

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### SADC Member States Trained on the AMHEWAS Programme on Disaster Risk Reduction



Capacity building in multi-hazard early warning systems for early action in disaster risk reduction continues to gather momentum in Africa. The African Union Commission (AUC) recently carried out induction training on the Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Early Action (AMHEWAS) for the member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The training took place from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Welcoming the participants, Mr. Gatkuoth Kai, Technical Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Unit on behalf of the AU Commission stressed on the need to expedite implementation of the Programme of Action (PoA) for the Implementation of



Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa so as to reduce disaster losses. He pledged the commitment of the Commission towards the implementation of the PoA. Mr. Kai indicated that the development of the AMHEWAS programme is important towards reducing disaster losses and resilience

building. He added “the programme integrates the four elements of multi-hazard early warning system. These include risk knowledge, monitoring and warning services, risk communication and response capability.

The SADC Secretariat through its Liaison Officer, Ms. Nana Dlamini, was buoyed by the timeliness of the training. Ms. Dlamini said “the induction training builds up on the Integrated Early Warning and Early Action Conference that we held for SADC ministers two weeks ago-September 5-8 2022. One of the key messages from that conference is the operationalisation of the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC). This operationalisation is directly linked to early warning systems that exist in our member states.” Furthermore, Ms. Dlamini pointed out to the fact that multi-hazard early warning for early action has been a theme and proven actionable for the RECs over the past several months. She went further to recall the AUC joint assessment mission to Mozambique and the subsequent visit to Nacala where the SHOC is hosted. This was followed by SACOF 26 which also focused on early warning and early action, and soon the Secretariat will be supporting its member states in their development of national contingency plans in an upcoming conference. The regional body also stressed on the need for the generation of early warning information and called for the integral part of member states in this, meaning that they needed to be conversant with the generation of early warning information.

Speaking at the event, Ms. Katarina Moukkid from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Regional Office for Africa recognised the importance of the training as a key to continuity of the existing partnership between UNDRR and the AUC, and also recognised the roles of the SADC Secretariat, the CIMA Research Foundation and the government of Italy that provides financial support to AMHEWAS and the training... Ms. Katarina added, “This is the second phase of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) capacity building in Africa, spearheaded by UNDRR, AUC, and the CIMA Foundation with support from Italy. As UNDRR welcome the induction training as it builds up on the call by the UN Secretary General call for availability of the Early Warning Systems within the next five years.” Ms. Katarina also noted that over the recent past, there has been an increase in scientific and technological advances, which have also fast-tracked improvements in DRR. This in turn, necessitates the need to build the capacity of institutions, and also build people-centred early warning systems to ensure the complexity posed by disasters is understood and addressed comprehensively.

On his part Mr. Marco Massabo of the CIMA Foundation applauded the scientific and technical partnership with the AUC. He hailed the workshop for adding value towards engagement of African member states to the Continental Situation Room on DRR. He called for more resource and funds allocation towards disaster prevention and preparedness phases, citing it to be a great opportunity for smooth and interoperational synthesis and exchange of real-time multi-hazard early warning information.

Over the five days, the participants were taken through observation and meteorological models in impact-based forecasting. The delivery of the workshop was both through presentations and also hands on exercises utilising the facilities of the Continental situation room. Impressively, the workshop also employed the services of two trainers, who were graduates of the AMHEWAS Training of Trainers (ToT) that took place in July 2022. The success of the workshop was further evidenced by the policy interface between multi-hazard early warning systems at the technical level, and the advocacy for early action that the participants highlighted they were going to carry out. For instance, Erick Seyama, the Director of Research and Early Warning from the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) of the Kingdom of Eswatini informed the audience that he would use the training to enrich his panel to mark the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction to be marked in 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

While closing the workshop, the AUC Technical Coordinator for DRR, Mr. Gatkuoth Kai was impressed by the success of the training. He expressed his joy in seeing the AMHEWAS programme impact more people across the Continent. Citing the tremendous impact of the AMHEWAS programme, he also informed the participants that two SADC member States, Angola and Namibia, have both officially requested the AUC for support in rolling out multi-hazard early warning systems at the country level.

For further information, please contact:

**Mr. Gatkuoth Kai** | Technical Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction | Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy, African Union Commission | E-mail: [KaiG@africa-union.org](mailto:KaiG@africa-union.org) | WhatsApp: +251 909537884

**For media enquiry:**

**Mr. Molalet Tsedeke**, Information and Communications Directorate | African Union Commission | +251-911-630 631; [Molalett@africa-union.org](mailto:Molalett@africa-union.org)

**Ms. Maryanne Muriuki**, Communication Specialist, Disaster Risk Reduction Unit, Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, AU Commission. Email: [MuriukiM@africa-union.org](mailto:MuriukiM@africa-union.org)

**Information and Communication Directorate**, African Union Commission | **E-mail:** [DIC@africa-union.org](mailto:DIC@africa-union.org)

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