

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### **Multi-hazard Early Warning for Early Action Programmes are making substantial progress in Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa**



Efforts to champion multi-hazard early warning for early action in Africa are already bearing fruit, according to the African Union Commission (AUC). A brief of the progress was presented at the opening of the high level ministerial meeting for Southern Africa integrated early warning and early action system initiative that took place in Maputo, Mozambique. The regional event is focused on the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

The high level meeting also supported the commitment by the United Nations Secretary General to have every citizen on earth protected by early warning systems in the next five years. The conference took place from September 5-9, and was co-organised by the AU Commission, the Republic of Mozambique, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) among others.

Addressing the ministerial session H.E. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, who is also the AU Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Champion, underscored reality and the impact of climate change in his country, while citing recent disaster events that resulted to significant economic losses and losses on human lives as well as impact on development gains. “Early Warning System initiative should be seen as a response to vulnerabilities and socio-economic problems in the face of risk with the aim of contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development goals” the President said.

In her (recorded) message at the ministerial conference, H.E. Amb. Josefa L.C. Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) of the AU Commission assured participants that the existing institutional and operational framework for multi-hazard early warning systems and early action; and its delivery programme of the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS) will bridge the gap in accessing available, timely and actionable early warning information to ensure that every person on the continent is protected by MHEWS. H.E. the Commissioner further emphasized on the importance of partnership so as to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the AMHEWAS. “The African Union calls upon the development and international partners, private sector, academia, and civil society organizations to support the implementation of the AMHEWAS at continental, regional, national and community levels”, she said.

“The African Union Commission strongly believes that the operationalization of a truly functional early warning systems combined with other risk reduction measures, will significantly contribute to reducing continental disaster losses by 2030, as envisaged in the programme of Action for the implementation of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 as well as Agenda 2063”, she underlined.

In his presentation during the ministerial segment, Mr. Harsen Nyambe, Director of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy of the AU Commission, underlined how the Africa Regional Africa Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the Programme of Action (PoA) for the implementation of Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 in Africa are significant in protecting development gains and contributing to the aspiration of Agenda 2063.

“In prioritizing multi-hazard early warning systems, the African Union Commission is implementing ClimSa Programme that provides early warning information for Disaster Risk Reduction, health, water, infrastructure and agriculture...”he recalled.

Prof. Petteri Taalas, Secretary General of WMO underscored the seriousness of climate change in Africa, citing the continuing rise of temperature on the continent, which surpasses the global average. The highest rate of sea level rise was observed in Africa by 2021, which impacted economic loses in some countries like Ethiopia, Madagascar and Zambia, he added.

Ms. Mami Mizutori, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) acknowledged the collaborative initiatives among different partners to extend the Early Warning System initiative to Madagascar, Comoros and Mauritius, while commending the SADC region for setting up the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operation Centre (SHOC) in Nacala, Mozambique.

Sharing the achievements, the AUC Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Technical Coordinator, Gatkuoth Kai referred to the Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Action System (AMHEWAS) as a significant milestone for the continent. The programme’s progress has already contributed to the establishment of situation rooms at the African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD)

in Niamey, Niger and Intergovernmental Authority on Development for Climate Predictions and Applications Centre (ICPAC) in Nairobi, Kenya, which are interoperable with the Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Action System (AMHEWAS) situation room at the AUC in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Already, the teams are working collaboratively and products such as the bi-weekly Continental Watch and disaster situation reports are issued and disseminated across the AU Member States.

Concluding the conference, the ministers adopted a declaration on the commitment of SADC to enhance Early Warning and Early Action in the region.

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