

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Joint Press Release

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THE 9TH AFRICA REGIONAL PLATFORM ADOPTS THE WINDHOEK DECLARATION



After three days of discussions, the 9th Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction concluded with the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration on advancing the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa. This ambitious document sets the direction for the next three years, reinforcing Africa's commitment to reducing disaster risks and building resilience across the continent.

The Regional Platform, held 21-24 October, gathered more than 800 participants coming from almost every African country and representing civil society, International Organizations and Member States. The event addressed key issues such as risk governance, financing DRR, and the impacts of the El Niño phenomenon on disaster risk in Southern Africa. It provided an opportunity for all the participants to engage in discussions on crucial DRR topics, learn about new tools and methods and engage with stakeholders from different areas.

The Platform, hosted by the Government of Namibia under the theme "*Act Now for the Resilient Africa We Want*," took place amidst one of the worst droughts in the Southern African Development Community region, affecting 58 million people.

Opening the event, the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. John Mutorwa, noted that the Platform provided *“the perfect opportunity for sharing experiences and peer learnings between Member States in order to augment the implementation of the Sendai Framework, its action plan and strengthen the disaster risk institutions.”*

In his opening remarks, Mr Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, expressed his appreciation to the Government of Namibia for hosting the conference and to the African Union Commission and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) as co-organizers. Noting the many challenges in the region, he stressed that “disaster risk reduction is essential to Africa’s sustainable development”, highlighting that *“we need everyone engaged in disaster risk reduction”*.



The Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable development of the African Union Commission, Ambassador Josepha Sacko, in a video recorded message, stressed the importance of advancing the Africa Multi-Hazards Early Warning and Action

System (AMHEWAS) programme which *“Is leading the way in improving our preparedness for hazards. This programme, especially through the establishment of situation rooms and the provision of timely advisories, enables African countries to monitor and respond quickly to hazards, safeguarding lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure”*

Referring to the the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063: the Africa we want, Mr Anderson Kamdambo Banda, Director of the SADC Humanitarian Emergency Operation Center, stated in his opening remarks that *“These milestones we have set for ourselves at various levels can only be achieved through the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, risk governance and risk-proof investment and resilience, into the continental, regional and national development plans bearing in mind their critical role to the integration and economic growth, development, resilience and sustainability of the continent.”*

Set in a country experiencing more and more intense drought, the event resulted in the adoption of a joint declaration renewing the Member States’ commitment to Disaster Risk Reduction. The Declaration addresses the key challenges the continent face in building resilience.

Financing efforts were at the heart of the discussions. The Windhoek declaration calls on Member States to increase budgetary allocation and establish innovative financing solutions, with support from regional and international partners to access funding, including for loss and damages and the Early Warning for All initiative. The Windhoek Declaration also reiterates the call for inclusivity especially in legislations and policies but also through better national systems for gathering disaggregated data. The event called for mainstreaming DRR in development programmes and aligned DRR strategies with sustainable development and climate resilience policies, ensuring coherent and comprehensive approaches across all levels of governance as climate-related disasters continue to grow.

The important role of Parliaments for effective risk governance was also highlighted as the conference hosted the first Parliamentarian Forum. In their Outcome Statement, members of parliaments committed to advance disaster risk reduction at regional level and in their respective countries.

The outcomes of this Regional Platform will feed into the upcoming UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Gaborone in December 2024 and in the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in June 2025 in Geneva, where Africa's common position will help shape the global agenda.

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