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Declaration of the eighth high-level meeting on disaster risk reduction

Windhoek, 24 October 2024



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Windhoek Declaration on advancing the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa

We, ministers and heads of delegations responsible for disaster risk reduction in Africa, having met in Windhoek on 24 October 2024 on the occasion of the eighth high-level meeting on disaster risk reduction, which was preceded by the ninth session of the Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held on 22 and 23 October 2024 under the theme “Act now for the resilient Africa we want”,

Expressing appreciation to the Government and people of Namibia for hosting these events and for the hospitality and warm welcome accorded to the delegates,

Expressing appreciation also to the African Union Commission and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for organizing these events with the support of the Southern African Development Community,

Recalling the decision taken by the Executive Council of the African Union at its thirtieth ordinary session, held in January 2017 (EX.CL/Dec.943 (XXX)), in which it endorsed the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa,

Recalling also the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on accelerating the path to achieving the goals and targets of the Programme of Action by African ministers and heads of delegations responsible for disaster risk reduction in Africa at the seventh high-level meeting on disaster risk reduction, held in Nairobi on 19 November 2021,

Appreciating the efforts of States Members of the United Nations, regional economic communities and non-governmental stakeholders and the support of the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction in implementing the priorities and decisions set out in the Nairobi Declaration and in the Africa Common Position to the 2022 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction,

Commending the African Union Commission for its leadership in putting into action the priorities and decisions set out in the Nairobi Declaration and in the Africa Common Position to the 2022 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction,

Recalling the decision taken by the Executive Council of the African Union at its fortieth ordinary session, held in February 2022 (EX.CL/Dec.1143-1167(XL)), in which it endorsed the institutional and operational framework for multi-hazard early warning and early action system for Africa and its delivery programme 2022–2030,

Acknowledging the launch of the Early Warnings for All initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, and the Multi-Hazard Early Warning for All in Africa Action Plan (2023–2027) at the inaugural Africa Climate Summit, held in Nairobi, and their importance in supporting the implementation of the institutional and operational framework for multi-hazard early warning and early action system for Africa and its delivery programme 2022–2030,

Welcoming the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations in May 2023 of the political declaration of the high-level meeting on the midterm review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,

Welcoming also the African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action, adopted during the inaugural Africa Climate Summit, held in Nairobi from 4 to 6 September 2023,

Welcoming further the outcomes of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt from 6 to 18 November 2022 and in Dubai, United Arab Emirates from 30 November to 13 December 2023, respectively, and taking note of the agreement reached at the twenty-eighth session to operationalize the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage launched at the twenty-seventh session,

Acknowledging the outcomes of the tenth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Addis Ababa from 23 to 25 April 2024, the sixth African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology, held in Addis Ababa on 16 and 17 May 2024, the Extra-Ordinary Virtual Summit of Southern African Development Community Heads of State and Government on El Niño Induced Drought and Floods, held on 20 May 2024, the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, held in Antigua and Barbuda from 27 to 30 May 2024, the first Africa Urban Forum, held in Addis Ababa from 4 to 6 September 2024, the Least Developed Countries Strategy and Ministerial Meeting, held in Lilongwe from 26 to 28 August 2024, the twelfth Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa, held from 30 August to 2 September 2024, the Least Developed Countries Strategy and Ministerial Meetings, held in Lilongwe from 26 to 28 August 2024, the tenth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire from 3 to 6 September 2024, and the first Early Warnings for All Multi-Stakeholder Forum for Africa, held in Windhoek on 21 October 2024,

Acknowledging also the adoption of the Pact for the Future, along with its annexes, including the Declaration on Future Generations and the Global Digital Compact, by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2024, and noting that the implementation of the Programme of Action is critical for the implementation of the Pact for the Future in Africa,

Expressing deep concern about the growing severity and frequency of disasters related to weather and climate extremes, in particular those triggered by events involving El Niño and the Southern Oscillation, especially in small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and least developed countries,

Mindful of the recent report of the World Meteorological Organization entitled “State of the climate in Africa 2023”, according to which, on average, African countries are losing 2–5 per cent of their gross domestic product annually because of climate-related hazards, and many are diverting up to 9 per cent of their budget to respond to climate extremes,

Recognizing the significant impact that extreme weather and climate events triggered by El Niño and the Southern Oscillation have on the African continent, especially on agriculture and food security and on the most at-risk communities, and the urgent need to invest more in observational networks and prediction tools, disaster risk reduction, preparedness, early

warning and early action, resilient recovery, building back better, anticipatory action and climate adaptation, in particular in the most affected countries,

Recognizing also the systemic nature of risk, illustrated by interconnected and simultaneous disasters and their cascading and devastating impacts, which are undermining efforts to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want,

Recognizing further the declaration of the mpox outbreak as a public health emergency of continental security by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization in August 2024, and appreciating their efforts to strengthen and accelerate the response to the ongoing mpox outbreak and Marburg virus disease outbreaks in Africa,

Acknowledging the leadership of the African Union Commission in the implementation of the Early Warnings for All in Africa Action Plan (2023–2027) with the support of entities of the United Nations system and other partners across the continent,

Aware of the significant financing gap for implementing disaster risk reduction and management, including response and recovery priorities and the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System Programme,

Also aware of the need for African Member States to establish multi-hazard early warning and early action situation rooms for the coordination, monitoring and dissemination of information on the potential occurrence of disaster events and their associated impacts, in order to facilitate disaster preparedness, response and recovery activities and anticipatory action,

Appreciating the role of stakeholders, including parliamentarians, civil society organizations, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the scientific community, the media, educational institutions, young people, women, persons with disabilities, private sector entities, local authorities and communities in supporting and implementing the Programme of Action at all levels, and the efforts of the African Risk Capacity in supporting Member States in strengthening risk financing mechanisms,

Stressing the importance of ensuring synergies and coherence in the implementation of disaster risk reduction, anticipatory action and humanitarian, development and climate change actions at all levels, including in the context of the humanitarian-peace-development nexus,

Mindful of the outcome of the first global stocktake under the Paris Agreement and the need for urgent climate action ambition to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement, and concerned about the inadequate provision of the means of implementation by developed countries for climate change adaptation and resilience building,

Welcoming the launch of the Africa Urban Resilience Programme, which, together with the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative, can significantly contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Action in urban areas,

Taking note of the Comprehensive School Safety Framework 2022–2030 developed by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector,

Welcoming the launch of the Private Sector Alliance for Disaster Resilient Societies, established by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Gender Action

Plan to Support Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030,

Appreciating the support provided by African Governments, development partners, United Nations entities and international and regional financial institutions for the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Declaring our determination to deliver on our commitments regarding the implementation of the Programme of Action, the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and subregional and national strategies and plans of action for disaster risk reduction, as crucial instruments for the realization of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063,

1. *Call upon* Member States, with support from regional economic communities, the African Union Commission, United Nations entities and development partners, to mobilize resources to advance the implementation of the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System Programme, including the establishment of situation rooms;
2. *Also call upon* Member States, with support from regional economic communities, the African Union Commission, United Nations entities and development partners, to build on existing initiatives and ensure country-driven implementation of the Multi-Hazard Early Warning for All Africa Action Plan (2023–2027) in support of the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System Programme, including in countries in fragile and conflict-affected situations;
3. *Reiterate* the call to Member States, regional economic communities, the African Union Commission, regional climate centres and regional specialized meteorological centres to develop capacity and scale up investment in national meteorological and hydrological systems for improved weather and climate information generation and service delivery for effective early warning, anticipatory action and transboundary risk management at all levels, and to recognize the critical role of national meteorological and hydrological services in providing warnings and alerts relating to weather, climate and water;
4. *Encourage* Member States, regional economic communities, United Nations entities and other international and regional organizations and financial institutions to mainstream disaster risk reduction in development programmes in all sectors;
5. *Request* Member States, regional economic communities, local authorities, private sector entities, educational institutions, civil society organizations, development partners and other stakeholders to support the development and implementation of coherent, risk-informed, people-centred, inclusive, holistic, gender-responsive and disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction laws, indigenous and local knowledge systems and practices, policies, strategies and programmes;
6. *Reiterate* the call to Member States to increase the annual public budgetary allocation and expenditure, to establish innovative financing solutions, including at the local level, and to galvanize private sector investments to accelerate the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa;

7. *Call upon* the African Union Commission, regional economic communities and development partners to strengthen the capacity of Member States to gain access to international financing facilities;
8. *Urge* Member States and regional economic communities to design and implement sustainable and inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies and recovery mechanisms;
9. *Call upon* Member States, local authorities and partners to implement the Africa Urban Resilience Programme, leveraging the Making Cities Resilient 2030 initiative, and to implement the outcomes of the first Africa Urban Forum;
10. *Also call upon* Member States, local authorities and partners to align the outcomes of the first Africa Urban Forum with those of the twelfth session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Cairo from 4 to 8 November 2024;
11. *Encourage* Member States to conduct disaster risk assessment and stress testing of critical infrastructure systems in order to ensure that infrastructure plans are risk proof and are aligned with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies and risk assessments;
12. *Also encourage* Member States to support the strengthening of partnerships between institutions responsible for disaster risk reduction and those responsible for the management of displacement, environmental management and climate change action, planning and finance, in order to promote a comprehensive risk management approach at all levels;
13. *Reiterate* the call to Member States and regional economic communities to actively participate in and follow up on the outcomes of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa, and to make disaster risk reduction an integral part of the voluntary national reviews and voluntary subnational reviews carried out in connection with the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development;
14. *Urge* the African Union Commission, regional economic communities, private sector entities, educational institutions, civil society organizations, development partners and other stakeholders to support Member States in improving their capacity to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and recover from the mpox and Marburg virus disease outbreaks, and to consider disaster risk reduction in developing related recovery plans and policies, plans and strategies for epidemic and pandemic prevention and resilience in healthcare systems;
15. *Request* the African Union Commission, regional economic communities, United Nations entities and development partners to strengthen the capacity of Member States to leverage the Monitoring and Reporting Framework for the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa and the Sendai Framework Monitor in monitoring and reporting on progress made towards achieving all targets of the Sendai Framework and the Programme of Action;
16. *Request* Member States and regional economic communities to support the development of the biennial report on the implementation of the Programme of Action;

17. *Urge* Member States to enhance national systems for the collection, analysis and reporting of disaster loss and damage data, disaggregated by economic and non-economic losses and, where relevant, by income, age, gender, disability and geographical location;
18. *Encourage* regional economic communities, the African Union Commission, United Nations entities and development partners to support Member States in their efforts to benefit from technical assistance provided through the Santiago network for averting, minimizing and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change at all levels and to gain access to the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage;
19. *Call upon* Member States, regional economic communities and the African Union Commission to proactively address disaster-induced displacement at all levels by integrating disaster risk reduction, climate change and environmental management into development strategies and plans;
20. *Also call upon* Member States, regional economic communities and the African Union Commission to enhance policy coherence and public-private partnerships, and to leverage innovative and cost-effective nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction approaches to bridge the gaps in climate resilience, preparedness and response and build back better for sustainability;
21. *Call upon* Member States, regional economic communities, the African Union Commission and other stakeholders to promote the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the midterm review of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and those set out in the *Bi-annual Report on the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 in Africa*;
22. *Also call upon* Member States, regional economic communities, the African Union Commission and other stakeholders to carry out the Gender Action Plan to Support Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 at all levels;
23. *Urge* Member States, regional economic communities, the African Union Commission and development partners to bolster and prioritize science-based approaches to disaster risk reduction through increased investment in research and innovation and the promotion of science, policy and practice dialogues, and to integrate disaster risk reduction into early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary education systems;
24. *Mandate* the African Union Commission to coordinate the development of the African common position on the eighth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction;
25. *Request* the Government of Namibia, as the Chair of the ninth Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the eighth high-level meeting on disaster risk reduction, to submit the present declaration to the policy organs of the African Union for consideration and endorsement.

Done on this day, 24 October 2024, in Windhoek