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Diong takes over the leadership of ARC Group, promises continuity and scaled commitment to DRM in Africa

Johannesburg, September 01, 2020: Mr. Ibrahima Cheikh Diong has taken over the reins of the leadership of the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group, following his unanimous election by the ARC Conference of Parties (CoP) earlier in June 2020.



Mr. Diong, an African statesman from the Republic of Senegal, will serve as the ARC Group's Director-General (DG) in the capacity of United Nations Assistant Secretary General (**UN-ASG**) for an initial term of four (4) years.

Sharing his excitement for the role, the new ARC Group DG, who has over 30 years of professional leadership and management experience in Africa, the United States, Europe and Asia, stated that he is humbled and eager to bring his versatile experience to serve Africa in this capacity, *"I fully comprehend and appreciate the incredible mission and outstanding work of ARC. With my professional and highly efficient colleagues, we will work relentlessly to not only consolidate the impact of ARC's work in our current 34 member countries, but to also to scale up our disaster risk management interventions to the rest of the African continent."*

Mr Diong praised his predecessor for the uncommon leadership of the institution which has made ARC a continental and global leader in development insurance, *"I celebrate a great human being, Mohamed Beavogui, who is always at the service of Africa, for the excellent job he has done at both nurturing and developing ARC into a viable and recognised continental disaster risk management mechanism."* He also thanked the ARC Group Joint Board and the staff for a seamless transition noting, *"Never in my 30-year career have I experienced such a smooth, efficient, and highly professional handover process. This is a great example of a smooth leadership transfer in Africa."*

In her remarks during the ARC Group Joint Board Meeting where Mr Diong was also formally welcomed, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the Chairperson of the ARC Agency said, *"It is reassuring to know that the ARC Group is set for good continuity and even greater strides in the delivery of its continental mission. We have gone from providing disaster risk coverage to a handful of countries at the beginning, to the impressive number of countries we have in our pool today. We have also achieved remarkable governance reforms resulting in greater recognition of our work by various stakeholders. Ibrahima is an astute statesman and well-rounded professional; and I speak for the Group that we could not have been blessed with a more accomplished African to take this institution forward."*

A Civil Engineer by profession, the new ARC Group DG comes with a unique blend of expertise that cuts across, amongst other things, corporate and investment banking, structured and blended finance, financial engineering, business re-engineering, change management, resource mobilisation, partnership development, human capital development, public-private partnership design, merger and acquisition management, project management, environmental policy and impact assessment, water resources management, monitoring and evaluation management, strategic communication and planning, private sector development and infrastructure development

Together with Lesley Ndlovu, the CEO of ARC Ltd (the insurance arm of the ARC Group), Ibrahima Cheikh Diong is excited to be injecting new energy into the organisation and drawing from their combined wealth of experience to build on the foundations already laid by his predecessor. Mr. Diong is committed to working with the team to identify innovative ways to advance Disaster Risk Management and improve Africa's resilience to disaster hazards. By providing clear decisive leadership to the ARC Group, the new Group DG sees this as an opportunity to contribute significantly

to the development of Africa and deliver on ARC's mandate to help African governments improve their capacities to better plan, prepare, and respond to extreme weather events and natural disasters.

Mr Diong holds a Masters' degree in International Affairs (MIA) with specialisations in international finance and environmental policy management from the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University in New York City. This is in addition to a Bachelor of Civil Engineering specialising in water resources management from Hohai International University in Nanjing, People's Republic China among other professional and industry credentials. He is perfectly fluent in English, French, Mandarin Chinese and Wolof, with a working knowledge of Portuguese.

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About ARC

African Risk Capacity (ARC) ARC consists of ARC Agency and ARC Insurance Company Limited (ARC Ltd). ARC Agency was established in 2012 as a Specialized Agency of the African Union to help Member States improve their capacities to better plan, prepare and respond to weather-related disasters. ARC Ltd is a mutual insurance facility providing risk transfer services to Member States through risk pooling and access to reinsurance markets. ARC was established on the principle that investing in preparedness and early warning through an innovative financing approach is highly cost-effective and can save upward of four dollars for every dollar invested ex ante.

With the support of the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, France, The Rockefeller Foundation and the United States, ARC assists AU Member States in reducing the risk of loss and damage caused by extreme weather events affecting Africa's populations by providing, through sovereign disaster risk insurance, targeted responses to natural disasters in a more timely, cost-effective, objective and transparent manner. ARC is now using its expertise to help tackle some of the other greatest threats faced by the continent, including outbreaks and epidemics.

Since 2014, 37 policies have been signed by Member States with US\$74million paid in premiums for a cumulative insurance coverage of US\$544million for the protection of 54million vulnerable population in participating countries.

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