

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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The 10th Humanitarian Symposium to advance the outcome of the May 2022 Malabo Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference



The African Union Member States have continued to place high importance on humanitarian issues in Africa, starting from the inception of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 to date.

Within this context, the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the African Union Commission (AUC), in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), organized the 10 Annual Humanitarian Symposium in Nairobi, Kenya from 14-16 December 2022. The Symposium drew high level participants from different humanitarian agencies, AU Member States, development partners and members of diplomatic corps, international and national organizations, NGOs, affected communities including representatives of refugee communities and other stakeholders. The Symposium provided a platform for engagement at a continental level on humanitarian issues, including humanitarian challenges emanating from Climate change, disasters, conflicts, and terrorist activities resulting in forced displacement; livelihoods, Food security and nutrition; health challenges and humanitarian financing in Africa.

The main objectives of the Symposium are to: Identify critical elements of the proposed 10-year AU Plan of Action based on the Malabo Declaration; Propose a draft Roadmap for the implementation of the 10-Year AU Plan of Action; Dialogue and engage with stakeholders on trends and patterns of humanitarian situation in Africa and; identify necessary areas of synergies at national, regional, continental and international levels that could support the achievement of the AU humanitarian agenda in the next 10 years.

During the opening ceremony Professor Julio RAKOTONIRINA, Director of Health and Humanitarian Affairs Directorate of the African Union Commission (AUC) delivered opening remarks on behalf of Her Excellency H.E. Amb. Minata SAMATE CESSOUMA, Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs & Social Development (HHS). Prof Julio briefed the audience on the Outcomes of the Malabo Humanitarian Summit and Pledging conference and the creation of [the African Humanitarian Agency \(AfHA\)](#). “African decision-makers have expressed the will to change the paradigm of African humanitarian action by providing the continent with a new humanitarian architecture for the future. The Malabo Humanitarian

Summit set priorities and defines Africa's new humanitarian architecture with the main objective of transforming AU's governance on humanitarian issues to match other efforts on the continent. This transition aims to address governance and policy gaps at continental, regional, and national levels with a target to achieve effective humanitarian response in Africa," said Mr. RAKOTONIRINA. He underscored that the convening of the AU Extra-Ordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference convened on 27 May 2022, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea was another milestone in AU's endeavor to achieve the objectives of Agenda 2063. "The Malabo Humanitarian Summit and the Pledging Conference have indeed contributed to the advancement of the African Union's humanitarian agenda by adopting a Declaration that proposed durable solutions and recommendations to address the humanitarian challenges in Africa. This declaration should be transformed into tangible action plans to solve the humanitarian problems of the continent," emphasized Prof. RAKOTONIRIN. Professor Julio RAKOTONIRINA thanked AU partners for commitment during the Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference, held in May 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea and urged all to continue the support for the creation of the African Humanitarian Agency and its operationalization.

The representative of the Government of Kenya, Amb. George Orina, Director, Africa & AU at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, highlighted the different challenges the 10th Symposium has to tackle. He underscored the need of all participants to enable the practical delivery of Humanitarian responses in a holistic approach to ending the humanitarian crisis faced in Africa. He reminded the audience that the 10th symposium has provided a great platform to discuss and find practical outcomes to ensure that the objectives are met.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Ms Rita Amukhobu, Ag. Head Humanitarian Affairs Division took the participants through the outcomes of the Humanitarian Summit, held in Malabo in May 2022. "The Malabo Summit also adopted a 10-year implementation Plan that had the following strategic priorities: Strengthening role of the State in humanitarian action; Reforming Africa's humanitarian architecture; Addressing root causes and durable solutions; Moving from norm setting to implementation; and Measures to link humanitarian action and sustainable development," said Ms. Rita Amukhobu.

In his welcoming remarks during the opening ceremony, H.E. Adekunle Joliff King, Ambassador of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Chairperson of PRC Sub-Committee of Refugees, Returnees and IDPs thanked the Government of Kenya for its hospitality, as well as the AUC Department of Health Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development for putting efforts to organize that annual insightful event. He acknowledged that it has been a long, rich, and engaging process, starting from the AU Extra-Ordinary Humanitarian Summit and pledging Conference. Amb. Adekunle King highlighted the importance of such Symposiums and the key role played for the ten past years in bringing together a wide range of participants to deliberate on and develop common approaches to tackling Humanitarian challenges. Despite these challenges. Amb. King noted that it was heartening to see that countries continue to play an active role, by putting in place measures to prevent displacement, and in the event, they do occur, for the timely response by offering Protection and Assistance to those affected.

In conclusion, H.E Amb. Adekunle King vowed that the following days would be significant in shaping the African Humanitarian Action for the next ten years and the expected outcome, the post-Malabo Plan of Action as an important framework in this respect as a strong commitment to building a resilient Africa. He has reiterated the readiness of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees, and IDPs to fully support the work of Member States, the AUC, and its partners in implementing actions aimed at strengthening Humanitarian Response in Africa.

The expected outcomes from this Symposium will include: Highlights of the outcomes and timelines, for the 10-year Plan of Action and propose synergies, tools and mechanisms for the implementation of the plan; and Identify partnerships and resources necessary to complement the implementation of the 10-year Plan of Action.

Note to Editors:

Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 27 May 2022:

The objectives of the Summit and Pledging conference were to:

- a) Highlight the humanitarian challenges in Africa;
- b) Mobilize resources from AU Member States and the wider International Community to respond to the unprecedented humanitarian emergencies that currently face the continent and support resilience programs for populations affected by complex crises, famine, and other disasters amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Declaration of the Humanitarian Summit collective resolve and commitment to:

- a) Develop measures to address humanitarian challenges in Africa;
- b) Deal with climate change, disasters and forced displacement in Africa;
- c) Address food security and nutrition in humanitarian situations in Africa;
- d) Address COVID-19, pandemics and health challenges in humanitarian space in Africa;
- e) Ensuring Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) for returnees in Africa;
- f) Revitalizing resource mobilization and financing for humanitarian action in Africa;
- g) Operationalization of the African Humanitarian Agency.

The second segment of the Extraordinary Summit entailed pledges, both financial and technical. In total over \$176 million was pledged, towards the operationalisation of the African Humanitarian Agency and to address specific humanitarian situations in the continent. A fund has been established by the African Union Commission, where the pledges will be deposited. The governance structure to administer these funds in transparency and accountability has been established.

The Humanitarian Agency:

The Assembly of the AU adopted a Decision to establish an African Humanitarian as part of AU's vision to strengthen its humanitarian architecture. It shall be established as a specialized technical institution of the Commission charged with the responsibility to coordinate humanitarian responses in Member States, playing a complimentary role and driver of humanitarian action in the continent.

Its necessity arose out of three factors: Desire for AU capability and presence in humanitarian action; Strengthen the primary responsibility of States in humanitarian action; and the Need to strengthen coordination of humanitarian issues in the continent.

As called for by the Malabo Declaration, the AU Commission is undertaking the formulation of post-Malabo Implementation Plan anchored on the following pillars:

1. Establishment of a Humanitarian Fund;
2. Operationalization of African Humanitarian Agency;
3. Mobilization of pledges and resources for humanitarian programs in Africa.

Further information should be directed to:

Ms.Rita Amukhobu | Ag. Head Humanitarian Affairs Division, Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development| Email: AmukhobuR@africa-union.org

For further media inquiries, please contact:

Mr. Gamal Eldin Ahmed A. Karrar | Senior Communication Officer | Information and Communications Directorate | E-mail: GamalK@africa-union.org

Information and Communication Directorate, African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@africa-union.org

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