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## Dedicated Fridays of the Commission

**“Building Institutional and Community Resilience in the face of floods, droughts, conflict and economic shocks” in Africa:  
Lessons from the response to El Niño Eastern Africa and Southern Africa  
August 2016**

### I. Background

Since 2015 through 2016, severe droughts and floods triggered by one of the strongest El Niño weather events ever recorded have had devastating impacts on food security and the livelihoods of millions of people across the horn of Africa, Eastern Africa and Southern Africa. Also, compounded by conflict, falling oil and commodity prices and other structural vulnerabilities, they have had a heavy impact on the economic growth and social prospects of countries affected.

#### **Eastern Africa and the Horn of Africa.**

Since October 2015, the humanitarian situation in the region significantly deteriorated as a result of continuing climactic and economic shocks and an increasing level of conflict. The number of people in the region suffering from severe (crisis and emergency – IPC Phases 3 & 4) food insecurity and malnutrition stood as high as nearly 20.4 million. The evolving situation in Ethiopia, which has suffered its worst drought in decades, has increased the number of people requiring food assistance in the country from 8.2 million to 10.2 million between October and December 2015.

In parts of Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia and notably south eastern Ethiopia, the deteriorating humanitarian situation resulted in significant impacts on pastoralists and farmers. An upsurge in violence in parts of Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Burundi compounded by economic shocks including the decline of global oil prices and increasing food prices contributed to exacerbating existing chronic vulnerabilities.

The flooding effects of the El Niño south of the equator were less than anticipated, however they did contribute to a significant increase in outbreaks of water-borne diseases including cholera and other diarrheal diseases. The worst cholera outbreaks since the 1990s have been reported in Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia, and 31,000 cases of measles have been

reported in Ethiopia alone during 2015. In Burundi, some 1,158,439 malaria cases and 520 deaths have been reported for the period January to mid-February 2016, more than double than the same reporting period in 2015.

### **Southern Africa**

As a result of the El Niño, Southern Africa faced an intense drought. The current rainfall season has been the driest in the last 35 years across large swathes of Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Mozambique, Botswana, Swaziland, Madagascar, northern Namibia and southern Angola. At the same time, heavy rains have been reported in north-eastern parts of the region and over the Island States.

The drought and heavy rains add to ongoing factors that are straining communities across the region, including an economic downturn characterized by a fall in commodity prices and a weakening of African currencies (notably the South African Rand and Zambian Kwacha), increases in food prices, which are putting basic commodities beyond the reach of many southern Africans, and a poor 2014/15 harvest. Water scarcity has also caused dams across the region to run dry, leading schools, hospitals and businesses to struggle to get power, and people to face water rationing. In Swaziland, hydro power generation has been suspended and the country is relying on imports from South Africa.

### **The Response**

Responses to the impacts of the El Niño-related events have been varied across countries. For instance, the SADC declared a state of regional emergency as a clarion call for donors, national governments and the humanitarian community to act faster. Efforts by national governments and the international community have been combined to support emergency responses related to the ongoing drought and floods (agriculture and food security, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, etc.). In particular, the African Union, member states and Regional Economic Communities have contributed to the response in the spirit of African Solidarity. Humanitarian assistance has been scaled up and linked to development programs to mitigate the impact of droughts and floods, speed recovery and build the resilience of the people and communities affected.

In such context, this Dedicated Fridays of the Commission will provide a platform for the African Union and its partners reflect on the following key questions:

1. How can countries effectively mitigate adverse effects of drought and floods to curtail the looming humanitarian situation and be prepared for similar events in the future?
2. What early lessons can be drawn from the country specific responses to the range of natural and human-induced hazards and associated risks and disasters?

3. How can human and institutional capacities be in Africa and mind-sets changed to innovate and scale up to reduce the vulnerability of African countries to economic and financial adverse shocks that negatively impact the structural transformation process
4. How can humanitarian efforts be linked with development interventions drought to strengthen resilient agricultural methods as well as improve climate resilience in general?

## **II. Objective of the Dedicated Fridays of the Commission- Stakeholders Discussion.**

This Dedicated Fridays of the Commission- Conference/debate will pursue the following objectives:

- Objective 1: Under the leadership of the African Union, to engage a multi-stakeholders discussion on successes, opportunities and challenges in the response to a combination of droughts, floods, conflict and economic shocks in Africa.
- Objective 2: Under the leadership of the African Union, to take stock of country specific responses to droughts, floods, conflict and economic shocks and draw lessons to held scaling up in interventions.
- Objective 3: Under the leadership of the African Union, to reflect on the best ways of breaking the humanitarian-development divide by promoting complementarity between humanitarian assistance and development and promote community resilience.

## **III. Organization of the Dedicated Fridays of the Commission -Stakeholders' Discussion**

**1. Organizers:** Hosted by the AUC Department of Economic Affairs, the event is a collaborative initiative between the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the AUC department of Political Affairs.

On a background of the outlook of the humanitarian situation to be shared by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), based on the findings of its recent on the humanitarian situation in Eastern Africa and Southern Africa and an analysis of the response droughts and floods (related to the El Nino) , conflict and economic shocks in the region, the Stakeholders' Discussion will dwell on insights from reputable experts from lead institutions in development (the NCPA), humanitarian action (UNOCHA) and capacity building (ACBF) and engage in interactive discussions.

**2. Venue:** Headquarters of the African Union Commission, Addis Ababa

**3. Date/Time:** 19 August 2016 (10:00 am – 01:00p.m.)

**4. Speakers:**

- **Chair: Dr. Khabele Matlosa**, Director of Political Affairs, AUC.
- **Moderator :** UNOCHA-AULO
- **Session Speakers**
  - ✓ Humanitarian outlook in Eastern Africa and Southern – **Mr. Pete Manfield**, Regional director, OCHA-ROESA
  - ✓ Linking humanitarian assistance to CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans in countries affected by El Nino? **Dr. Augustin Wambo Yamdjeu**, Head of CAADP at the NEPAD Agency
  - ✓ Which capacities matter in building community resilience when natural disasters hit? – **Dr. Thomas Munthali**, Director, Knowledge Management and M&E, **African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)**.
  - ✓ Post –Istanbul: Leveraging the African Common Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness and the WHS Commitments to address floods, droughts, conflict and economic shocks in East and Southern Africa (**Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Director of Political Affairs, AUC**)

**5. Participants:**

- Staff Members of the African Union Commission
- Diplomatic mission in Addis Ababa
- AU Partners Group
- Researchers, and Academics and Think-Tanks in Addis Ababa,
- Members of the UN Liaison Team to the African Union,
- Members of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Sub-cluster ( RCM)
- Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- NCPA (NEPAD Coordination and Planning Agency)
- African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)

#### **IV. Reference documents:**

- **UNOCHA–ROESA, Humanitarian Outlook for the Southern Africa Region, March– August 2016.**
- **Southern African Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (RIASCO), Regional Outlook for the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region: recommendations for Humanitarian action and Resilience response: Recommendations for Humanitarian Action and Resilience Response, Version 3: April -**

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**August 2016**

Friday, August 19 <sup>th</sup> , 2016	
<b>09:30 – 10:00</b>	<b>Arrival and Registration of participants</b>
<b>10:00 –10:20</b>	<p><b>OPENING SESSION</b></p> <p><b>Welcome remarks by</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Director of Political Affairs, African Union Commission</li> <li>▪ Adoption of the Work Programme</li> <li>▪ Presentation of the Speakers</li> </ul>
<b>10:20 – 11:20</b>	<p><b>Topical Presentations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Pete Manfield, Regional director, OCHA-ROESA-</b> Humanitarian outlook in Eastern Africa and Southern</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Augustin Wambo Yamdjeu, Head of CAADP at the NEPAD Agency -</b> Linking humanitarian assistance to CAADP National Agriculture and Food Security Investment Plans in countries affected by <b>El Nino</b></li> <li>• <b>Dr. Thomas Munthali, Director, Knowledge Management and M&amp;E, African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) -</b> Which capacities matter in building community resilience when natural disasters hit?</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Director of Political Affairs, AUC) -</b> Post-Istanbul: Leveraging the African Common Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness and the WHS Commitments to address floods, droughts, conflict and economic shocks in East and Southern Africa</li> </ul>
<b>11:20 – 12:20</b>	<b>Plenary Discussions</b>
<b>12:20 – 12:30</b>	<b>Summary of Outcomes by the Chair</b>
<b>1:00 – 2:00</b>	<b>Cocktail</b>