

OPENING REMARKS

Seventh High-Level Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction

19 November 2021, 10-11AM Nairobi Time

Opening Remarks

- **H..E Hon. Dr. Fred Okengo Matiang’i, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Interior & Coordination of National Government, Government of Kenya**
- **Hon. Leila Chikhaoui El Mahdaoui, Minister of Environment, Republic of Tunisia and Current Chair of the Africa Regional Platform Bureau;**
- **H.E Amb. Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment**

- **H.E. Dr Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)**
- **Distinguished Delegates**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**
- **All protocols observed,**

I am delighted to welcome you all to this 7th High-Level Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction being held in conjunction with the 8th session of the Africa Regional Platform.

These events are graciously hosted by the Government of the Republic of Kenya and co-organized together with the African Union Commission and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

The Africa Regional Platform has brought together over 750 Delegates from across the world. While this is an improvement on previous platforms, we still have work to do to achieve gender parity.

The Platform has provided the opportunity for Member States, Regional Economic Communities, civil society organizations and other stakeholders to undertake an in-depth review on progress

made so far and to agree on the two main draft outcome documents which this meeting is to consider. These are:

The draft implementation matrix of the Programme of Action for the implementation of Sendai Framework in Africa (2021-2025); and

The draft **Nairobi Declaration** which identifies DRR priorities and recommends concrete actions to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework and the AU Programme of Action.

Excellencies and Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am impressed with the progress that has been made since the adoption of the Tunis Declaration three years ago.

UNDRR has been working closely with all partners, including the African Union Commission, and, especially with the ***Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment Department***.

As a result of our collective efforts, 25 African countries now have disaster risk reduction strategies and plans of action aligned with the Sendai Framework.

I also note the following:

- i. Greater use of risk knowledge for evidence-based decision-making;
- ii. Enhanced capacity for multi-hazard early warning and early action, supported by 24/7 situation rooms;
- iii. Strengthened coordination mechanisms including the Africa Science and Technology Advisory Group, Youth Advisory Board, and Gender and DRR Platform; and
- iv. 28 African countries are now using the Sendai Framework Monitor to report on progress;

Despite these efforts, Africa remains the most vulnerable continent to natural hazards.

In addition to economic losses triggered by extreme weather events, the COVID-19 pandemic is threatening hard-won gains in poverty reduction. According to the African Development Bank, there could be as many as 465 million people living in extreme poverty by the end of the year, almost 35% of the African population.

This is a huge cause for concern and a reminder that disaster risk reduction is also about poverty risk reduction.

International development cooperation and solidarity must be strengthened if we are to recover from the pandemic, fight climate change and address the underlying drivers of disaster risk.

I am confident that the new implementation matrix of the Programme of Action and the **Nairobi Declaration**, once adopted, will encourage such support.

The rest of the world looks to you, not only as political leaders but also as thought leaders and innovators when it comes to developing disaster risk reduction frameworks and the way you promote and implement an all-of-society approach.

Much of what has been discussed and agreed here this week will inform the Mid-Term Review of the Sendai Framework which is now underway.

The outcomes of this Regional Platform will also feed into the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction hosted by the Government of Indonesia, next May.

I hope to see many of you there.

Thank you and I wish you a fruitful deliberation.

