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United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



PRESS RELEASE

Ethiopia and the African Union Commission celebrate IDDR 2017

Addis Ababa, 13 October 2017: The International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) was observed at the African Union Commission (AUC), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Under the theme “Home Safe Home! Reducing Exposure, Reducing Displacement”. The half day event was jointly organized by the Ethiopian Government (National Disaster Risk Management Commission), the African Union Commission (AUC) and other partners including UN Agencies and Civil Societies.

The event was attended by over 250 participants drawn from Federal and Regional Government institutions of Ethiopia, African Permanent Missions, AUC, Regional and country UN organizations, international and local NGOs, media, Youth Group, private sector and academia including more than 10 African Universities brought together by Periperi U.

The event was officially opened by H.E Mr Mitiku Kassa, Commissioner, National Disaster Risk Management Commission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, who said “the government of Ethiopia is implementing Sendai Framework and the Africa Programme of Action and is among the Member States that continue to make great strides in the context of its National Disaster Risk Management Policy and Strategy, in order to deliver on commitments to successfully achieve target (e) of the Sendai Framework”.

H.E. Mrs Amira El Fazil, Commissioner of Social Affairs at the AUC highlighted that “risk reduction should not end with establishment of policies and structures alone; they must work to yield results that reduce the number of people affected by natural and human induced hazards. This commemoration comes as yet another wake up call to the African governments and all stakeholders to take action that will see those policies being implemented”.

Mr Samba Harouna, representative of the UN Country Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, called for urgent action to translate the commitments made to meet the 7 targets of the Sendai Framework and the Africa Programme of Action, including target B, and thus reduce exposure, vulnerability, and displacement, and build resilience. Mr Samba also underlined that the UN system is fully committed to supporting Ethiopia and the African Union Commission in their efforts to advance the DRR agenda in the context of the Sendai Framework and the Africa Programme of Action.

Following the opening remarks, a video message from Mr Robert Glasser, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction, and other IDDR related videos messages were delivered to the audience.

Ms. Bina Desai, Head of Policy and Research at the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, made a presentation under the title “ *The hidden cost of disasters: displacement risk*”. “Disaster displacement risk is disproportionately affecting small island states and also Africa when we look at it in relation to population size. Disaster risk is mainly an economic concern in high-income regions such as North America, but a serious displacement – and therefore human – concern in Africa”. “To be able to address this concern, serious investment in stronger capacity for data collection, analysis and application is needed now”, she said

The panel discussion focused on reducing the number of disaster affected people with an emphasis on protection from displacement and building resilience against disaster risk.

The speakers were drawn from the Africa Union Commission (AUC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), UNISDR-Africa Liaison Office, National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), and Administration for Refugees and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) of Ethiopia. The panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Elvis Paul Tangem, from Africa Union Commission (Department of DREA).

Mr. Mathewos, UNISDR liaison Office to the African Union in Addis Ababa, highlighted the support being provided by UNISDR to the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, and Member States to their efforts to effectively implement Sendai Framework as an important instrument to reduce exposure, vulnerability, and displacement and build resilience to disasters in Africa. He also stressed the importance of ensuring coherence across all relevant international and continental post-2015 development agreements in achieving sustainable development and building resilience across the continent and highlighted the efforts made by UNISDR so far in this regard

Mr Gatkuoth Kai, Technical Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction, at the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture stated that African Union Commission has made significant progress towards operationalization of the Africa Programme of Action for the implementation of Sendai Framework. Mr. Kai further emphasized that such progress was made possible through the high level political commitments demonstrated by African Heads of State and Government and financial support from the European Union through the “Building Disaster Resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa Programme” a multi-year regional programme funded by the European Commission and being implemented as part of its cooperation with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States.

There was an exhibition by various agencies, including the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), National Disaster Risk Management Commission (NDRMC), UNISDR, IFRC, Red Cross Ethiopia, WFP, IOM, CRS, WVI, CCFC, Cord-Aid, Dan Church Aid (DCA), and Plan International to showcase their efforts and initiatives in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management particularly in reducing number of disaster affected people and displacement.

Advocacy materials, Banners, Posters, leaflets, and Flash Disks bearing the theme of the IDDR 2017 ‘Home Safe Home’ were distributed and displayed in strategic locations in Addis Ababa. All participants received flash disk that contain copies of key UNISDR’s publications, Africa Program of Action, Ethiopia’s DRM Policy, and other advocacy materials and message. The IDDR 2017 was adequately covered by the national media before and during the event

Ato Abera Kassa, Director, DRR Directorate of NDRMC highlighted the government’s commitment to work in collaboration with its development partners to mainstream the Disaster Risk Management into sectors strategies, plans and programmes.

1. Snapshots of Participants



2. Snapshots of Panelists and Moderator



3. Snapshots of Exhibitions



