

4th African Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

**Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania
13-15 February 2013**

PROVISIONAL DRAFT Summary Statement

Preamble:

Over 250 participants from over 45 African countries gathered in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania for the 4th African Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction from 13-15 February 2013. Many stakeholders from governments, intergovernmental regional organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors, UN, academic and technical institutions, NGOs, and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, were joined by youth and community leaders, parliamentarians, mayors and local governments, media and the private sector - all sharing a common commitment to building resilience of African communities and nations to disaster risk and adapt to a changing climate.

1. This Statement has been built on a history of recommendations and decisions (annexed) that reflect the achievements of African institutions and African leadership in setting a global agenda, the internationally agreed Hyogo Framework for Action. Looking to the future of disaster risk reduction beyond 2015 (HFA2) we see Africa leading on the fostering of new partnerships globally with African cities and communities.
2. This 4th African Regional Platform (ARP) reviewed achievements and challenges in implementing the African Plan of Action, identified measures for fulfilling shared commitments through 2015 and looked ahead to consider both the changing character of vulnerability and innovations in building resilience.
3. The ARP was held back to back with the 5th Drought Adaption Forum (ADAF5): Reducing Drought Risk in Africa – Measuring Impact Strategizing for the Future, which focused on methodology and indicators to measure resilience at the community level.
4. The vision and recommendations put forward in this Summary Statement aim to guide all stakeholders to act within their areas of personal responsibility and within their institutional mandates. They specifically aim to inform regional and international action through the African Union and the Regional Economic Commissions in Africa and the Global Platform and consultations leading to HFA2.
5. In addition to the recommendations for regional and sub-regional action, and the focused insights from the featured sessions outlined below, and the annexed reports of working groups, partners, and stakeholders several overarching themes recurred.

6. **Africa is a dynamic continent in a period of rapid transformation characterized by changes in the economy, society and the environment.** These changes will be aggravated by climate change. Rapid economic growth can aggravate vulnerability; while sustainable approaches to development can have a profound impact on resilience. Therefore, the 4th African Regional Platform looked beyond 2015, to envision an HFA 2 that recognizes that risk is dynamic and that risk affects different segments of the community in different ways.
7. **Communities, in particular women and children, stand at the frontline of disaster risk and play an increasingly influential role in building resilience.** Renewed commitment to act in partnership with communities entails commitment to eliminating illiteracy, promoting education, promoting public health, food security and livelihoods (through formal and informal mechanisms) are key to resilience. New partnerships with media and the private sector can be instrumental in moving the agenda forward. No communities or vulnerable groups should be left behind. Rather the engagement of youth and the inclusion of physically-challenged persons brings new energy to disaster reduction at the local level. Community education and awareness call for coordination across sectors, between government and civil society. Strongly supported efforts to strengthen and engage local social institutions hold the promise of renewed public commitment to building resilience.
8. **Safe and equitable development outcomes in Africa are achievable.** In Africa, poverty eradication, including through access to markets and services, provision of infrastructure, eradication of malnutrition, particularly in the face of recurrent drought, is more likely to be achieved when disaster risk is addressed. The development sector, including sectorial ministries, private sector and bilateral and multilateral aid institutions are called on to integrate disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into their plans, programmes and actions and are called on to be more accountable for their decisions. National efforts to plan for and implement the post 2015 development agenda, Rio+20 and the HFA2 can be advanced through integrated approaches. Most urgently, humanitarian response and development actors should share responsibility by aligning their policies and coordinating their efforts.
9. **Extensive knowledge and technical and human resources are already available nationally and locally.** These must be recognized, and leveraged in our collective efforts to reduce disaster risk. African Academic and research institutions have been under-utilized for resilience building at grass-root level. Local knowledge, local leadership and community relations play a pivotal role in in strengthening coping capacities. Improved communications vertically between national and local level and horizontally among government sectors, can drive public awareness and sensitization about disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The media and civil society are essential partners in these endeavors.
10. **Targeting progress in disaster risk reduction efforts at all levels helps governments** better plan, assess progress and learn lessons in a more systematic and informed way. Efforts that support shared information, transparency and are defensible are highly recommended to be adopted at national level. Currently, the monitoring of HFA progress is not adequate. In

many instances, DRR policies and plans lack good indicators and targets, and only a few countries systematically account for disaster losses and estimate the impact of disaster on the overall economy and society. At the same time, those most vulnerable to disasters need good information on what disaster risk is and what happens to their lives and livelihoods when disaster strikes. While HFA-1 remains, HFA-2 should build on lessons and progress while providing a broader vision that embraces innovations and changing conditions. It should work for those most at risk; women in particular are disproportionately affected by disasters most often as a result of pre-existing inequalities. Targeting the vulnerable to ensure equitable planning and resourcing of disaster measures is strongly recommended as a key issue to be addressed for a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction in Africa.

11. Disaster risk reduction is now on the agenda of every government in Africa.

Governments have the responsibility to create the constitutional as well as institutional and policy environments, and legal frameworks, for building resilience and protecting the vulnerable, including decentralisation of disaster risks and strengthening of local and community structures. It is encouraging that as many as 40 countries in Africa have established national platforms or coordination mechanisms. These advances must be sustained and the growing popular awareness of disaster risk reduction must be converted into actions to systematically enhance implementation of the Africa Plan of Action and national, regional and international commitments.

12. Therefore, the 4th African Regional Platform calls for a commitment to focus on the following:

Disaster Risk Reduction at the Regional Level

Africa has seen high rates of economic growth in recent years with some African countries featuring in the fastest growing economies globally. However, the role of disasters in reversing the development gains cannot be ignored. While several DRR initiatives and efforts have been undertaken, more needs to be done to strengthen them. With this backdrop, the session focussed on strengthening DRR at regional level with following specific observations and recommendations:

1. Integrate DRR into development and humanitarian agenda in a coordinated and multi-sectorial manner.
2. Leverage existing efforts while initiating new ones.
3. Rio+20 put DRR as part of Sustainable Development framework. There is a need to have a relook at the human development agenda.
4. Strengthen working with civil society organizations to reach local communities.
5. Quantify risk and measure resilience.
6. Vulnerabilities are growing in Africa, while, high economic growth provides an opportunity to move forward sustainable development agenda including DRM.
7. Over 2/3rd of DRR/M funding comes from humanitarian actors. There is a need to balance this with development, including DRR/M.
8. A number of academic and research institutions exist in the continent with focus on DRR that can form the basis for developing a network of capacity development institutions for

training, research and information / knowledge management (Ref: Ministerial Recommendation No. 3, 2010).

9. Parliamentarians have taken the initiative to establish a network and define the Nairobi Plan of Action to advocate DRR through legislation.
10. More emphasis needs to be put on institutionalisation of multi-sectorial national platforms for DRR/M (Ref: Ministerial Conference, Recommendation No. 1, 2010).

Disaster Risk Reduction at the Sub-Regional Level

The session outlined the achievements made and challenges faced at sub-regional levels in Africa. These ranged from policy formulation and coordination to comprehensive DRR implementation. The following observations and recommendations were made by representatives of Regional Economic Communities:

1. It is encouraging to note that as many as 40 countries in Africa have established national platforms or coordination mechanisms. They still need to be strengthened.
2. Significant progress has been made on policy formulation, however, legislation and its conversion into adequately-resourced programmes still remains an issue.
3. DRR needs to be mainstreamed into poverty reduction strategies and programmes.
4. There is a growing need for systematic, multi-hazard, trans-boundary and standardized risk assessments and people-centered early warning systems and preparedness planning. Greater support should be given to risk data management and sharing risk information.
5. Incentives, such as technical support and funding, need to be provided to education sector to integrate DRR in school curricula more systematically.
6. Accountability should be enhanced through putting DRR in sub-regional monitoring frameworks.
7. Investments in capacity development at all levels, including communities, and DRR research need to be enhanced.
8. Investments in urban risk management and resilient cities should be enhanced.
9. There is an urgent need for strengthening coordinated resource mobilization.

Increased Political Commitment and DRR Investment

There is a broad awareness in Africa about the significance of DRR and its role in ensuring sustainable development and awareness. However, this awareness is yet to be fully translated into action by committing human, technical, institutional, political and financial resources. The session outlined concrete examples of DRR investments and its shift in focus from response and relief to resilience. The following observations and recommendations were made:

1. Political commitment is critical for making DRR a national priority.
2. Parliamentarians should work more closely with the executive with better fiscal management.
3. Donor commitment on long-term DRR funding needs to be enhanced.
4. Enhance efforts to engage more with the private sector in DRR, in particular building on their role in investments, leveraging their technical expertise through partnerships

5. It should be noted that DRR financing should not be the only concern but right linkages should be developed with relevant policies.
6. An integrated approach of DRR implementation is the key for enhancing DRR investments.
7. Systematic implementation of the Africa Plan of Action for DRR is required.
8. The institutional integration of DRR and climate change remains a major challenge. Clear responsibilities need to be identified and outlined.
9. There is a need for creation and strengthening of risk databases and its wider dissemination by change agents (media, government, etc.).

Risk identification, Monitoring and Early Warning

Risk knowledge contributes to achieving HFA targets through providing strategic policy guidance and informing DRR implementation. However, gaps between risk information and its end-users have been observed, while both generation and dissemination of risk knowledge remains a challenge. The session made the following observations and recommendations:

1. Communities should be at the centre of DRR as they know how risk develops and how it affects them. Community education and awareness on DRR should be integrated across sectors and is coordinated between government, civil society and general public.
2. Resilience is a coping mechanism of the society. Disaster risk profiles inform what makes communities resilient.
3. To finance DRR efforts, mobilisation of local resources should be complemented by external support.
4. DRR should be considered an investment rather than expenditure.
5. There is a need for standardization of risk assessments in the continent.
6. Existing regional and sub-regional technical centers in the continent can support replication of risk assessment and early warning systems.
7. Disaster preparedness is more effective when backed by contingency funds.
8. Translating early warning into early action remains a challenge.

Resilient Cities in Africa

Africa has witnessed extremely high urbanisation rates which parallels its economic growth, at the same time, poses critical challenges for DRR, largely exacerbated by climate change. The session brought forward initiatives undertaken to address urban risks in the region and build urban resilience. The following observations and recommendations were made:

1. Urban areas, as not only the centres of infrastructure and assets, but also of growing disaster risks, deserve high multi-sectorial (including health) DRR attention.
2. Informal settlements and slums in urban areas are exposed to the highest level of risks, while women and children living in such areas are the most vulnerable.
3. There is a need for robust operational urban risk management architecture with multi-sectorial groups and developing capacities through building skilled human capital.
4. Intra-country coordination between national and local authorities needs to be enhanced, including decentralization of urban governance.

5. There is a need for coordinated urban risk assessments and mapping as part of a comprehensive urban risk information system for development planning.
6. Urban structural measures and services (e.g. drainage and sewerage systems) should be complemented by non-structural measures like development of and adherence to building codes for urban planning.

Reducing risk: Climate change adaptation and emerging regional challenges

Most of disasters losses in Africa are associated with weather-related shocks. Climate change doesn't only have a direct impact through disasters but also through increasing socio-economic vulnerabilities of communities. The session aimed at identifying and assessing the challenges and opportunities for integrating CCA and DRR in Africa. The following observations and recommendations were made:

1. DRR and CCA integration is vital to achieve synergized programme implementation:
 - Institutional segregation of CCA and DRR poses practical implementation challenges. Therefore, there is a need to develop conjoined policies that integrate DRR and CCA and hence pave way for institutional integration.
 - There is a need to enhance skills for short-term weather predictions and medium-term forecasts through strengthening of regional and national institutions and leveraging existing global and regional climate information facilities. This in turn should inform DRR strategies and programmes.
 - User-friendly and user-customized climate information enhances effectiveness of its application.
 - Note and support the regional programmes and initiatives in Africa that will contribute to DRR in Africa. These include ClimDev, WMO Global Framework Climate Services (GFCS), African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET), WHO's Health Sector Regional Strategy, etc.
2. Integrate gender-responsive perspectives, protection and equity in DRM:
 - Women have a pivotal role in household-level food security. This, when linked to their dependence on natural resources and with prevailing gender relations and inequalities in a society, can inform DRR and CCA strategies.
 - There is a need for capacity development of women and women's groups to reduce risks; and to strengthen women's groups and dialogues between community-based women's organizations and local and national government officials.
3. Voice an uncompromising commitment to children, encourage them to contribute and assist in resilience building initiatives and take strong efforts to provide them with information and develop their capacities.