

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### Collaborative Learning and Experience Sharing at the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction



The Government of the Republic of Togo hosted the twentieth session of the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction (AWGDRR). The biannual meeting was held from 17 to 19 October 2023 in the capital, Lomé. The theme was "From Commitment to Action - Path to Accelerate the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa".

Speaking at the opening session, Mr Harsen Nyambe Nyambe, AUC Director of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE) and the Head of Delegation, expressed his appreciation to the Government and the people of the Republic of Togo. Mr Nyambe noted, "*Africa remains at risk. The Continent is warming faster than any other region, as indicated in the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).*"

Mr Nyambe also noted that the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction has previously served as a tool for resource mobilisation while appreciating the support of donors and implementing partners. He further underlined the Commission's continued progress in the disaster risk reduction agenda, noting the inauguration of the [Steering Committee and the Technical Working Group](#) of the Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Early Action (AMHEWAS) Programme in July 2023.

Director Nyambe also spotlighted the continued efforts towards climate change adaptation, resilience and early warning systems, as evidenced in the recent Africa Climate Summit held in September 2023. He indicated that the AU Commission is in

the process of setting up an implementation plan to operationalise the Summit's Declaration. Mr Nyambe thanked the Republic of Togo for hosting the event.

H.E. Ambassador Calixte Madjoulba, the Minister of Security and Civil Protection in the Republic of Togo welcomed all the participants on behalf of the President and the Government of the Republic of Togo. He noted that natural hazards and crises threatened populations in Africa, noting that no country is exempted from hazards.

He cited the ongoing flooding in Togo and called for accelerated efforts towards a resilient Africa by 2030. "*I recognise the consistency in organising the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction*", he said, commending the success of the Working Group. The minister also expressed solidarity with the victims of recent disasters in Morocco, Libya and Cameroon. He also noted that Togo has made considerable strides in enhancing disaster resilience. A delegation from the country participated in the [Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#), held in May 2023.

He further highlighted that the government had strengthened disaster risk governance by adopting a national DRR policy, domesticated in regions and municipalities. "I also call for concerted efforts towards anticipatory action and also actions to operationalise the Africa Climate Summit Declarations. Disaster risk reduction requires much investment. We are optimistic that the outcomes of this meeting in Lome will feed into other disaster risk reduction discussions."

Mr Amjad Abbashar, the Chief @UNDRR\_Africa, welcomed all the participants to the 20th session of the AWG, which he described as a "**landmark**". He noted that, given recent statistics, Africa remains one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to disasters and pointed out the recent earthquake in Morocco, floods in Libya and landslides in Cameroon. Mr Amjad also recognised the capacity building efforts in ECOWAS and ECCAS regions. He thanked all the donors and partners, and appreciated the hospitality of the Government and the people of the Republic of Togo.

Mr Mohamed Ibrahim, the head of the DRR and Humanitarian Unit at the ECOWAS Commission, said, "*The Africa Working Group on DRR presents an opportunity to discuss disasters. Africa is prone and vulnerable to natural and human-made hazards. Within the region, the Sahel region is still experiencing crises and human displacement, affecting infrastructure, economies and people*". Mr Ibrahim called for the participants to actively participate in the session and work towards innovative and tangible solutions. He noted that DRR remains a top priority, noting that the AWG catalyses collaborative learning.

Donors and implementing partners also gave progress reports of their interventions. The European Union (EU) updated the session about the Team Europe Initiative (TEI). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) presented on the recovery efforts following Tropical Cyclone Freddy in Madagascar and Malawi through the Resilience Hub and support to the Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS) programme through the Sahel Resilience Project. Indigenous

communities, media and faith-based organisations were also represented by GreenAid, DIRAJ and Caritas Africa, respectively.

To exchange best practices and lessons learned in climate and disaster risk reduction and management, the host country, through the National Civil Protection Agency (ANPC), organised a field visit for the participants. The participants visited four basins constructed as water retention areas and thus are a measure of flood management.

### **About the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction (AWGDRR)**

Reconstituted following the request of the Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (Nairobi, April 2010), the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction (AWGDRR) has been playing a significant role in providing technical support to the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States and partners for the coordination and implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and its Programme of Action. The AU Commission chairs the Working Group, while the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), through its Regional Office for Africa (RoA), serves as the Secretariat.

The Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction is supported by the European Union under the 11<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (EDF 11).

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