



WELCOMING REMARKS BY

**H.E. Ambassador Josefa SACKO,**  
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Sustainable Environment (ARBE)  
African Union Commission

**COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER  
RISK REDUCTION (IDDR),**

**13 OCTOBER, 2022, MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE**

Your Excellency Filepe Jacinto Nyusi, President, Republic of Mozambique, and African Union Champion for Disaster Risk Management; I have the distinct honour to welcome you to preside over the commemoration of this year International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDR), here in the beautiful city of Maputo. The commemoration of this great day offers me an opportunity to congratulate you Mr. President upon your appointment as the African Union Champion for Disaster Risk Management by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in February 2022.

Since then, the DRR agenda has received significant political momentum under your leadership. Having read your work programme for the next three years, I am confident that the DRR agenda on the continent will witness significant transformation in building resilience. As you embark in implementing your work programme, I wish to take this opportunity to assure Your Excellency the African Union Commission's support to your work programme.

**Your Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,**

We are commemorating this year IDDR day amid ongoing disasters on the continent that amplified by the climate crisis. The Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2022 highlights that the climate emergency and the systemic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic point to a new reality. Understanding and reducing risk in a world of uncertainty is fundamental to achieving genuinely sustainable development and to reducing vulnerability.

The African continent is the most vulnerable to disaster risk. Since 2015, the continent recorded over **700 disaster events**, which affected over **80 million people, and killing over 66,000 people across the continent**. Droughts, cyclones and floods affected more people and undermine economic developments. In Mozambique, the memory from the cyclone Idai induced disaster is still fresh in our mind. Yet since Idai disaster, which resulted to **over 1000 mortalities** and affected hundreds of thousands of people, disasters continue to affect people and development on the continent. In the horn of Africa, ongoing drought, which was worst since the last 40 years has affected over **50 million people**.

I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to those who lost their lives to the disasters. Furthermore, I wish to request your excellences and distinguished audience to take a moment of silence in memory of the victim.

**Your Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,**

The disaster events I have just highlighted could have been substantially reduced or averted if early warning systems (EWS) were adequate. As we know it "we cannot stop natural disasters but can arm ourselves with knowledge; so lives wouldn't have been lost if there were disaster preparedness". As climate related disasters are on the rise, the need to develop multi-hazard early warning systems to respond to the increasing frequency and magnitude of climate hazards is not only **urgent but essential**.

In that light the AU Commission developed **institutional Framework for Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action and its delivery Programme**. The establishment of multi-hazard early warning systems on the continent would ensure **keeping people out of poverty and protection of development, including attainment of the goals enunciated in the AU Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want**.

This Framework sets out mechanisms, structures and operational directives for coordination of specialised departments of the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and Member States (MS).

To translate the framework into concrete action. The AU Commission developed the **Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Action System (AMHEWAS)**. As part of the implementation of AMHEWAS, three situation rooms have been established. These include the AMHEWAS Situation Room in Addis Ababa, IGAD Disaster Operations Situation Room in Nairobi, Kenya, and Climate Multi-Hazard Advisory Situation Room in Niamey, Niger.

**AMHEWAS represents the African Union vision to substantially reduce disaster losses by 2030 and to build resilience.**

Building resilience is a multi-prong task that requires multi-risk approach. As part of building resilience to the growing risk on the continent, the AU Commission has also developed **COVID-19 Recovery Framework for Africa**.

The COVID-19 crisis has revealed **how susceptible modern societies are to systemic risks and that a ‘domino effect’ across infrastructural, social, environmental, political, and economic systems in each society can alter or completely disrupt their original configuration**.

The pandemic and other crises in Africa have further **exacerbated vulnerability, particularly for women, children, people living with disabilities, displaced populations and refugees** and the poor, among other vulnerable groups, requiring a holistic approach to recovery to ensure no one is left behind.

Planning for and implementing risk-informed and resilient recovery interventions from COVID-19 impacts will be critical for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and African Aspirations as defined in Agenda 2063.

Taking cognisance of this need, the African Union Heads of State and Government expressed strong commitment to the COVID-19 response and recovery through their Thirty-Four Ordinary Session (Decision - Assembly/AU/Dec.797(XXXIV) held in February 2021 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and the later in the Summit on Financing African Economies held on 18 May 2021 in Paris.

The Assembly of the Union made a strong call for closer engagement of sectors and stakeholders for harmonised and coordinated efforts to COVID-19 response and recovery on the continent. This was further reiterated by the Peace and Security Council in their 1043rd meeting held on 29 October 2021 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Furthermore, the Specialised Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment from 9-10 November 2020, had encouraged Member States, the African Union Commission (AUC) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to mobilise financial, technical and human resources to address the recovery efforts.

In this regard, the AUC, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other stakeholders, developed a COVID-19 Recovery Framework for Africa.

The goal of the Framework is to guide resilient socio-economic recovery efforts at the continental, regional and national levels from a multi-risk perspective, creating preconditions for building resilient societies in the African continent. The Framework has been developed in collaboration with the (RECs).

In addition, the AU Commission developed a Green Recovery Action Plan (GRAP) to ensure that Africa countries take COVID-19 as an opportunity to rebuild greener and resilient communities.

**Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

With this background, allow me to thank our member states and RECs who provided significant contributions to these frameworks. In similar vein, I wish to extend our gratitude to our partners for their financial and technical support. To name a few, the European Union, Government of Italy, Sweden, UNDRR, UNDP among others.

I thank you.