



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

**OPENING STATEMENT**

**AT THE**

**9<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF AFRICA REGIONAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER  
RISK REDUCTION**

**BY**

**DR SAARA KUUGONGELWA-AMADHILA, MP**

**PRIME MINISTER**

Tuesday, 22 October 2024  
Mercure Hotel, Windhoek, Khomas Region

*Check Against Delivery*

- Master of Ceremonies;
- Mr. Kamal Kishore, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR);
- Hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers both from Namibia and other countries;
- Heads of Delegations;
- Your Worship Queen Kamati, Mayor of the City of Windhoek
- Honourable Regional Governors
- Honourable Chairpersons of Regional Councils
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Distinguished Delegates;
- Members of the Media;
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning and a Warm Welcome to Windhoek, the Capital City of the Republic of Namibia!

1. It is an honour and privilege for me to , on behalf of the government and people of Namibia welcome all distinguished delegates to the 9th Africa Regional Platform and the 8th High-Level Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction, under the theme “Act Now for the Resilient Africa We Want.”

Namibia is pleased to be accorded this rare and enriching opportunity to host this Platform. We trust that you will find your stay in Namibia very memorable. And please feel all welcome to Namibia!

2. I am particularly pleased to note a very interactive programme for this Platform. I have no doubt therefore that it will unpack critical issues to strengthen disaster risk management. I am also pleased to note the diverse representation of all delegates, which is affirmation of the multi-stakeholder role in addressing disaster risks.
3. I am informed that this Platform will, amongst others, reflect on the progress we have made as a continent towards the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration adopted during the Eighth session of the Africa Regional platform held in Nairobi, Kenya in 2021. Indeed, the Nairobi Declaration has positioned our continent to strengthen disaster risk reduction efforts by aligning them with the Sendai

Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and regional development goals. This Platform provide the perfect opportunity for sharing experiences and peer learnings between Member States in order to augment the implementation of the Sendai Framework, its action plan and strengthen the disaster risk institutions.

4. The Nairobi Declaration of 2021 reiterated the importance of multi-hazard early warning systems and the need for Member States to prioritize early action in addressing disaster risks. In response to this call and in our endeavor to ensure that every person on earth is covered by multi-hazard early warning systems, Namibia is currently in the process of setting up an Emergency Operations Center that will eventually be linked to the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre and the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System.
5. Namibia continues to undertake reforms aimed at strengthening the disaster risk framework, including Early Warning Systems. I am pleased to inform you that annually, Namibia undertakes the vulnerability assessments and analysis, which proactively inform response measures to predicted disasters. The vulnerability

assessments and analysis informs policy decision to address occurring disasters, but also to strengthen resilience through investing in infrastructure and enhancing capacities in disaster risk management.

6. Africa is on the frontline of the climate crisis and faces a multitude of disasters, from relentless climate extremes to environmental degradation. Of late, the continent has witnessed severe disasters, including tropical cyclones, floods, droughts, and veld fires, which have resulted in significant economic losses and displacement of livelihood and precious loss of lives.
7. Indeed, the Nairobi Declaration urged Member States to enhance the collation and analysis of disaster data, particularly focusing on disaggregation by gender, age, disability, and location for informed decision-making. To this effect, the government of the Republic of Namibia continue to populate the disaster Loss and Damage Database, the Sendai Framework Monitor and contributing to the compilation of the SADC Biennial Reports on Disaster Risk Reduction. These efforts are not only critical to accelerating the Sendai Framework's goals, but they also provide a platform for

tracking progress, enhancing national and regional cooperation, and guiding policy adjustments.

8. The SADC Region is currently going through one of the worst droughts in recent years, driven by the El Niño phenomenon. This situation resulted in threatened lives and livelihoods of about 58 million people, with food and water security severely compromised. This led to most Member States declaring a state of disaster on account of drought. The region subsequently launched a joint Appeal for assistance to supplement their national responses.
9. The Government of the Republic of Namibia declared a State of National Disaster (Drought) on 22 May 2024. This follows a crop assessment which confirmed that the national aggregated cereal production of white maize, sorghum, pearl millet, and wheat for 2024 has decreased by 53%. In addition, a decrease of 69.7% on dam water levels was observed in March 2024. As a result, there is a significant deterioration of household food security in various regions of the country.
10. Subsequently, the Namibian government approved a nationwide drought relief programme comprising of food assistance to

vulnerable households, livestock support for farmers and water provisions to drought-stricken communities. The cost of these interventions is estimated at over US\$90 million (or N\$1.6 billion). A funding gap of US\$27 Million (N\$482 million) exists, for which Government appeal for assistance.

11. Positive responses to our appeal for assistance have been received from the development partners for which we are grateful. Assistance comes in the form of cash donations and in kind donations of food and equipment made directly to the government and donations in cash and kind made through the UN agencies. The food assistance under the drought relief programme covers 373,276 households (translating into about 1.26 million people), representing 41% of the population.
  
12. The disaster risk management would benefit from peer learning and leveraging on innovations and technology. In Namibia, we have started to digitize all beneficiaries' data and to monetize the relief assistance through the introduction of voucher cards to beneficiaries which are redeemed at contracted local business enterprises, largely small business enterprises.

13. This Platform is an opportunity for us to look at where resources are urgently required and to discuss the financing of the interventions to mitigate the short and long-term impacts of disasters and build resilience. I am happy to see that the programme will zoom into changing the way money is invested to reduce disaster risks, and the roles of all stakeholders, including non-State actors.
14. In harmony with the Nairobi Declaration, the government of the Republic of Namibia developed a National Risk Profile which profiled about 14 hazards which the country is exposed to. This will enhance our planning and prioritization of resources to mitigate the impacts of these hazards.
15. Correspondingly, the government, in close collaboration with development partners and all relevant stakeholders, is developing a National Resilience Building Strategy, which will be aligned to the National Risk Profiles. This exercise shall culminate in the development of resilience strategies to safeguard the lives and livelihoods of our vulnerable communities against the detrimental effects of disasters.



16. In 2017, Namibia commenced with the process to Mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation into Developmental Planning. This is aimed to break the cycle of disasters by integrating risk reduction measures across all sectors.
  
17. As we advocate for disaster risk reduction interventions, we must put our communities at the center, providing them with education to understand the various risks and hazards they face, while ensuring early warning systems are accessible to all members of our communities.
  
18. Moreover, let us appreciate the disaster relief support provided by individuals, private sector and civil society in protecting lives and livelihoods against the adverse impacts of disasters and consider ways to better coordinate it and optimize it.

Director of Ceremonies, Dear Delegates

19. As I conclude, I would like to urge all of us to ensure that the deliberations of this Ninth Regional Platform are fruitful and culminate into an inclusive and actionable outcome “Windhoek

Declaration” that will serve as a catalyst to the resilient Africa we want.

I thank you.