

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### Disaster Risk Reduction Experts Highlight Interagency Collaboration for Inclusive Resilience

#### *Experts Recommend an All-of-Society Approach*



Disaster risk reduction experts have emphasised that interagency collaboration and coordination are critical to advancing an all-of-society approach to disaster resilience. The experts convened at the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction (AWGDRR), held in Bujumbura from 25 to 26 March 2026. The event was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Burundi and organised by the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) Regional Office for Africa.

The theme of the event was “**Accelerating action on the [Windhoek Declaration](#) and the [Africa Common Position to the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2025](#) commitments.**”

Participants shared updates on the [action points](#) from the [23rd Session](#) held in Victoria Falls in 2025 and reflected on progress made, while looking ahead to implementing the remaining five years of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

Speaking on behalf of the African Union Commission, Dr Jihane El Gaouzi, Head of the Sustainable Environment Division, highlighted that disasters continue to hamper Africa's socioeconomic development. She called for strengthened international and South-South cooperation, emphasising that, “***Disaster impacts remain a challenge in Africa, and all stakeholders need to work together to build resilience against extreme events.***”

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Mr Amjad Abbashar, Chief of the UNDRR Regional Office for Africa, noted that significant progress has been achieved on the continent. ***“We have realised progress made towards comprehensive multi-hazard early warning systems, disaster risk financing, recovery and readiness, and anticipatory action,”*** he stated.

Opening the event, H.E. Nibona Bonansize Celestin, Brigadier General of Police and Assistant to the Minister of Interior, Community Development, and Public Security of the Government of the Republic of Burundi, observed that climate-related risks are already being experienced. He stated: ***“Recent floods, landslides, and rising Lake Tanganyika water levels have affected over 360,000 people. This highlights the urgent need for strengthened preparedness, early warning systems, and risk-informed development planning.”***

He further shared Burundi’s national efforts, noting that a national Disaster Risk Reduction Policy has been developed and is currently undergoing validation. This represents a shift towards proactively anticipating disasters rather than merely responding to their impacts. In addition, Burundi has strengthened its Platform for Risk Prevention and Disaster Management as a consultation and coordination framework among stakeholders.

Mr Semingar Ngaryamngaye, Head of the Department for Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation at the Economic Community of Central African States (@CEEAC\_ECCAS), noted that the region continues to face a range of hazards, including floods, droughts, heat waves and mudslides.

He underscored the importance of the Africa Working Group on **Disaster Risk Reduction**, stating that ***“The Working Group plays a determining role in providing a coordinated and well-structured approach towards addressing disasters.”*** He further highlighted its contribution to advancing both the African Union’s Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## **Experts Share Best Practices and Deliberate Way Forward**

Experts from Burundi shared national best practices in inclusive disaster risk reduction, including ongoing efforts to integrate gender-disaggregated data into resilience planning. They also outlined plans to operationalise a multi-hazard situation room for disaster risk reduction. The facility will be linked to the Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Early Action System ([AMHEWAS](#)) Situation Room at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa.

Discussions also focused on advocacy and policy developments, including the planned Continental Guidelines on Anticipatory Action and the establishment of the Continental Technical Working Group on [Anticipatory Action](#) under the AMHEWAS programme. The Working Group will strengthen knowledge sharing, capacity building, and coordination, while supporting existing continental mechanisms, such as the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction.

The host country also demonstrated progress in adopting an all-of-society approach to disaster resilience.

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A panel discussion on disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DiDRR) brought together government and non-government stakeholders who shared experiences in promoting the use of disaggregated data to address the disproportionate impact of disasters on persons with disabilities.

During the session, participants from the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia also shared best practices and lessons learned in disaster risk financing through domestic investments, in line with the [Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa](#).

In addition, participants explored Transformative Community Resilience interventions aimed at strengthening resilience at the local level. The experts also briefed on the revised matrix for the [Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa](#). The matrix covers the period 2026-2030, which represents the final five years of the Sendai Framework implementation period.

The 25th session of the Africa Working Group on **Disaster Risk Reduction** is scheduled for the second half of 2026.

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

Reconstituted following the request of the Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Nairobi in April 2010, the Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction serves as the continent's primary technical and coordination mechanism for disaster risk reduction. It provides technical support to the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, Member States, and partners in coordinating and implementing the [Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) and its [Programme of Action](#). The African Union Commission chairs the Working Group, while the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, through its Regional Office for Africa, serves as the Secretariat.

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