive developments in terms of partnerships and funding from various partners.

iii. The COVID-19 pandemic has hard hitting effects on all sectors of the AU MS Economies, revealed new vulnerabilities, exposed inequities and increased the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance. This has strained financial resources and hindered recovery from the effects of the pandemic as well as efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

iv. Notwithstanding the fact that progress has been made, there is still work that needs to be done in the area of data collection and sharing, including on disaster-related losses and damage. Some organizations working on DRR are unable to properly document and/or share
data required for the Sendai Framework Monitor, which makes it difficult to report on the targets. MS still have challenges in reporting direct economic loss due to disasters.

3. Priorities

Based on the context of the continent, and guided by the PoA, the Nairobi Declaration as well as other relevant AU Decisions, MS and partners will be prioritising the following in the next three years:

i. **Recovery from COVID-19**: The African Union MS take note of the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on human lives and economies and are cognizant of the urgency to develop and implement comprehensive and integrated recovery, prevention and risk reduction strategies, plans and programmes for achieving sustainable development for all.

ii. **Disaster Risk Governance, supported by regulatory and legal frameworks**: Inadequate DRR policies, legislative and institutional frameworks have negatively impacted the implementation of the PoA. MS reiterate the importance of developing and implementing DRR policies, strategies and plans that are aligned to the Sendai Framework and the PoA. MS also stressed the need to take into whole of society approach account climate change considerations and in this regard. It is also critical to ensure that DRR policies, strategies and plans are supported by strong continental, regional, national and sub-national platforms.

iii. **Establishment and operationalisation of the MHEWEAS at all levels**: It is necessary to harmonise existing MHEWEAS and to increase access to Early Warning information to decision makers and at-risk population to facilitate early action and support transboundary disaster risk management.

iv. **Investment in DRR**: Domestic financing is important to ensure national ownership and sustainability of DRR initiatives, as well as leveraging international financing for DRR.

v. **Enhancing the regional cooperation in risk management**: There is need to enhance the Regional and international in support of the PoA implementation at all levels and for effective transboundary disaster risk management.

vi. **Data collection and Disaster Loss Databases**: Assessment of the damage and loss caused by disasters is not effectively done due to absence of data collection systems on the ground. There is an urgent need to strengthen capacity for DRR data collection and reporting.

4. Commitments to implement the Sendai Framework for DRR

Guided by the PoA and the Nairobi Declaration on accelerating the path to achieving the goals and targets of the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa, Member States and DRR stakeholders hereby make the following commitments:

- **To provide adequate, dedicated and predictable resources for DRR**, including through increasing domestic budget allocation and strengthening resource mobilization, to implement the PoA in general and priorities of the Nairobi Declaration in particular.
- **To accelerate the operationalisation of the AMHEWAS at all levels and in order to improve capacity of climate information services for effective early action and transboundary risk management.** In this regard, they also welcomed the announcement of the ambitious goal by the UN Secretary General to protect everyone on Earth by early warning systems
against increasingly extreme weather and climate change within the next five years, and emphasised that this effort should build on existing initiatives, including those in Africa.

iii. To rollout and implement the COVID-19 Disaster Recovery Framework for Africa.

iv. To ensure the development of robust national and sub-regional disaster risk governance systems, backed by regulatory and legal frameworks that will enable institutions to align disaster risk reduction policies, strategies and plans to the Sendai Framework and the PoA and ensure their implementation.

v. To ensure cohesion between DRR and climate change policies and strategies in support of risk informed, resilient sustainable development.

vi. To strengthen investment in resilient infrastructure by mainstreaming infrastructure related considerations into DRR policies and development programmes.

vii. To strengthen capacity for the generation, access and application of quality and disaggregated data and indigenous knowledge.

viii. To actively participate and contribute to the mid-term review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 in Africa and the Africa Biennial Report on DRR.

ix. To strengthen partnerships and cooperation by intensifying regional, sub-regional, national, and sub-national coordination mechanisms, as well as North-South, South-South cooperation, to include partnerships with local communities, civil society organisations and the private sector.

x. To intensify efforts to strengthen the capacity of DRR institutions at all levels and ensure full engagement of local communities, women, youth, persons with disabilities, the private sector, among others, in the design and implementation of interventions aimed at building resilience.