



**CLOSING REMARKS OF AMBASSADOR HAROLD SAFFA,
CHAIR OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

**Your Excellency, John Mutorwa, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Works and
Transport of the Republic of Namibia**

Honorable Ministers in Charge of Disaster Risk Management

Your Worship, the Mayor of the City of Windhoek

**H.E. Kamal Kishore; Special Representative of the United Nations for Disaster
Risk Reduction**

Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners

**Distinguished Representatives from the African Union Member States and
Regional Economic Communities**

Representatives of Development Partners

Members of the Media

All Protocol duly observed

1. We are at the end of an important event on Disaster Risk Reduction co-organized by the African Union Commission, UNDRR, SADC Secretariat and the Government of the Republic of Namibia.
2. Once again, on behalf of the African Union, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Republic of Namibia for the excellent hospitality and facilities accorded to all the delegates in this beautiful and very clean city of Windhoek.

3. Let me also express my gratitude to our co-organizers the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction and the Southern African Development Community.
4. I commend the diligence of all the participants who have worked tirelessly to produce the Windhoek Declaration to be translated into action for the purpose of building a resilient Africa that we ALL Want.
5. This is a product of negotiations and compromises as a declaration cannot pack all the outcomes of the 4-day events as well as to be able to reflect in details the aspirations of everybody, it is rather a summary of the key outcomes.
6. **Excellencies**, producing a great declaration alone is not good enough and I therefore call upon all Disaster Risk Reduction stakeholders, including Member States, Regional Economic Communities, Partners, the Private Sector and Non State Actors to all rally behind the implementation of this declaration.
7. Understanding Disaster Risks, Strengthening Disaster risk governance to manage Disaster risks, Investing in Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience and enhancing preparedness for effective response and Build Back Better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction are all relevant and need to be implemented concomitantly by relevant stakeholders to address the main concerns of Africa in terms of Disaster management.

Excellencies

8. We have learnt about all the challenges that frustrate efforts to reduce disasters such as limited data, weak coordination among different players, lack of synergies among programmes and initiatives as well as limited financial and human resources.

9. Disaster Risk Reduction being every one's business, all stakeholders have to play their role in addressing these constraints and thus ensure that we make disaster risk reduction a core development agenda.

10. At the African Union Commission, efforts are being made through implementation of Disaster Risk Governance Programme funded by European Union, Sahel Resilience Project funded by Sweden and UNDP, Africa Urban Resilience Programme funded by GIZ and Africa Multi-Hazards Early Warning and Early Action Programme funded by the Government of Italy, Denmark, UNDRR and CIMA Foundation, NORCAP and most recently the World Bank. Thank you again to all these partners for their generous support.

11. I would like to seize the opportunity to once more, urge all African Union member States and Regional Economic Communities to keep the momentum and work synergistically with the African Union Commission in the implementation of this declaration and beyond.

12. Before concluding, I would like to thank all the delegations which took time to thank all the Honourable Ministers for taking time from their busy schedules to attend this very important gathering in the Disaster Risk Reduction calendar of our continent.

13. Let me also once again express our gratitude to all the participants, the organizers, the interpreters and my team from the African union for the job well done.

14. I wish all participants a safe return to their respective families and countries. I thank you for your kind attention.