

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Introductory Remarks

Of

**H.E. Amb. Josefa Leonel Correia SACKO
Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture**

On the Occasion of

**The Launching of the Inaugural Africa Biennial Report on Disaster
Risk Reduction**

**5th August, 2020
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

Excellency President Adama Barrow, President, Republic of The Gambia

Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson, African Union Commission

H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

Excellency Amb. Catherine Mwangi, Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the African Union, and Chairperson of the African Union PRC Sub-Committee on Environment

Excellency Ms. Mami Mizutori, United Nations Representative of the Secretary General on Disaster Risk Reduction

Excellency Amb. Ranieri Sabatucci, Head of the European Union Delegation to the African Union

Distinguished guests, members of media, ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the launching of the Inaugural Africa Biennial Report on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

Let me begin by congratulating the AU Member States and RECs for the successful completion of this report.

Africa has always been at the forefront of the development of the DRR policy agenda since 2004. In 2004 the AU member states developed the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. A Programme of Action for the implementation of the Strategy was developed and was subsequently revised to be aligned with the global Hyogo Plan of Action, which had a timeframe of 2005-2015.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted as the Global Framework in 2015 and it replaced the Hyogo Plan of Action. Africa was the first continent to develop the Programme of Action (PoA) for the implementation of the Sendai Framework. This Programme of action was adopted by the AU Heads of State during the January 2017 Assembly.

In 2018, in Tunis, Tunisia, the High Level Ministerial Meeting for DRR adopted a Monitoring and Reporting Framework for the PoA that was developed by the AUC. This Framework seeks to facilitate monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the PoA. The High Level Ministerial Meeting further tasked the AUC to develop the biennial report on the implementation of the PoA, using the monitoring and reporting framework. This report, Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, is the first report on the implementation of the PoA.

This ground-breaking achievement would not have been possible without the support of the African Union Member States, RECs and partners. More than 40 AU Member States participated in the data collection workshops held at EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC and North Africa, while total of 50 Member States (91%) provided data for this biennial report. This represents an overwhelming response by both Member States and RECs. The AUC would like to congratulate and thank the Member States and RECs for this accomplishment. We hope to see the same level of support and participation for the next report, which covers the 2019-2020 period. The AUC has already started preparations for data collection for the next report.

My sincere gratitude goes to the EU and ACP for the financial support to the Programme *'Building disaster resilience to natural hazards in Sub-Saharan African regions, countries and communities'*, through which this report was made possible.

I would like to extend my special thanks to the UNDRR, who have always been a very supportive technical partner to the AUC. At the global level, UNDRR has done a commendable job in developing the Sendai Monitor for monitoring of the global DRR targets of the Sendai Framework for DRR. The UNDRR office for the African region has worked tirelessly to provide training and guidance to both the AUC and Member States on the Sendai Monitor. Despite the Sendai Monitor being a very powerful tool for tracking disaster losses and progress in implementing the global DRR targets of the Sendai Framework for DRR, one of the key challenges noted during the development of this biennial report was the low reporting on the Sendai Monitor. I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the Member States to strengthen their reporting on the Sendai Monitor. It is when we rigorously collect and analyse the disaster data that we come to realize the real impact disasters are having on our continent. Up-to-date and disaggregated data is an essential tool for any policy development process.

Before I conclude, Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, may I bring to your attention a few issues that are raised by this inaugural report:

- First, the report points out that allocation of resources to DRR still remains low, this in spite of the acknowledgement by the AU member states that DRR is an important issue. The policy frameworks and declarations all speak to the political will to further the DRR objective in the continent. I urge member state to translate the political will into more practical actions by increasing resource allocation to DRR.
- Second, the report noted that few countries and RECs reported to have DRR legislations in place. The AUC would like to urge member states to develop legislations that will empower their DRR institutions. This becomes particularly important as more and more disasters emerge to hit the continent. The COVID-19 pandemic is a case in point. Strong legislations and policies would ensure effective coordination and resource allocation for response and recovery efforts.
- Third, we commend the RECS and member states for the efforts they are making in improving the risk knowledge. Many capacity building activities, including knowledge networks, have been formed and countries are making steady progress in curriculum development for DRR. Most efforts, however, are centred on natural hazards. With the lessons from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, I would like to strongly encourage the member states to extend risk knowledge to other risks beyond natural hazards. The Covid-19 pandemic has opened our eyes to the need to incorporate epidemics in our risk profiles. I hope the next report will be full of lessons learnt and good practices in this regard.

The above are just but a few highlights of the key findings of this inaugural report.

To conclude, I would like once again to thank the Member States and RECs for the job well done, and I encourage them to make use of this report. As I mentioned earlier, the AUC is already working on the second report and hopes to use the lessons from this inaugural report, as well as your valuable guidance, to continue improving the quality of subsequent Africa biennial reports to make them as helpful as possible in supporting the implementation of the PoA.

Thank you