

Concept Note

Amid increasing climate and disaster risks, how is Africa building its resilience?

An African Union (AU) led side event convened by African Union Commission (AUC) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the margins of the 25th Conference of the Parties (COP 25) to the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Date: 10 December 2019

Venue: IFEMA - Feria de Madrid in Madrid, Spain, Room 5

Time: 11:30 – 13:00

Background

Over the past 20 years, climate related disasters have increased exponentially in Africa. Although the mortality rate due to disasters is decreasing, the number of people affected, and the economic impact of disasters on the continent, is rising. This can be largely ascribed to improvements in development (including urbanisation) and economic activities. Despite these improvements, the economic and social growth achieved so far is very fragile and susceptible to climate risks and disasters hence negating the progress made towards achievement of national goals and overall attainment of Agenda 2063 and global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to the World Bank (2019), many African countries have made significant development achievements in the last few decades with annual growth averaging 4.5 percent, but increasing weather, water, and climate risks threaten these gains.

Since 1970, Africa has experienced more than 2,000 natural disasters, with just under half taking place in the last decade (World Bank, 2019).

The vulnerability of the African Continent was recently evident when more than 1000 people were killed across Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe due to Cyclone Idai. The World Bank estimates that the economic loss from cyclone Idai is around \$2 billion dollars. Cyclone Kenneth followed Idai in quick succession. This time Mozambique was struck again in addition to Comoros. Epidemics including Ebola are also a serious concern on the continent. The differentiated impact on men and women, vulnerable groups, minorities and migrants across the continent is exacerbated mostly by climate change, environmental degradation, unplanned urbanization, inequality, as well as disaster induced displacement and conflicts. Countries recovering from protracted civil wars and post disasters, and small island states are particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural hazards.

Building resilience to natural and human induced hazards have gained significant momentum on the continent. The African Union Commission (AUC) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) alongside African states have instituted normative frameworks to build resilience of African nations. These include development of strategies on Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change, Weather and Climate services, biodiversity and ecosystem-based solutions. The 50-year Pan African Agenda: The Agenda 2063 which was adopted in 2003 is an important ligament that coordinate

implementation of these resilience frameworks. Further opportunities have been made available by the adoption of global agenda such as Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda.

Translating these policies into action is being undertaken through overarching continental programmes on resilience. How is Africa building its resilience? Work on resilience building is gaining momentum on the continent. The policy environment is encouraging but implementation of resilience policies is faced with some technical and resource constraints. African states have to redouble their efforts in mobilizing domestic resources to achieve resilience targets. Similarly the international community should continue play its vital role in supporting resilience building in Africa. Additional efforts is required to build technical capacity of African states to build their resilience to climate change and disaster risks.

Objectives

The overall objective of the side event is to showcase Africa's efforts on resilience building. The event will examine ongoing efforts at policy and operational levels across the continent, discuss best practices, challenges and opportunities for synergy and better programming of resilience interventions.

The specific objectives are to:

- Increase visibility of continental programmes on resilience building to promote synergy with other programmes
- Share Africa's lessons, experiences and challenges to resilience building with a wide range of stakeholders on resilience
- Stocktake recommendations to enhance resilience building in Africa

Expected Results

- Policy recommendations on resilience building in Africa
- Awareness on programmes for resilience
- Experiences, best practices and lessons shared among stakeholders
- Enhance synergies and collaboration at regional level in particular

Target audience

- AU Member States
- RECs
- Global Resilience community
- Academia
- Private Sector
- Civil Society