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**OPENING REMARKS
BY
H.E. TUMUSIIME RHODA PEACE,
COMMISSIONER FOR RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE
AT
THE AFRICAN DELEGATES MEETING
MARCH 13, 2015, SENDAI, JAPAN**

- **Your Excellency Modest Mero, Permanent Representative of the United Republic to the United Nations in Geneva and Chair of this meeting**
- **Your Excellencies – African Representatives in the Bureau of Inter-governmental Preparatory Committee for the Third World Conference on DRR**
- **The Chair of the Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction Mr. Mohammed Masr from the Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations in Geneva**
- **Ms Sharon Rusu, Head, UNISDR Regional Office for Africa**
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corp**
- **Distinguished Delegates**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**
- **All protocols observed**

I have the honour and pleasure to add my voice in welcoming you all, on behalf of the African Union Commission, and, indeed, on my own behalf, to this important meeting of African Delegates; and I wish to convey warm greetings and best wishes from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who recognizes the importance of DRR and the key role you are playing in advancing it on the continent.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you are all aware, Africa is a continent confronted by a broad range of hazards and related risks and disasters. You would recall that cognizant of this situation and the fact that disaster risk reduction is more effective in saving lives and cost effective than emergency response, the African Union Heads of State and Government adopted the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2004 and subsequently its Programme of Action, including the current Extended Programme of Action in 2011, which is in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action.

While implementation of these continental and global frameworks for disaster risk reduction has led to significant milestones in terms of advancing the disaster risk reduction agenda across the African continent, much remains to be done towards effectively reducing the vulnerability and exposure of the continent and hence strengthening the resilience of persons, communities, countries and assets in a meaningful and sustainable way.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Demonstrating its continued commitment to disaster risk reduction and highlighting its critical role in realizing the AU vision of **“An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and a dynamic force in the global arena”**, the African Union recently in January 2015 adopted Africa’s Contribution to the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In the course of adopting Africa’s Contribution, AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities were urged to actively participate in the process leading up to its integration into the global Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

and, in particular, to actively participate, at the Heads of State/Government level, in the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

In the same vein, the AU Commission was mandated to facilitate the review of the current Extended Programme of Action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in line with the Post-2015 Framework for DRR once it gets adopted.

The Commission has also taken steps to integrate Disaster Risk Reduction into its various strategies, plans, and programmes, including Africa Agenda 2063, part of which is the Accelerated African Growth and Transformation within the framework of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

Furthermore, the AU has put in place the African Risk Capacity to reduce the risk of loss and damage caused by extreme weather events and natural disasters by providing targeted responses to disasters in a more timely, cost-effective and transparent manner.

I am also pleased to report that in collaboration with UNISDR, AUC supported the establishment and operationalization of mechanisms, like the African Working Group and the Africa Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction.

All the above-mentioned steps taken by the AU Policy Organs as well as efforts exerted by the AU Commission, Member States, and Regional Economic Communities to deliver on their DRR related mandates are a clear manifestation of Africa's continued commitment to Disaster Risk Reduction.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The AUC attaches a great significance to your meeting today given the key issues that you will concentrate on are of paramount importance to enable Africa to continue speaking with one voice as far as ensuring that its concerns and priorities are adequately reflected in the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and international cooperation and support is enhanced for its implementation. Your meeting today will also serve as an avenue for us to generate the commitment needed not only for reviewing the current Programme of Action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR in line with the global Post-2015 Framework for DRR, but also for its actual implementation, especially at country level.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I also take this opportunity to thank all partners that tremendously supported us not only in advancing the DRR agenda on the continent, but also in the process leading up to the development of Africa's Contribution to the Post-2015 Framework for DRR and its integration into the global post-2015 Framework for DRR. In particular, I would like to reiterate the African Union's gratitude for the support that UNISDR, under the able leadership of H.E. Margareta Wahlstrom, has been providing to our continent in this regard. In this connection, I would like to thank the UNISDR Regional Office for Africa for our close collaboration and the hard work and assistance in organizing this meeting in the margins of the Third Session of the

Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

In the same vein, the African Union wishes to applaud the support that the European Union has provided through its EU-ACP DRR programme: “*Building Disaster Resilience in Sub-Saharan African Regions, Countries, and Communities*” to further advance the DRR agenda on the African continent.

We also salute Member States, the Regional Economic Communities, and all other relevant stakeholders for their continued and demonstrated commitment to DRR as well as active and consistent engagement in the development of Africa’s contribution and its integration into the forthcoming global post-2015 framework for DRR. We are also encouraged and proud of Egypt’s and South Sudan’s successful representation of Africa in the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee.

Finally, we salute the Government and the people of Japan for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to all of us here since our arrival and for putting in place excellent arrangements for the success of our deliberations.

With these few remarks, I look forward to our productive meeting and your further guidance.

Thank you for your kind attention.