

**JOHANNESBURG RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR
THE 2005 WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION**

3 June 2004,
African Regional Consultation on Disaster Reduction,
Johannesburg, Republic of South Africa

AFRICAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON DISASTER REDUCTION

in Preparation for the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction

2- 3 June 2004,
Johannesburg, South Africa

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Preamble

The occurrence of disasters triggered by natural hazards, the number of people affected and economic losses are rising in Africa.

Africa is the only continent where the regional share of reported disasters in the world total has increased over the last decade. Hydro-meteorological hazards (droughts, floods, windstorms - particularly tropical cyclones, landslides and wildfire) occur most pervasively and account for most of the people affected by disasters, drought being the principal among these. Less frequent hazards include pest infestation - such as locust plagues, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions. In 2000-2001, about 35 million people, equivalent to 13 per cent of the total population in Africa, were affected by disasters caused by natural hazards.

The impacts of epidemics and conflicts severely increase vulnerability of people to natural hazards. In particular, the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria, tuberculosis and water-borne diseases are impacting households and communities so severely that they place downward pressure on sustainable development, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Their impacts should be addressed as part of the strategic directions recommended in this document.

The international community has set targets for global sustainable development and poverty reduction in Agenda 21 of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development and the 2000 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Progress in reducing vulnerabilities to disasters is essential for achieving the MDGs. In turn, attaining the MDGs is crucial for reducing vulnerability to disasters. To achieve the Agenda 21 objectives, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) called for the mainstreaming of disaster risk management in development. With specific regard to Africa, Section 8 of the Plan urges actions at all levels to assist Africa to deal effectively with disasters induced by natural hazards and conflicts - including their environmental and humanitarian impacts - within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and National Governments have some experience in disaster management. The international community has also been contributing to improve disaster management. However, the effectiveness of these institutions and initiatives in stemming the tide of increasing vulnerability to and impacts of disasters is limited. Hence the need for a strategic approach to improving and enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of disaster risk reduction in Africa by emphasizing disaster risk management.

Therefore, the Commission of the AU, the NEPAD Secretariat and UN/ISDR Africa organized an African Regional Consultation on Disaster Reduction in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 2 and 3 June 2004, to consider and recommend aspects of a draft Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction aimed at integrating disaster risk reduction into sustainable development activities at all levels, to be considered for the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Kobe-Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005.

Empirical evidence indicates that investment in disaster risk reduction acts as an insurance policy for investment and development gains in Africa.

In this regard, the meeting made the following recommendations, based on discussions and the draft Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Reduction:

2. Recommendations & Strategic Directions

2.1. Political commitment and better institutional arrangements for disaster risk reduction as a regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national priority with strong organizational basis for implementation

The proposed strategic directions to increase political commitment to disaster risk reduction are:

- To strengthen lobbying and advocacy for political commitment, responsibility and accountability.
- To strengthen institutional frameworks for disaster risk reduction at all levels.
- To increase resource allocation for disaster risk reduction.
- To strengthen the capacities of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to facilitate the implementation of the proposed Africa Regional Strategy.
- To harmonize terms and policies in disaster risk reduction.
- To develop national platforms for disaster risk reduction.
- To strengthen the decentralization of disaster risk reduction interventions.
- To increase public participation in planning and implementing disaster risk reduction interventions.
- To increase gender sensitivity of disaster risk reduction policies, legislation and programmes.
- To promote increased inter-country cooperation and coordination.

2.2. Improved identification and assessment of disaster risks and enhanced early warning

The proposed strategic directions to improve identification and assessment of disaster risks are:

- To improve the quality of information and data on disaster risks.
- To improve identification, assessment and monitoring of hazards, vulnerabilities and capacities.
- To strengthen early warning systems, institutions, capacities and resource base, including observational and research sub-systems.
- To improve communication and information exchange among stakeholders in risk identification and assessment.
- To engender and improve integration and coordination of risk identification and assessment processes and interventions in all development programmes.

2.3. Enhanced knowledge management, public awareness and education to build a culture of resilient communities

The proposed strategic directions to enhance knowledge management for disaster risk reduction are:

- To enhance the generation of information (statistics and data).
- To increase access to and dissemination of information.
- To improve communications in disaster risk reduction.
- To develop inventory and exchange of best practices.
- To develop and strengthen educational, technical and training institutions in disaster risk reduction.
- To develop a clear research agenda and expand research on disaster risk reduction.

The proposed strategic directions to raise public awareness of and education on disaster risk reduction are:

- To improve information dissemination and communication.
- To promote integration of disaster risk reduction in education at all levels.

- To expand the role of the media to promote a culture of prevention.
- To strengthen the role of traditional and local authorities and incorporate their experience into local and national action.
- To strengthen the role of women, the youth and other major groups in disaster risk reduction.

2.4. Disaster risk reduction integrated into rehabilitation and reconstruction including post-conflict situations

The proposed strategic directions to deal with challenges facing countries emerging from major natural hazards and conflict situations include:

- To ensure that programmes reintegrating internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees and ex-combatants into civil life are sustainable and that massive population movements do not pose a further risk to development.
- To address land and environmental degradation.
- To ensure that rehabilitation of infrastructure damage incorporates risk reduction considerations.
- To include disaster risk reduction in the establishment of rural development programmes, to address extreme poverty.
- To use recovery opportunities to develop capacities and programmes to reduce the impact of natural hazards.
- **To assist Governments in post-conflict situations with demining efforts, as an integral component of development projects.**

2.5. Strengthen disaster preparedness, contingency planning and community involvement in risk reduction

The proposed strategic directions to integrate disaster risk reduction for contingency planning and community involvement, including emergency management, are:

- To advocate the inclusion of disaster risk reduction in all development strategies at local, national, sub-regional and regional levels.
- To prepare and disseminate guidelines for integrating disaster risk reduction in development planning and activities.
- To facilitate the orientation of emergency response management towards disaster risk reduction.
- To facilitate the strengthening of contingency planning and other preparedness measures in emergency management.
- To integrate traditional and indigenous knowledge and coping mechanisms into disaster reduction policies.
- To ensure community consultation processes.

2.6. Regional and international cooperation as a key component to enhance knowledge, capacity and motivation needed at national and local levels to support African countries

The proposed strategic directions for international cooperation to support national efforts to integrate disaster risk reduction are:

- To provide systematic support to African countries to assist in disaster risk reduction initiatives, particularly through capacity building and financial and technical assistance.
- To establish a component of disaster risk reduction in all development and humanitarian assistance programmes to protect development gains while ensuring that these programmes do not contribute to the accumulation of risks.
- The UN Secretary General to ensure stronger commitment by the United Nations to address and support efforts of member States to integrate disaster reduction into UN programmes in a coordinated fashion in Africa.
- To ensure that international development and financial institutions include disaster risk reduction in all their activities as a means of insuring investment and development gains in Africa.

- To undertake social and cost-analysis studies of the impact of disasters on development in Africa, as well as analyses of the savings made through investment in disaster risk reduction.

3. Implementation of recommendations and proposed Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction

Effective implementation of the above recommendations depends crucially on the institutional arrangements for its development and management. Developing an African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction has been initiated, involving the participation of RECs and national authorities through a consultative process. This participatory approach will continue throughout the implementation of the recommendations and the Strategy.

The following stakeholders have key roles to play in the implementation of the recommendations and the African Strategy:

AU: The AU should adopt an Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and a Programme of Action. The AU/NEPAD should focus on strategic guidance, providing facilitating support, promoting support from development partners, coordination at the regional level and establishment of close links with and between RECs.

RECs¹: The RECs should focus on interpreting strategic guidance for their member States, facilitating the implementation of the recommendations and African Strategy within their sub-regions, and coordination, particularly in respect of inter-State initiatives. They are to implement this through establishing sub-regional disaster risk reduction platforms and focal points, and through the preparation of programmes for resource mobilization to support national and sub-regional efforts.

Africa Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction: This Group has been established by the AU on the recommendation of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (UN-IATF/DR). Chaired by the AU, its membership comprises the Commission of the AU, the NEPAD Secretariat and all RECs as well as select regional and UN agencies. UN/ISDR Africa provides support to the Group. The Group's goal is to deploy efforts and support those of National Governments to advance disaster risk reduction and facilitate the mainstreaming and integration of disaster risk reduction in all phases of development in Africa to help achieve NEPAD objectives.

National Governments: They will lead the process of developing disaster risk reduction capacities and the integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development. They will also ensure the establishment of enabling environments, including by adopting enabling legislation and setting up the relevant national mechanisms and platforms to engage participation by all stakeholders. They will take the necessary steps to empower the relevant RECs to establish regional disaster risk reduction platforms and focal points to coordinate sub-regional approaches to disaster risk reduction.

Major groups: Civil society organizations, the private sector and other major groups should collaborate with disaster risk reduction authorities by participating in the development and implementation of the recommendations and African Strategy within the context of national participatory processes that National Governments will develop in collaboration with them.

International financial and development partners: All the above institutions and groups will need to work together to provide the international financial, development and humanitarian partners with guidance on the provision of assistance and resources for disaster risk and vulnerability reduction and on the need to include disaster risk reduction into their programmes. The partners' assistance will be targeted mainly towards support

¹ The RECs recognized by the AU are the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA).

for risk and vulnerability identification, information management and communications, capacity building, institutional strengthening, training, research and emergency management.

United Nations: The UN and its Programmes and specialized agencies are called upon to include objectives of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) in all their programmes by developing action in this regard and by reporting annually on the impact of these actions.

4. Monitoring responsibilities

The AU/NEPAD, RECs and National Governments will monitor the implementation of the above recommendations and that of the proposed African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction from complementary perspectives, as follows:

AU: Based on the principle of subsidiarity, the monitoring responsibility of the AU Commission/NEPAD Secretariat will be limited to the sub-regional level. They will monitor the progress of RECs towards achieving the above recommendations and the African Strategy goal, objectives and outputs. Where necessary, the AU will facilitate assistance under the Strategy to help RECs develop monitoring at the sub-regional level.

RECs: The RECs will monitor the implementation of the above recommendations and that of the proposed African strategy at the sub-regional level by focusing on implementation and outputs of the recommendations and African strategy in REC member countries. They will publish periodic overview reports on gaps in implementation of disaster risk reduction policies by countries in their sub-regions, based on reporting requirements of Governments to be agreed beforehand between them.

National Governments: Governments should monitor objectives and outputs at national and local levels. They will compile periodic summary reports on the state of disaster risk reduction in their jurisdictions and develop a set of targets to address the gaps and challenges. Each country will develop its own indicators and monitoring mechanisms in line with the objectives of the Strategy.

United Nations: The UN and its Programmes and specialized agencies, through the coordination of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (UN-IATF/DR) and the UN/ISDR Secretariat, are requested to monitor and report on international efforts to include disaster risk reduction strategies in their programmes.