



KEY NOTE ADDRESS FOR COMMISSIONER H.E AMB. JOSEFA SACKO

FOR

THE AFRICA REGIONAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

17 November 2021

NAIROBO, KENYA

Your Excellency, Representative of Government of Republic of Kenya

Excellency My Sister Mami Muzitori, Representative of UN Secretary General and Head of United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Your Excellencies, African Ministers and Heads of Delegations responsible for Disaster Risk Reduction

Distinguished audience, ladies and gentlemen, all Protocols observed.

1. First and foremost, allow me to convey the warm greetings of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) who extends his gratitude to the people and the Government of the Republic of Kenya for accepting to host the 8th Africa Regional platform for DRR and the High Level Ministerial Meeting.
2. This demonstrates the commitment of the Government of Kenya to Disaster Risk Reduction and risk-informed development for a resilient Africa in a Covid-19 transformed world.
3. COVID-19 has transformed our world, including the way we understand disaster risk, governing disaster risk, financing disaster risk for resilience, and preparing and building back better in preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction.
4. We now understand better that a hazard affecting a country or a community in the far east or far west has significant repercussion for communities and countries across the globe.
5. We now understand better that one hazard connects with other hazards in an unprecedented fashion, further complicating appropriate actions.
6. For instance, COVID-19 has helped facilitated other disasters as attention and resources had to be diverted to responding to the pandemic. Furthermore, COVID-19 killed some of the top scientists who devoted their lives to finding cure to HIV/AIDs, Ebola, Cancers, and other natural hazard risks, inter alia.
7. Here in Africa, we lost to COVID-19 our own Dr. Justus KABYEMERA, a dedicated and humbled African Scientist and expert who had devoted his life to finding solutions to disaster and climate risks affected our continent, and his home nation Tanzania. May his soul continues to rest in peace. In memory of Dr. Justus, may I ask all of us to take a moment of silence.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. Even hazards coordinate and collaborate far better than us. Of course they have always been, however, COVID-19 has illustrated this fact quite explicitly.
9. As we have seen with hazards, we must ensure a multi-hazard governance and coordination approach. We must ensure better and coordinated implementation of Agenda 2063, Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, Sendai Framework, Paris Agreement, Sustainable Development Goals, Global and regional global health policies, New urban Agenda, Kampala Convention, and Agenda for Humanity, to mention a few.
10. We must build on existing continental, regional and national mechanism such as Africa Working Group for Disaster Risk Reduction, Africa Regional Platform, Sub-regional and national platforms, to strengthen coordination.
11. Over the years the African Union Commission and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction have jointly organised the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.
12. A high-level meeting of African Ministers responsible for DRR is convened at the end of each session of the platform. Each high-level session concludes with a ministerial declaration.
13. Since 2015, three ministerial declarations; namely Tunis Declaration, Mauritius Declaration and Yaoundé Declaration were adopted by the ministers and further endorsed by the African Union Executive Council.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

14. As you may recall, our last Regional Platform for DRR which was held in Tunis, Tunisia in **October 2018** back to back with the Africa Arab Platform for DRR, culminated to a ministerial declaration – the Tunis Declaration.
15. The Tunis Declaration requires among others institutionalisation of Disaster Risk Reduction in AUC structure, development of inaugural Africa Biennial Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, upgrading of Environment Division into a department, establishment of continental Multi-hazard early warning programme, establishment of Africa Youth Advisory Board on Disaster Risk Reduction and Science and Technology Advisory group, among others.

16. I am glad to inform you that all these have been achieved. We now have a new AUC structure and the environment Division is now elevated into Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy. I take this opportunity to introduce to you Mr. Harsen Nyambe who has been appointed as the new Director of the Directorate. Mr. Harsen brings decades of experience in environment and natural resources management, and, in particular, extensive experience in climate change and disaster risk management in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific.
17. I wish to further inform you that the DRR Unit is now formally instituted in the new AUC structure under the Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy. Similarly, the inaugural Africa Biennial Report on Disaster Risk Reduction was developed and launched by the President of the Gambia H.E. Adama Barrow on 5th August 2020.
18. The Biennial Report confirmed the usual suspect: disaster risk is on the rise. Dissecting analysis of risk shows that vulnerability is increasing, hazard exposure is increasing, and coping capacities are neither decreasing nor increasing – meaning our coping capacities are not aligned to the rising vulnerability and exposure.
19. To address the rising disaster risk, the Tunis Declaration calls for establishment of multi-hazard early warning system.
20. A multi-hazard early warning programme has been developed and implementation is ongoing. We will present the details of the programme during the course of this meeting.
21. Despite progress, disaster risk is on the rise on the continent and continues to undermine development gains. COVID-19 has further heightened the risk. The heightened risks require robust actions that must result to reduced disaster risk and losses by 2030.
22. The African Union Commission is working with RECs and partners to implement the following actions to address the disaster risk situation:
 - Operationalization of continental Situation Room for Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action
 - Development and operationalization Africa's Institutional Framework for Multi-Hazard Early Warning System and Early Action
 - Development of COVID-19 Recovery Framework for Africa

- Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance for Resilience in Africa regions and countries
 - Continued implementation of Sahel Resilience Programme
 - Developing a programme on mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in continental programme and project – this programme will culminate in an AU policy that makes it mandatory for any AU project or programme to take into account disaster and climate risk
 - Development of a roadmap for urban resilience to guide continental response to growing urban risks and disasters.
23. These actions are expected to have positive impacts in member states and communities
24. I wish to extend gratitude to our development partners that have been supporting us all the way. To mention a few, the European Union, Kingdom of Sweden, Italy and our technical partners including UNDRR, UNDP, CIMA research foundation, among others.
25. As I conclude, the African Union calls upon further collaborations and international cooperation to realise effective implementation and dividends arising from these actions at national and community levels.
26. These collaborations would need to seize the opportunities and growing enabling policy environment at continental, regional and national levels.
27. Once again, thank you for taking your time to participate in the 8th Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and you a fruitful deliberation.

Thank you
Obrigado
Merci
Asante Sana
Shukuran