

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### THE AU COMMISSION OPERATIONALISES THE GOVERNANCE AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS FOR THE AFRICA URBAN RESILIENCE PROGRAMME



To strengthen governance and coordination for the Africa Urban Resilience Programme ([AURP](#)), the African Union Commission has operationalised the Steering Committee and the Technical Working Group for the AURP. The inaugural meetings for both structures took place from 14 to 16 August 2025 in Cape Town, South Africa, where the terms of reference for both mechanisms were adopted.

The AURP Steering Committee is the programme's governing body, overseeing the overall implementation of the AURP and setting the strategic vision. The Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy, at the AU Commission, serves as the Secretariat of the AURP Steering Committee. Accordingly, the AURP Steering Committee is chaired by the Director of SEBE.

The AURP Technical Working Group comprises AU Member States (MSs), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the AUC, multilateral/bilateral partners, women, and other stakeholders who support and/or implement resilience-building efforts at the national, regional, continental, and global levels.

*"The operationalisation of the Africa Urban Resilience Programme's governance and coordination mechanisms is a milestone towards streamlining multi-agency collaboration for the AURP's implementation,"* said Mr. Harsen Nyambe Nyambe, Director of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy ([SEBE](#)), African Union Commission.



Mr. Nyambe stated, “Disasters across Africa are increasingly impacting our cities and urban areas, with both frequency and intensity on the rise. We must prioritise disaster risk reduction and resilience-building initiatives in urban centres to ensure sustainable development across the continent. Since the technical validation of the African Urban Resilience Programme in 2023, we have received strong internal and external support, including key endorsements from the African Union’s governing bodies and vital technical and financial support from our strategic partners, including the Governments of Sweden and Germany, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).”

The programme governance also includes key AURP donors and implementing partners, including Sweden, Germany, the UNDP, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure ([CDRI](#)). Other actors working on complementary urban resilience programmes, including those involved in coordinating the programme, will also play critical roles in the programme’s implementation.

Mr. Anders Alm, Programme Manager for Environment, Climate Change, and Energy at the [Embassy of Sweden in Addis Ababa](#), highlighted the strategic areas in which Sweden collaborates within the region, including climate, environment, and the sustainable use of natural resources. While noting that resilience and adaptation to climate change are important areas for Sweden, Mr. Alm underscored, “*The Africa Urban Resilience Programme, endorsed by the African Union and its Member States, is a timely and strategic response to the challenges. It provides a continent-wide framework to strengthen urban resilience through integrated planning, risk-informed governance, and inclusive development.*”

Dr. Gatkuoth Kai, Regional Coordinator for Africa, Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery, UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa, applauded the AU Commission and partners on the progress made so far. He expressed deep appreciation for the support from Sweden to UNDP through the [Sahel Resilience Project](#), which has enabled the successful development and ongoing implementation of the AURP. He further thanked the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) for their support in the implementation of the AURP. Underscoring that no single entity or group can do this alone, Dr. Kai said, “*We must work with all the stakeholders to scale interventions that match the changing development paradigms. The [Aqinile Partnership](#), implemented by AUC, UNDP, UN-Habitat, and UNEP, is a key example of the joint effort to deliver impacts at scale.*”

Addressing the steering committee virtually, Mr Ronald Meyer, Head of Division Coordination of Operations in Africa, African Affairs at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany ([BMZ](#)), said that *“The AURP is a critical and timely response. As an African-led programme endorsed by the AU Executive Council that is deeply rooted in the priorities of the AU Agenda 2063, it provides an essential framework to address all the challenges around.”* Mr Mayer added, *“The Government of Germany strongly supports the Africa Urban Resilience Programme, ensuring that resilience efforts are embedded in shared frameworks, enabling countries to address risks that are bound by borders and require collective solutions. The German Development Cooperation is proud to contribute to this effort through the Resilience Initiative Africa (RIA), a regional project implemented by GIZ.”*

Dr. Elias Bongani, Head of the South African National Disaster Management Centre ([NDMC](#)), officially opened the AURP inaugural meetings on behalf of the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Government of the Republic of South Africa. Welcoming the participants, Dr. Bongani outlined South Africa’s frequent vulnerability due to storms and heavy rainfall in multiple provinces. He emphasised, *“There is a need for each municipality to ensure that the development planning within their geographical locations includes conducting disaster risk assessments, identification and mapping risks, areas, ecosystems, communities, and households that are exposed to physical and human-induced threats.”*

A growing proportion of African cities and urban centres are predicted to experience some of the world's most severe impacts of disasters. Acknowledging this, the AURP has made significant and timely strides in advancing resilience-building initiatives in Africa, including global advocacy, communication campaigns, and knowledge sharing.

The AURP has been showcased at side events at selected high-level forums, including the African Urban Forum, the World Urban Forum, and the Conference of the Parties (CoP) on Climate Change, as well as the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the [Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (GPDRR 2025). Through this agenda, technical support has been provided to Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States in the development of key regional strategies, such as the Regional [Resilience Strategy for West Africa](#) (2024) also with Sweden’s support through UNDP’s Sahel Resilience Project and the initiation of detailed sectoral guidelines on urban resilience for AU member states, with GIZ’s support.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), on behalf of Germany, provided financial support for the inaugural meetings in South Africa.

### **About the Africa Urban Resilience Programme (AURP)**

The Africa Urban Resilience Programme (AURP) was developed by the African Union Commission (AUC) with the support of the Government of Sweden and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the [Sahel Resilience Project](#). The AURP is a continental framework designed to strengthen regional and national urban risk management policies, plans, and institutional capacities of member states in addressing urban risks.



Additionally, the European Union, through the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) Intra-ACP Natural Disaster Risk Programme, played a catalytic role in supporting the development of the AURP.

### **About Resilience Initiative Africa**

The 'Resilience Initiative Africa' ([RIA](#)) is a regional project supported by Germany that aims to increase the capacities of regional, national, local state, and non-state actors for risk-informed urban development in Africa. One crucial part of RIA is the support for the Africa Urban Resilience Programme (AURP). The project is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and its project partners.

### **About the Aqinile Partnership (AUC-UNDP-UN-Habitat)**

'Aqinile', which means 'They are strong, they can withstand' in the Zulu language, reflects the ethos and ambition for building resilience in urban Africa. AUC, UNDP, UN-Habitat, and UNEP have joined forces through the Aqinile partnership to deliver risk reduction and resilience-building efforts, accelerating risk-informed development on the continent. The partnership serves as an implementation mechanism for the Africa Urban Resilience Programme, which promotes intersectoral coordination and advocates for urban resilience among AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

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