

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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AUC, SADC, and UNDRR visit Zambia to catalyse the establishment of the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Situation Room for disaster risk reduction

“National situation room an inevitable tool for developing and disseminating multi-hazard early warning information”



The African Union Commission (AUC), jointly with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), visited Zambia from 10 to 14 March 2025 to assess the country's capacity to establish and operate the National Multi-hazard Early Warning for Early Action situation room.

The national situation room is an inevitable tool for developing and disseminating multi-hazard early warning information to enhance disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. As part of the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning for Early Action (AMHEWAS) programme, the Zambia Situation Room is expected to be interoperable with the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC) and the Continental Multi-hazard Situation Room at AU headquarters in Addis Ababa.

The delegates started their mission by paying a courtesy call to the foreign affairs ministry. Mr Friday Chilufya, the assistant director, received them and hailed the relationship between Zambia and the African Union Commission in addressing the issues regarding human development. Mr Chilufya reiterated the need for proactive measures in disaster risk management (DRM) and explained his optimism that this initiative will substantially help Zambia reduce disaster losses. Further, he explained his concern that despite Zambia being a landlocked country, it is very prone to disasters resulting from extreme weather events. The

assistant director assured the delegates of maximum cooperation and looked forward to implementing the recommendation based on the outcomes of the mission.

In her remarks, Ms. Teresa Pinto, the AUC Technical Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction, applauded the Zambian government's work in reducing disaster losses. She further emphasised that the mission aimed to see how Zambia could establish and operate a multi-hazard early warning situation room and become among the countries with such a room that benefits its people.

On the other hand, the National Coordinator of the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit from the Vice President's Office (VPO-DMMU), Mr Norman Chipakupaku, was impressed by the work done by the AMHEWAS in establishing the Situation room in Tanzania that is linked to the SHOC and continental Situation rooms. He underscored that Zambia is willing to learn from Tanzania. The National Coordinator expresses the sentiments that climate change is exacerbating the disaster situations in the country, citing the record drought that hit Zambia in 2024 and the current ongoing floods, especially in Lusaka. The coordinator seeks more collaboration to connect the National situation room with SHOC and the continental situation room.

The delegates also visited the National Emergency Operations and Communications Centre and discussed with the experts who directly manage and work at the centre. The National disaster management experts highlighted that droughts, floods, and disease outbreaks are among Zambia's main disasters. During the discussion, the AU Commission explained that the AMHEWAS' is to ensure that all 55 African Union member states have functional Multi-Hazard Early Warning Situation Rooms that are interoperable with regional and continental situation rooms. The SADC secretariat presented the utility of the SHOC in the region and its interoperability with the National and continental situation rooms.

The delegation also met with relevant stakeholders involved in operating the situation room, such as the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, the Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA), the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, academia, and the United Nations (UN) team in Zambia.



During the consultative meeting with the UN Country Team in Zambia, the UN Resident Coordinator, Ms. Beatrice Mutali, expressed her impression of this initiative, citing the importance of having a one-stop centre for

Multi-hazard Early warning. She further urged the team to make the best use of modern technology, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), in the operations of the situation room. Ms. Mutali assured the delegation of the UN country team of her full support for this initiative.

About AMHEWAS

The Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS) Programme is a continental programme that aims to support countries in substantially reducing disaster impacts by enhancing the availability, accessibility, and usage of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems. The program is being implemented at continental, regional, and country levels. AMHEWAS is financed by the governments of Italy and Denmark and implemented through the Italian Agency for Development Corporation (AICS), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the CIMA Research Foundation, and Norwegian Capacity (NORCAP).

For further information, please contact:

Ms Teresa Pinto, Technical Coordinator, Disaster Risk Reduction Unit | Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy | African Union Commission | **E-mail: PintoT@africa-union.org** | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

For media enquiry:

Mr Molalet Tsedeke | Information and Communication Directorate | African Union Commission
Tel: +251-911-630 631 | **E-mail: MolaletT@africa-union.org** | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ms. Maryanne Muriuki, Communications Analyst – Disaster Risk Reduction | Disaster Risk Reduction Unit | African Union Commission | **E-mail: MuriukiM@africa-union.org** | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Information and Communication, African Union Commission | **E-mail: DIC@africa-union.org** | **Web: au.int** | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | **Follow Us:** Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | YouTube