

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### THE AU COMMISSION AND CARITAS AFRICA DISCUSS JOINT AVENUES ON STRENGTHENING DISASTER RESILIENCE IN AFRICA



A delegation from Caritas Africa paid a courtesy call to the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Unit under the Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy in the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE). The meeting was held on Thursday, 9th February 2023 and provided an opportunity for Caritas and the AU Commission to know more about each other's work and identify possible collaboration themes.

Welcoming the delegation, Mr Gatkuoth Kai, Technical Coordinator for DRR at the AU Commission (AUC), thanked the delegation for visiting the AUC. He outlined the structure of the discussion, which started with the opening statement by the visiting delegation and their presentations, AUC's presentation, and concluding remarks. He then invited the group to kick start the discussions.

Mr Pinelli Pier Francesco from Caritas International headquarters in the Vatican made the opening remarks. He conveyed the greetings of CI, which is a confederation of 162 countries across the world. Mr Francesco also shared more about the organisation's work and the current discussions on human development from climate change and migration.

Mr Albert Mashika, Regional Coordinator for Caritas Africa, presented the institution's 2024-2030 Strategic Plan and identified an avenue of collaboration between the AUC

and the organisation: Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR), Early Warning Systems and the development of Emergency response plans.

Other African Caritas country officials shared more about their work, including Malawi, Mozambique and Ethiopia. Ms Chimwemwe Ndhlovu of Caritas Malawi shared how the institution was involved in response to COVID-19 and the ongoing cholera situation in the country. The organisation has also taken stewardship in reforestation and promoting the integration of indigenous knowledge in disaster risk reduction.

Mr Santos Pedro Lifande of Caritas Mozambique pointed out that the organisation is involved in conservation agriculture, planting trees to act as windbreakers to increase resilience during heavy storms in the country. Caritas has also been heavily involved in resilient infrastructure, reaching out to communities for construction with wind-resilient roofing, a blueprint architecture that the Republic of Mozambique has approved.

Mr Bekele Moges Kidane representing Caritas Ethiopia, discussed that they are strengthening community-based disaster risk management, strengthening food security by initiating irrigation projects, and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and are involved in climate action. Ms Lucy Esipila, the Policy and Advocacy Officer for Caritas Africa, shed light on Caritas' planned advocacy for the 28th **United Nations Conference of the Parties (COP28)** Climate Change Conference.

Mr Gatkuoth Kai, Technical Coordinator for DRR at the AU Commission, presented about the DRR Unit's programmes, including; Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Action System (AMHEWAS) for DRR, the Sahel Resilience Project, Strengthening disaster risk governance for resilience in African regions and countries and the draft Africa Urban Resilience Programme. These programmes were made possible through sustained financial support to the DRR Unit by the European Union, Sweden through UNDP within the framework of the Sahel Resilience Project, and Italian Governments through UNDRR.

In the reflection session, both organisations identified pathways to collaboration, including advocacy and integration of indigenous and local knowledge in strengthening disaster resilience across Africa and implementing the AMHEWAS programme to ensure last-mile reach and risk communication. The Caritas delegation thanked the AU Commission for hosting them, describing the visit as insightful and eye-opening, and expressed optimism for concrete collaboration.

**For further information, please contact:**

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