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Ninth Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction: 21-24 October 2024

The multiplicity of hazards that exist on the African continent, such as earthquakes, droughts, floods, tropical storms, and landslides, means that the threat of disasters is never far from the continent. However, given sufficient information, foresight, and planning, this threat – or risk – of disasters can be reduced and managed to minimize loss and damage.

The Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (AfRP) is the main disaster risk reduction (DRR) coordination mechanism for Africa. It held its ninth meeting in Windhoek, Namibia, on the theme “Act Now for the Resilient Africa We Want.” The Ninth AfRP (AfRP-9) was an opportunity for stakeholders representing a diverse range of sectors, from local communities to subnational, national, and regional governments, to share their experiences and exchange ideas on how to translate DRR knowledge into action to build a more resilient Africa.

AfRP-9 focused on issues critical for enhancing Africa’s disaster preparedness, including: applying risk information for transformative governance; investing to reduce risk, by changing the way money is spent; and reducing loss and damage, by saving lives and protecting investments. The Forum featured a combination of plenary, thematic, and working sessions that provided participants with the opportunity to deep dive into these important topics and chart a path forward for Africa’s resilience.

Key messages that emerged from the Forum included the fact that early warning and early action are essential for reducing disaster risk and minimizing the loss and damage from disasters. Such early warning and action require effective collaboration across the whole of society and government, as all stakeholders, from local communities to the private sector, to ministers and parliamentarians, have a responsibility and role to play. Early warning also requires a paradigm shift from reactive action to proactive planning, and the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS) Programme was showcased as an important mechanism for proactive action on the continent.

Back-to-back with the AfRP-9, the Eighth High-Level Meeting on DRR also convened, bringing together African Ministers and Heads of Delegation to adopt the outcome of the Forum, particularly the Windhoek Declaration. This Declaration contains calls to action for Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), local authorities, the private sector, civil

society, and all members of society to play a part in implementing disaster risk management (DRM) activities. The Declaration also urges Member States and other relevant bodies to mainstream DRR in development programmes in all sectors.

AfRP-9 took place from 22-24 October 2024 in Windhoek, Namibia, with the Eighth High-Level Meeting on DRR also convening on 24 October. The two events were hosted by the Government of Namibia and organized by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), African Union Commission (AUC), and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

These meetings were preceded by the Early Warnings for All Multi-Stakeholder Forum for Africa, Pre-Conference Stakeholder Consultations, and the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Disaster Preparedness Workshop 2024, which all took place on 21 October. Over 700 participants, representing every sector of society, attended the four-day event.

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A Brief History of Disaster Risk Reduction

DRR includes all the policies, strategies, and measures that can make people, cities, and countries more resilient to hazards, and reduce risk and vulnerability to disasters. The following paragraphs highlight important institutions and recent developments in the international and African DRR agendas.

Third UN World Conference on DRR: This meeting convened from 14-18 March 2015, in Sendai, Japan, and adopted the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030, which is the successor to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. The Sendai Framework focuses on four priorities for action – understanding disaster risk; strengthening disaster risk governance; investing in DRR; and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction – for achieving a set of seven global targets. Its global targets are to:

- substantially reduce global disaster mortality;
- substantially reduce the number of people affected by disaster;
- reduce direct disaster economic losses in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP);
- substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services;
- substantially increase the number of countries with national and local DRR strategies;
- substantially enhance international cooperation for developing countries to implement the Framework; and
- substantially increase the availability of, and access to, multi-hazard early warning systems (EWS) and disaster risk information and assessments.

Regional Platforms for DRR: Regional DRR Platforms are multi-stakeholder fora that provide an opportunity for DRR stakeholders, at the regional level, to showcase practical applications, exchange experiences, and develop joint statements, strategies, and action plans, which guide decision makers and practitioners. Recognizing that risks and vulnerabilities go beyond national boundaries, the Platforms reflect the commitment of governments to improve coordination and implementation of DRR activities, while linking to international and national efforts.

The UN Office for DRR (UNDRR) regional offices serve as the supporting secretariats for regional platforms. There are currently five regional platforms, for: Africa; the Americas and the Caribbean; Arab States; Asia-Pacific; and Europe and Central Asia.

Africa Regional Platform: The AfRP, which takes place every three years, brings together Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), development partners, and other DRR stakeholders to review progress and share experiences, good practices, and lessons learned on DRR at the regional level. It seeks to build a consensus on the way forward to enable Member States to deliver on their commitments to the Sendai Framework.

Sixth Africa Regional Platform and the Fifth High-Level Meeting on DRR: These meetings took place in Balaclava, Mauritius, in November 2016, and focused on enhancing understanding of disaster risk, improving disaster risk governance, increasing national and regional resilience, enhancing disaster

preparedness, and linking the Sendai Framework to Africa through an African Programme of Action (PoA). The Fifth High-Level Meeting on DRR brought together ministers and high-level representatives to adopt the outcomes of the Platform, including the PoA for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa. The PoA is the guiding continental framework to advance the DRR agenda in coherence with sustainable development, climate change, and other related actions for resilience. The Meeting also adopted the [Mauritius Declaration](#) on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa.

Africa-Arab Platform on DRR: This meeting took place in October 2018 in Tunis, Tunisia, under the theme “Towards Disaster Risk Informed and Inclusive Sustainable Development.” The meeting comprised the Seventh Africa Regional Platform and the Sixth High-level Meeting on DRR, and the Fourth Arab Conference on DRR. Ministers and Heads of Delegations adopted the [Tunis Declaration](#) on accelerating the implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR and the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR. The Declaration, *inter alia*, calls on the AUC to prepare a biennial report on DRR in Africa and urges African states and local authorities to include DRR and resilience approaches in relevant national legal frameworks, not only in DRM acts but also in sectoral legislation.

Eighth Africa Regional Platform on DRR: This event took place virtually in November 2021, followed by the Seventh High-Level Meeting on DRR, in a hybrid format, both online and in Nairobi, Kenya. Held on the theme “Towards Disaster Risk-Informed Development for a Resilient Africa in a COVID-19 Transformed World,” the meeting aimed to review progress in implementing the Sendai Framework and its PoA in Africa. Ministers and Heads of Delegations adopted the [Nairobi Declaration](#) on accelerating the path to achieving the goals and targets of the PoA for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 in Africa. Through this Declaration, Ministers in charge of disaster risk called on African Union (AU) Member States and RECs to, among other things, increase the annual budgetary allocation for implementing DRR strategies, programmes, and plans of action.



Delegates are welcomed to AfRP-9 with a traditional Namibian dance performance.



Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for DRR and Head, UNDRR

Report of AfRP-9

Opening Ceremony

On Tuesday, 22 October, AfRP-9 opened with a musical performance by the National Cultural Group of Namibia.

Master of Ceremonies I-Ben Natangwe Nashandi, Executive Director, Office of the Prime Minister, Namibia, welcomed participants, calling for the conference to chart a sustainable course for resilience building and risk reduction for Africa given the intensifying climate crisis.

Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for DRR and Head, UNDRR, delivered opening remarks, calling Africa a “litmus test” for determining achievement of the Sendai Framework on DRR. He said Africa has the largest number of least developed countries (LDCs) and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), both of which face intensifying climate risks and challenges from fragility, vulnerability, and conflict. He commended Africa on its progress and leadership in building resilience, including with the adoption of the first early warning systems on the continent, new DRR policies and legislation, risk forecasting and information systems, and new approaches to DRM. He supported using the Ubuntu concept that our shared humanity connects us all to develop cooperation to deliver resilience and fulfill the goals of [Africa’s Agenda 2063](#).

Anderson Banda, Director, Southern African Development Community (SADC) Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC), said this meeting offers a platform to build consensus on work needed to be done by regions and communities to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063, and the Sendai Framework. He added that this must be done through mainstreaming DRR, climate change adaptation, risk governance, and risk-proof resilience in national development plans. Banda also advocated for policy and legal frameworks for DRR programmes which ensure the reduction of communities’ vulnerabilities.

Harsen Nyambe, Director, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, AUC, described the challenges that Africa is facing, which undermine its resilience efforts. He highlighted that in 2022 alone, weather, climate, and water-related disasters

caused an estimated economic loss of USD 9.5 billion for the continent. To address these losses and challenges, he said Africa must cultivate the ability to feed itself even in the face of droughts, and put in place the right infrastructure, transportation systems, electricity, and access to education. He concluded that this integrated approach is crucial for the continent’s ability to manage disaster risk.

In his keynote address, John Mutorwa, Deputy Prime Minister, Namibia, and Chair of the AfRP Bureau, speaking on behalf of Saara Kuugongelwa, Prime Minister of Namibia, reaffirmed the role of multiple stakeholders in addressing disaster risk. He underlined AfRP-9 as an opportunity for experience sharing and peer learning among African countries to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework and its PoA for Africa.

Recalling the 2021 Nairobi Declaration adopted at AfRP-8 and its provisions on multi-hazard EWS, Mutorwa outlined Namibia’s response, including:

- ongoing establishment of an emergency operations center that will be linked to the SADC SHOC and the AMHEWAS;
- annual vulnerability assessments and analyses that proactively inform the response to predicted disasters and policy decisions to address ongoing disasters; and
- development of a national risk profile including 14 hazards to which Namibia is exposed, to help with prioritizing responses.

Closing the opening ceremony, Master of Ceremony Nashandi urged for both evaluating progress since adoption of the Nairobi Declaration in 2021, and focusing on the calls to action arising from the [Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework](#). He called on participants to be guided by Ubuntu.

Plenary Sessions

Applying Risk Information for Transformative Governance: On Tuesday, 22 October, Amjad Abbashar, Chief, UNDRR Regional Office for Africa, called for concrete recommendations to enhance the 2021 Nairobi Declaration.

Abbashar noted that 39 African countries have reported on one or more of the seven Sendai Framework targets:

- on reduction of mortality, 44 Sub-Saharan countries reported no change, despite an almost 50% reduction in the global average mortality rate;



Panel speakers during the session ‘Applying Risk Information for Transformative Governance’, moderated by **Amjad Abbashar**, Chief, UNDRR Regional Office for Africa

- on the number of people affected by disasters, 22 million Africans are affected annually, representing an increase from 1,930 to 2,000 per 100,000 from 2014 to 2023;
- on direct economic losses, losses as a share of GDP have increased from 0.54% to 2.94%;
- on impacts on infrastructure and basic services, over 11,000 critical infrastructures were destroyed between 2015 and 2022;
- on DRR strategies, countries with national strategies increased from 11 in 2015 to 32 in 2024;
- on international cooperation and financial flows, 10 countries reported receiving official development assistance and other official flows for supporting DRR actions from 2015 to 2021, but reporting on this target has drastically decreased; and
- on EWS, 21 countries reported having multi-hazard EWS, but 15 are “limited” to “moderate.”

Keynote Speaker Harsen Nyambe, Director of Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, AUC, called for empowering effective governance to mitigate, not just react to, risk through risk information. He urged identifying capacities, tracking patterns in how risks evolve, and identifying areas of future risks such as urbanization, environmental degradation, and climate change. Saffa further called for integrating risk reduction into policies and development planning using EWS, risk information systems, disaster databases, and risk mapping, and embedding risk management into every level and sector, such as agriculture, health, urban planning, and energy.

Surekha Ramessur, SADC Climate Services Centre, reiterated that multi-sectoral approaches integrating sectors, such as water, food, and agriculture, is crucial for DRM. She also emphasized the need for data for effective climate services, acknowledging remaining challenges, such as inadequate coordination and collaboration across sectors and limited access to technology and information.

Hellen Likando, Director, Directorate Disaster Risk Management, Office of the Prime Minister, Namibia, discussed how national strategies for mainstreaming DRM were adjusted for the community level in order to identify which risks are most prominent for those worst affected by disasters. She described: by-laws in Namibia that require new buildings to satisfy requirements of an environment risk assessment; investments in climate-smart agriculture to help identify effective farming techniques to confront droughts; and new desalination technology.

Jean-Rigobert Tshimanga Musunganyi, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Interior, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), reported on his ministry’s coordination with other ministries to collect data, decentralize authority and information, and ensure local authorities have decision-making capacities for DRM. He noted cities with large populations must provide resilient infrastructure for their people and address the vulnerabilities they experience in times of disaster.

Dorcas Wangu, Humanitarian Response Coordinator, Oxfam, lamented that government policies remain mostly reactive, and underlined the need for risk-informed policies and frameworks



Dorcas Wangu, Humanitarian Response Coordinator, Oxfam

for sustainability. She described her organization’s work with communities and highlighted lessons learned, including:

- putting communities in the “driving seat” of DRM, given their lived experience and the abundance of knowledge they hold;
- adopting a resilience approach requiring all investments to apply a risk lens;
- ensuring risk communication can be understood by the most vulnerable people, by, for instance, providing risk information in accessible formats;
- minimizing protection gaps through investment in risk-informed social protection mechanisms; and
- working with communities to support affordable risk transfer by linking them to insurance and other innovative solutions.

Subsequent discussions considered how governments can work more effectively with civil society, which communication mechanisms and risk assessment methods can be used, and how to report on the Sendai Framework’s targets.

In their responses, Musunganyi explained the use of a consultation framework that includes regular meetings and information exchange for collaborating with civil society, humanitarian agencies, and the UN system. Wangu underlined that no communication mechanism is perfect, and called for



Hellen Likando, Director, Directorate Disaster Risk Management, Office of the Prime Minister, Namibia



The Ombetja Yehinga Organisation, a Namibian youth organization, perform a piece titled 'Calling the Rain,' highlighting the many challenges faced by local communities.

allowing target communities to select appropriate mechanisms, such as social media for youth and local radio stations, for those that are not literate.

During the break, there was a performance by the Ombetja Yehinga Organisation Namibian youth group, titled 'Calling the Rain.'

Investing to Reduce Risk: Changing the Way Money Is Spent: On Tuesday, 22 October, Moderator Gina Bonne, Head of Environment and Climate Change, Indian Ocean Commission, opened this session. Before introducing the panelists, she challenged the audience to consider changing the way money is spent given that the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework showed the African continent experienced total losses of 12.3% of GDP between 2015 and 2021.

Kamal Kishore, UNDRR, noted studies have found that USD 800 billion is expected to be lost annually due to disasters. He urged a full spectrum approach in financing for climate change and disasters, alongside immediate disaster relief and response. Kishore observed that while the present global discussion on DRR is focused on increased official development assistance,

every country – regardless of their level of development – should include a budget for DRR in their national budgets.

Rohey John-Manjang, Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Natural Resources, The Gambia, encouraged the use of legal instruments to guide action on risk management. She stated that strategy and policy documents will motivate understanding and action on DRR, and that building public-private partnerships into the development agenda will broaden financial sources. John-Manjang said presently only 10% of resources go to the people actually targeted, asking how to change this so that at least 70% reaches vulnerable communities. She noted that in The Gambia, efforts are underway to reduce the top-down approach, with policymakers and local populations co-designing and co-implementing projects and determining resource allocation based on needs. She said this approach will enable local populations impacted by disasters to take ownership of projects and be empowered, as well as reduce poverty.

Gabriel Pollen, Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit, Office of the Vice President, Zambia, said the Mosotunia Falls (Victoria Falls) are dry today due to the worst drought in over 100 years, which is affecting tourism, employment, food security, and energy production. Noting that 85% of energy production in Zambia is hydro-based, he said currently only three hours of electricity is generated per day and 6.6 million people are at risk of hunger and starvation. He said Zambia is therefore mainstreaming DRR in individual sectors and infrastructure. He noted that the support Zambia has received is biased toward humanitarian assistance, calling for a radical paradigm shift in the international financing architecture toward resilience, development, and coping strategies. He advocated for supporting regional bodies to galvanize resources across borders.

James Murombedzi, Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resource Management Division, UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), said losses due to climate change are equal to 2-5% of annual GDP, possibly increasing to 10-15% by 2035. He urged investing 1% of GDP in weather and climate information,



Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for DRR, and Head, UNDRR, delivers a keynote address during the plenary session 'Investing to Reduce Risk.'

citing a proven benefit-cost ratio of 4:1. Murombedzi noted a five-to-tenfold increase in financing for infrastructure is required, but lamented that most African countries are allocating over 60% of GDP to debt repayments, which have increased since 2010. He said UNECA is helping develop innovative mechanisms for mobilizing blended finance, including utilizing natural resources in debt-for-nature swaps, green bonds, and blue bonds. He called for:

- exploiting critical raw materials for the sustainable energy transition so Africa benefits appropriately;
- using existing tracking systems for DRR and climate change adaptation to discern actual financing levels; and
- holding discussions on reform of the global financial architecture.

Benedict Libanda, CEO, Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, discussed the potential of blended finance in substantially increasing disaster risk financing. He noted that assets under pension management in Africa amount to around USD 56 trillion, but bemoaned the lack of an appropriate vehicle to unlock this pension capital to attract mutual funds and commercial bank investments. Libanda highlighted that blended finance can be used for this purpose, using public funds to attract private capital. He cited examples of its use to leverage climate finance, such as through the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Namibia One blended finance vehicle focused on green hydrogen projects.

In the ensuing discussion, John-Manjang noted that, in her country, cash transfer schemes target women-headed households because women usually ensure that cash received is used for alleviating household poverty. Pollen described national innovations, such as access to micro-level insurance for farmers, to respond to the adverse impacts of droughts, reducing unhealthy dependence on maize, and increasing production of drought-resilient crops, such as sorghum, millet, and cassava. Murombedzi called for urgently concluding review of the global financial architecture, stressing that interest rates offered to

African countries, typically around 17-20%, are significantly higher than the global average of 5-6%.

During the break, Rets'elisitsoe Molefe, Disaster Management Authority, Lesotho, performed a rap he wrote specifically for AfRP-9, entitled 'Going Higher.'

Reducing Loss and Damage: Saving Lives and Protecting Investments: On Wednesday, 23 October, Moderator Rita Missal, Crisis Bureau, UN Development Programme (UNDP), opened this session, drawing attention to three key points to frame discussions:

- Africa and its local communities suffer from the adverse impacts of climate change in numerous ways, and although the establishment of the Fund for Responding Loss and Damage is good progress, the financing gap in Africa continues to widen;
- the financing gap is increasing as the frequency and severity of disasters rise; and
- there is a choice in how to allocate resources, and more balance is needed between investments in rebuilding public infrastructure after a climate shock and addressing the impacts on local populations.

Loretta Hieber Girardet, UNDRR, reported that African countries lose 2-5% of GDP annually in disaster response, with an estimated USD 30-50 billion needed annually to adapt to the changing environment. She added that by 2030, an estimated 118 million extremely poor people in Africa will be further exposed to droughts, floods, and extreme heat, so the need for a loss and damage fund for African countries is urgent. She highlighted the Santiago Network which aims to provide technical support to countries facing losses and damages and a platform for capacity building, convening stakeholders, and knowledge exchange. She applauded the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage established under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), noting that its mandate and partnerships with UNDRR and others are crucial for responding to disasters.



Panel speakers during the plenary session focused on reducing loss and damage

Errol Foseka, Minister for Internal Affairs, Seychelles, described how his country, a small island developing state (SIDS), is acutely impacted by disasters. He noted that 2023's torrential rains caused the Seychelles huge economic and natural losses, alongside severe impacts on local populations. Foneska pointed to the dependence of the economy of the Seychelles on tourism and fisheries which are both threatened by climate change. He emphasized early education for Seychellois children, who will inherit the continuing impacts of disasters and climate change. Accordingly, he shared that the Ministry of Education, alongside the Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment, have a special programme to educate youth about climate change and how to adapt to it.

Cecilia Aipira, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), focused on the environment's role in DRR, given people's dependence on it to build resilience and rebuild lives. She cautioned that disaster impacts on the environment are nuanced and baseline information and reliable data on economic and non-economic values of ecosystem services in Africa are lacking.

Sintiki Tarfa Ugbe, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission, bemoaned inadequate investment in DRR because short-term actions to gain political capital often take priority. She highlighted ECOWAS' development of a recovery preparedness roadmap for West Africa, post-disaster capacity needs assessments, an AMHEWAS-linked disaster observatory, a multi-sectoral resilience strategy, and strengthening transborder flood management, despite challenges with coordination.

Adérito Celso Félix Aramuge, Director-General, National Institute of Meteorology, Mozambique, called Mozambique a "supermarket of disasters." He highlighted Mozambique's success in creating resilience and reducing disaster-related loss of life and economic losses, which require: developing policies and legislation with clear division of responsibilities; an Anticipatory Action Protocol (AAP) for early warning and action; improved data, forecasts, and dissemination; commitment at all levels; and a new national roadmap. He cautioned that climate finance, DRM funding, damage monitoring and assessment, and weather

forecasting capacity improvements, are still needed. He warned everyone to trust meteorological services' authoritative voices, not "social network fake news."

Panelists then responded to participants' questions. Girardet reiterated the Santiago Network's role in providing technical support to countries, saying a lack of baseline data is not an impediment because the Network supports countries to improve their data. Aipira added that no country has perfect data but identified different sources of data such as countries' Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and risk profiles prepared with support from UNDRR and the World Bank.

Ugbe highlighted the need for a multi-sectoral resilience strategy for West Africa for overcoming silos, and Girardet said UNDRR is helping countries develop comprehensive risk management programming. Foneska noted coordination among different ministries is easy in the Seychelles due to the country's size.

Thematic Sessions

Risk-Informed Policy Making for Sustainable Development, Climate Change Adaptation, and the Environment: Huw Beynon, UNDRR Regional Office for Africa, moderated this session on Tuesday, 22 October.

Setting the scene, Gatkuoth Kai, Regional Coordinator for Africa, Disaster Risk Reduction and Recovery, UNDP, called for learning from nature and ecosystem balance. He noted innovative efforts for risk-informed policymaking, including the AU's Africa Centre for Disaster Research and Prevention, the AU Urban Resilience Programme, the Making Cities Resilient programme, public review, and partnerships for triangular cooperation among countries. He lamented a continuing gap in advancing implementation through coercing or motivating institutions to work together and a tendency to act and reform only after major events. Kai further noted that the biggest gap remaining for DRR is the absence of data for the most vulnerable communities at the grassroots level.



Panel speakers for the thematic session on 'Risk-Informed Policy'

Harsen Nyambe, Director, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, AUC, reported on AU support to Member States' resilience through, *inter alia*, the Africa Strategy on Action and alignment with other international institutions, including the Convention on Biological Diversity. He lamented that only 50% of Africa is covered by EWS, calling for collaboration on capacity building, policy harmonization, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Cecilia Aipira said communities depend foremost on the environment to survive crises or disasters, citing nature-based solutions (NbS), such as wetland restoration to protect against storm surges. She called for an integrated approach to planning and policy formulation but said many governments struggle to address these coherently across ministries. Aipira noted a disconnect between policymakers' prescriptions and actual day-to-day on-the-ground challenges and called for engaging community-level knowledge to enhance implementation. She described how NbS can play a large role in building resilience when confronting droughts and floods, but lamented that lack of data on the economic impacts of disasters at the community and national levels prevent corresponding action.

Pamela Komujuni-Kalule, Senior Disaster Management Officer, Office of the Prime Minister, Uganda, reported on Uganda's governance efforts for integrating DRR with climate change adaptation. She noted: work on policies to bridge the gap between DRR and climate change adaptation, given that they are handled within different government divisions, and to mainstream these across sectors; and coordinating data collection to ensure policy coherence. Komujuni-Kalule identified the need to harmonize and mainstream guidelines to serve different sectors through adequate DRR policies.

Grace Mercy Osewe, County Executive Committee Member for Governance, Administration, Communication and Devolution, Homa Bay County, Kenya, spoke on integrating DRR at the county level into local sustainable development plans, climate change adaptation, and environmental protection. She noted four

aspects: an institutional framework for effective DRM; related institutional structures including an SDG alignment coordination unit that meets regularly on integrating DRR into financing, planning, and sectoral working groups; assessments and gap analysis; and financial commitments to progressively allocate up to 2% of the county budget to DRM. Osewe described hubs established in Kenya to collect data across thematic areas related to the environment and DRR to help provide innovative solutions.

Legislation, Standards and Regulations for Disaster Risk Reduction: On Tuesday, 22 October, Moderator Ranjini Mukherjee, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), introduced two key themes for the session: DRR policy development and overcoming barriers to implementation of legislation and standards.

Emmanuel Kasimbazi, University of Makerere, Uganda, said existing legislation on DRR in Africa is outdated, having been adopted prior to the Sendai Framework. He listed challenges in legislating, including limited expertise, infrastructure, and technical capacity, and urged integrating DRR policies with climate policies.

Banak Dei Wal, Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, South Sudan, echoed the previous speaker, noting that in his country, legislation lacks the capacity to achieve its goals. He highlighted the lack of political will due to continued fragmentation between institutions which leads to a lack of understanding on how to tackle DRR. He also cautioned that the private sector in South Sudan cannot be engaged until it has an incentive to invest in this area.

Stella Ngugi, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), said legal frameworks remain fragmented and inconsistent in how they are developed, and receive insufficient budget allocations. She added that legislation fails to address the specific vulnerabilities of women, children, and other marginalized groups.

Susan Snaddon, UN Office for Project Services, cited examples of infrastructure work to mitigate risks in several



Panel speakers during the thematic session 'Legislation, Standards and Regulations'

African countries, cautioning that infrastructure in the wrong place, poorly designed, or not maintained exacerbates risks. She called for:

- use of the best current knowledge and consideration of future scenarios;
- attention to design codes and standards;
- control of training and registration of infrastructure professionals;
- addition of DRM to educational curricula;
- occupational health and safety legislation;
- conditions on loans or grants for infrastructure development; and
- regular maintenance.

Bako Nirina Rabevohitra, Réseau des Observatoires Ruraux, Madagascar, cited Madagascar's efforts to collaborate on resilience capacity building, plans for a roadmap to strengthen infrastructure resilience, and five types of standards and norms to:

- balance resilience in various aspects of infrastructure;
- identify DRR measures for infrastructure across sectors;
- promote coordination and good governance in each sector and ministry;
- ensure ministry-level monitoring and evaluation; and
- improve data collection to anticipate risks and adapt infrastructure.

Further remarks focused on recommendations for overcoming challenges in implementation. Ngugi recommended that: the private sector develop resilient infrastructure and support development of insurance mechanisms; academia undertake research to guide evidence-based policy development; local actors guide local solutions; and international actors and donors provide financial and technical support at all levels.

Snaddon called for eliminating: outdated regulations and inconsistent enforcement; short-term political interests that discourage long-term infrastructure maintenance; and lack of strategic asset management plans. Dei Wal recommended: adopting the principle of coordination and identifying an

institution to lead this; listening to people and communities in need; and revisiting legislation regularly to assess gaps and benefit from experiences.

Kasimbazi called for: roadmaps for implementation, with tools such as standard operating procedures, guidelines, and manuals; capacity to provide humanitarian assistance when money is not available; and coordination between technical people and ministries to simplify disaster issues.

Rabevohitra recommended:

- adopting resilience standards for construction and maintenance of infrastructure;
- ensuring ownership and leadership by key ministries;
- updating standards and regulations regularly to account for increasing climate change; and
- strengthening partnerships and collaboration.

Leveraging Technology to Reduce Disaster Risks, Losses and Damages: On Tuesday, 22 October, Ahmed Amdihun, Climate Prediction and Applications Centre, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, presented on how artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning can improve weather forecasting and climate prediction. He explained that data collected from decades earlier can help machine learning forecast future climate events. Amdihun also stated that looking at the whole value chain of automated EWS can enable sharper forecasting of droughts.

Idris Halima Ohunene, Nigeria National Space Research and Development Agency, reported on earth observation-based assessment of nature-based flood mitigation focusing on flood-prone areas in her country. She noted that her agency tries to implement the UN's Global Platform for DRR in its emergency management practices. She, however, advocated that Africa adopt NbS to deal with flood mitigation, explaining that this approach is already implemented in many countries. She highlighted restoration and preservation of wetlands and enhancing green infrastructure for flood mitigation, noting this considers factors such as elevation, slope, land use, land cover and distance to rivers to effectively manage floods.



Panel speakers for the thematic session 'Leveraging Technology to Reduce Disaster Risks, Losses and Damages'

Aklilu Dinkneh Teklesadik, Netherlands Red Cross, reported that the IFRC is using data and digital technology to support national development of AAPs for municipalities, for forecasting and responding to flooding, and for using remote sensing data to forecast rainfall and urban floods.

Godefroid Nshimirimana, African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development, said his organization supports national meteorological services in capacity building and technology transfer, through monitoring, forecasting, and advising on drought and on heavy precipitation.

Antonio Belleza, SADC SHOC, described a new center to support SADC Member States in coordinating preparedness response and early recovery activities combining drones, satellites, and other tools, such as AI and risk maps, to be able to quickly respond to disaster situations, particularly for rescue efforts, while reducing costs.

In the ensuing discussion, panelists:

- stressed technology transfer must include capacity building and training;
- noted bilateral support can ameliorate the lack of resources hindering capacity building;
- said advanced technology systems should complement, not replace, local knowledge systems by integrating local knowledge for contextual appropriateness; and
- concluded that strategies for using innovative technologies have great potential for reducing disaster risk losses and damages across different contexts.

The Role of Private Business and Finance in Creating or Reducing Risk: On Wednesday, 23 October, Aminou Akadiri, CEO, Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry, moderated this session. Abiodun Akintunde Ogundeji, University of the Free State, South Africa, explained the central role that the private sector plays in putting resilience on the agenda in a multi-sectoral approach. He urged businesses to balance their focus on economic growth with social and

environmental impacts, encouraging them to abandon the traditional model focusing solely on profit.

Aritiana Fabien Faly, National Office for Risk and Disaster Management, Madagascar, called for the private sector to be transparent about the potential risks to society that its work may create, to build trust and enable DRM. He added that the private sector is responsible for many jobs and support to local communities, which enables a “bounce back” after disasters. Faly also described the government’s role in mapping risks and informing potential investors. He noted consultations by the Government of Madagascar with the private sector on information that mobile network operators should share widely and ideally free of cost in EWS to warn remote areas. He emphasized private sector accountability to the population, stressing government AAP development to try to ensure the private sector’s sense of duty to communities, given that no profit can be made without consumers.

Mignonne Karugu, CEO, Africa Business Group, discussed the need for African countries to leverage best practices and lessons learned in areas, such as the adoption of electric vehicles and smart agriculture, that will lead to reduced greenhouse gas emissions. She also urged using the African Free Trade Agreement within the context of DRR.

Khotso Tsotsotso, Acting Head, Old Mutual Foundation, noted the basic tenets for successful public-private partnership: clear communication, mutual benefit, trust, and collaboration. He noted his organization’s programmes include awareness building on managing fires and droughts, preparedness, and accredited and non-accredited training delivered through universities.

John Kamara, Chair, AI Centre of Excellence, stressed the private sector’s key role in understanding data accuracy and urged expanding data collection and analysis to consider a variety of possible disaster scenarios. He suggested considering the steps needed to address future risks, using prediction, proactive preparedness, and correlative data frameworks. On addressing



Panel speakers during the thematic session focused on the role of private business in disaster risk reduction

long-term and intergenerational impacts, Kamara said businesses should be convinced to invest in DRR before disaster strikes, lamenting people's preference to wait until something happens and then try to "solve the problem." Kamara stressed DRR should be part of "business as usual." He suggested maximizing existing knowledge and experience instead of "reinventing the wheel," urging policies that incentivize private sector investment.

Karen King, Royal Haskoning DHV, an engineering consultancy firm, reported on the development of a complex model of a dual flooding threat from rivers and lack of storm drainage. She urged prioritizing mitigation actions through cost-benefit analysis of a range of options. King also highlighted software allowing people from affected areas to comment on disaster mitigation responses' effectiveness after specific events and noted the importance of multi-country data sharing.

During the subsequent discussion, one participant underscored the need to stop operating in silos regarding the private sector, public sector, and civil society because when disaster hits, it does not hit in silos. He added that the private sector plays a large role in providing transport, reconstruction supplies, and jobs in the face of disasters. He noted that its contribution in jobs, recovery, and livable conditions has a multiplier effect, allowing vulnerable populations to pay bills and taxes and meet societal commitments.

Mobilizing Public Sector Expenditure for Risk Reduction: On Wednesday 23 October, Pios Vusi Ncube, DRM Unit, SADC, moderated this session. He presented a short video clip calling for immediate action on DRR in Africa.

Ricardo Orlando Gottschalk, UN Office of the Resident Coordinator in South Africa, warned that Africa is off track in meeting key SDG targets to reduce hunger, poverty, inequality, disasters, and gender-based violence. He said many African countries are fiscally constrained in their ability to adequately tackle these issues. He welcomed the recent decision adopted in the [Pact for the Future](#) to put reform of the international

financial architecture back on the agenda. Gottschalk called for more mobilization from all stakeholders, saying the international financial system must serve everybody and financial resources must be targeted for the public sector to be most effective.

Nan Zhang, Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) Facility, UN Centre for Regional Development, noted that the governments negotiating on financing for development are not the ones experiencing climate change impacts daily. She called for the involvement of those "at the frontline" – local populations and local governments – to have the mandate to make small to medium policy interventions to build resilience. She noted only 10% of climate finance targets are aimed at the local level, explaining the LoCAL mechanism provides climate adaptation financing for local governments, with built-in financial incentives to achieve climate targets every year.

Koffi Konin, Africa Risk Capacity Group, talked about how this group, which includes 18 AU Member States, focuses on risk transfer, gender strategy, and capacity-building from the ministerial level to parliamentary budget committee members, to build knowledge and skills to effectively manage risk.

Maria Evenson, Ministry of Finance, National Planning and Trade, Seychelles, said Seychelles' National Development Strategy 2024-2028 prioritizes, among others, operationalization of integrated national emergency management plans and sectoral infrastructure plans, but noted implementation requires financing. She also noted Seychelle's climate finance budget tagging framework.

Resina Katafono, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, noted "backwards progress" on SDG targets, rising challenges and risks, growing inequality, increasing geopolitical tensions, insufficiency of ongoing increases in public and international resources for development and resilience, and slowing private sector investment and trade. She pointed to the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development in June 2025 and integrated financing networks that help countries access all sources of financing.



Panel speakers for the thematic session 'Mobilizing Public Sector Expenditure'

In the following discussion, speakers noted:

- the need to ensure financing is available to countries most needing it on positive terms, rather than hindered;
- the International Monetary Fund’s “binding constraints analysis” helps align financing towards projects that address the most needs;
- middle-income countries lacking access to concessional finance can access non-concessional finance from multilateral development banks at better-than-market rates;
- a strong monitoring and evaluation framework provides evidence on the impact and sustainability of projects and programmes; and
- national government fiscal transfer systems obviate the need for one-off project approaches.

Early Warning to Early Action to Reduce Loss and Damage: On Wednesday, 23 October, Phoebe Wafubwa Shikuku, UNDRR, and Shaban Mawanda, Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre, moderated this session. To begin, they asked participants to stand in different parts of the room to help visualize who works on practice, coordination, research, and finance, in relation to early warning of disasters.

Michele Leone, International Development Research Centre, presented her organization’s [CLimate Adaptation and REsilience programme](#) (CLARE). He noted that CLARE’s climate modeling research helps understand how cyclones in the West Indian Ocean form, how many are forming, and their frequencies. She said CLARE’s research confirmed that the Category 5 cyclones likely to hit this region in 2025 are unprecedented for their intensity and proximity to land. Leone said behavioral science needs to explore why local populations often do not react appropriately to early warnings, noting research found that the absence of ready reactions is often linked to economic barriers, along with an assumption that the warnings have come too late, resulting in shock and inaction by individuals.

Martha Chiwaya, Malawi Red Cross Society, said her department disseminates early warnings to communities. She noted that warning initiatives must cater to communities so sometimes a door-to-door approach is employed whereas other times gatherings of locals are favored. She commended this initiative which involves women and every actor in society



Phoebe Wafubwa Shikuku, UNDRR

leaving no one behind, noting early warning initiatives have resulted in livestock also being moved to protected areas, saving lives of people and biodiversity as well. Chiwaya said comparative studies have confirmed that early warning initiatives have had significant positive impacts on communities compared to impacted communities that had no early warnings of disasters.

John Harding, Head, Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems Initiative Secretariat, said EWS leading to early action are formally prioritized for effectively averting climate change losses and damages. He noted a paradigm shift to EWS that includes predictions of impacts on people, livelihoods, and assets, lamenting that such granular risk analysis is not generally available, nor is information on losses and damages. He urged the next generation of EWS to be impact-based, with more robust national databases on losses and damages, including at the local level.

Maria Bernadet Karina Dewi, United Nations University, said risk knowledge can inform impact-based early warning and early action for particular vulnerable groups or sectors, thereby minimizing losses and damages. She said the “impact chain approach” identifies and prioritizes potential risks of and losses from impacts, associated hazards, and drivers of exposure, and listed many potential benefits of AI for early warning.

Aritiana Fabien Faly said most Madagascar regions lack enough data, resources to build infrastructure to withstand expected disasters, and finance for reducing losses and damages, but that EWS improvements can help. He said communities and sectoral capacity to react to upcoming disasters are prioritized, describing his office’s everyday simulation exercises based on cyclone and flood scenarios and requesting external monitoring.

Participants then divided into groups to contribute “one challenge, one noteworthy point, and/or one potential solution.” The groups then reported ideas on, among other things:

- quantifying non-economic losses and damages such as impacts on culture and psychology, to incorporate into data and forecasting;



Martha Chiwaya, Malawi Red Cross Society

- the technological gap affecting how early warning messages are sent and the actions taken, especially in remote areas; and
- more coordination on early warning and early action efforts, including memoranda of understanding and community-led processes.

Working Sessions

Reducing Disaster Risks on an Urbanizing Continent:

On Tuesday, 22 October, Moderator Sophia Kamau, Resilience Initiative Africa, German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ), opened this session which shared practical examples and consultative discussions to enhance understanding of critical elements of effective disaster risk governance at the local level.

Queen Omagano Kamati, Mayor of Windhoek, Namibia, underlined the need for a decentralized approach that empowers local governments and tailors the DRR approach to unique contexts. She stressed that comprehensive DRR frameworks must: address urban vulnerabilities and ensure that risk assessments guide urban planning; ensure all stakeholders have a role in decision-making processes; integrate risk information into development plans; and incorporate innovation into urban design, such as green spaces and natural barriers.

Shee Kupa Shee, Director, Disaster Management and Peacebuilding, Lamu County Government, Kenya, presented on some of his county's DRM efforts, such as the Emergency Operation Centre that won the Averted Disaster Award 2024 for its DRM efforts. He highlighted this Centre has averted flood disaster, saving the lives of over 10,000 people. He described other efforts such as processing the EWS in various languages in order to reach all vulnerable people.

Francois Venance Alwende, Director, Disaster Risk Management and Resilience, City of Bukavu, DRC, reported on the recent Multi-Stakeholder Workshop on DRR in Bukavu which resulted in the establishment of a committee that will help develop Bukavu's strategic plan for DRR. He also described the city's work in upgrading the Nyamugo Slum, which is one of the DRC's largest slums, as well as the establishment of disaster management clubs in local schools to advance the DRR agenda.

Participants then gathered in three breakout groups, focusing on: building strong foundations; breaking down barriers; and charting the course.



Delegates attend a working session focused on reducing disaster risks.

Group 1 participants called for empowering local authorities to take the lead on DRR, enhancing community involvement and engagement, building strong stakeholder networks, identifying and working with vulnerable groups, and mainstreaming DRR in all sectors, particularly higher education.

Group 2 identified strategies for breaking down barriers, including developing multi-stakeholder planning and coordination at all levels, creating awareness and understanding of DRR, enforcing by-laws, establishing a mandatory budget for DRR activities, and recognizing and appreciating Indigenous and local knowledge.

Group 3 outlined actions that cities can take to elevate DRR governance, such as policy-level communication and information sharing, outcome-based planning, and stakeholder mapping, identification, and orientation. Advocacy to create buy-in for customized global plans by local authorities and South-South learning were identified as ways that regional and global networks can help local governments effectively implement their DRR and resilience strategies.

Victoria Hugelshofer, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, closed the session, thanking participants for their contributions.

Mainstreaming Disaster Resilient Infrastructure in Africa:

This session, which took place on Tuesday, 22 October, was moderated by Alpana Saha, Director, Partnerships, Governance, and Resource Mobilisation, CDRI; Ranjini Mukherjee, Director, Research, Knowledge Management and Capacity Development, CDRI; Suchismita Mukhopadhyay, Lead Specialist, Advocacy, CDRI; and Arighna Mitra, Analyst, Advocacy, CDRI.

The moderators introduced CDRI, explaining it is a partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks, the private sector, and knowledge institutions established to promote the development of resilient infrastructure that supports sustainable development. They outlined the ongoing development of a dedicated regional programme for Africa, which aims to, among other things: provide grants for infrastructure strengthening; make recommendations on disaster risk financing arrangements; organize workshops on power, telecommunications, and transport; and provide fellowships for young researchers.



Alpana Saha, Director, Partnerships, Governance, and Resource Mobilisation, CDRI

Representatives of three CDRI members then presented overviews of their work with CDRI. John Kissi, Director, Hydrological Services Department, Ghana, described CDRI's support in infrastructure resilience building efforts in his country.

Mekailah Stephens, UNDRR Office for Africa, outlined partnership with CDRI in Ghana and Madagascar, to assess the vulnerability and exposure of infrastructure to specific hazards. She underlined the importance of infrastructure stress testing and the tool developed by UNDRR for this purpose to help users assess infrastructure vulnerabilities as well as the linkages between infrastructure assets and systems.

Roberto Rudari, International Center for Environmental Monitoring Research Foundation, described his organization's collaboration with CDRI in implementing a risk assessment for critical infrastructure at the global level.

Participants then worked in breakout groups to discuss, *inter alia*: regional priorities for risk-informed development; how disaster and climate change are impacting the infrastructure in their countries or regions; and various initiatives for disaster resilient infrastructure and climate adaptation in Africa.

Loss and Damage: Gender Dimension: On Wednesday, 23 October, this session was moderated by Eve Silima Wanjala, Gender and Social Inclusion Consultant, UNDRR, and focused on ways to empower women and girls to participate effectively in DRR processes and implementation.

Beatrice Teya, UN Women Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa, regretted that despite progress in managing disasters in Africa, significant disaster-related gender inequality remains in terms of women's access to basic services, knowledge, technology and finance. Teya called for:

- integrating gender in disaster risk processes, including risk profiles, to enhance understanding of how disasters will impact various members of society;
- enabling access by vulnerable groups to multi-hazard EWS;
- investing in resilience-building measures that consider the unique challenges of women, men, boys, and girls in their diversity; and

- promoting participation and leadership of women and other marginalized groups in key DRM processes and decision making.

Saturnin Epie, Chief, UN Population Fund (UNFPA) Representation Office to the AU and UNECA, underlined that the intersection of gender dynamics and DRR is not a theory, but is about communities and peoples' lives, and is essential for ensuring women and girls have the support and opportunity to realize their full potential. He highlighted the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR and the Sendai Framework PoA for Africa, which incorporate a holistic approach to risk management and endorse gender equality as a fundamental element. Epie noted that at the global level, the UN supports gender-responsive risk management, and the Sendai Framework underscores women's critical role in DRM, calling for their full and equal participation in all phases of DRR.

Hawa Abdulghafoor, Gender-Based Violence Coordinator, Tana River County, Kenya, and Kenya Government Gender Focal Point, lamented that recent floods in the Tana River have resulted in significant increases in gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, child marriage, child labor, school dropout, and maternal and neo-natal mortality rates. She described the County Government's response through working with different partners to address various disaster impacts. Abdulghafoor said the county partners with: UNFPA to address maternal and neonatal mortality; the International Organization for Migration and national government to address the problem of cluster housing; and the Red Cross, to undertake a Kenya Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment to provide data on the floods and their impacts.

Teya then presented the Sendai Framework Gender Action Plan, noting its goals to substantially increase resource allocations, activities, and impacts of gender-responsive DRM, and substantially decrease gender-related disaster risk by 2030.

Participants then gathered in two breakout groups.

Group 1 considered the inclusive disaster preparedness and response approaches that can be deployed, and identified:

- functional and inclusive EWS to ensure all groups are informed so they can take action to reduce loss and damage;



Beatrice Teya, UN Women Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa



Hawa Abdulghafoor, Gender-Based Violence Coordinator, Tana River County, Kenya, and Kenya Government Gender Focal Point

- disaggregated data on impacts according to gender, age, and disability, so as to inform planning;
- community-level mapping of disabilities to influence policy and decision making; and
- use of diverse communication formats and means to reach diverse groups, such as braille for the visually-impaired.

Group 2 considered key strategies, contingency plans, and best practices for supporting minority and at-risk groups, and highlighted:

- gender-inclusive risk mapping;
- strengthened movement databases to ensure accurate data on resident numbers; and
- vulnerability capacity assessments to understand those that need to be reached effectively.

In closing remarks, Lydia Zigomo, UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office, emphasized integrating gender considerations into DRR strategies to build resilient communities that leave no one behind. She noted that to achieve effective DRR, gender-responsive policies must also be disability-friendly and inclusive.

Taking the AMHEWAS from Continental to National: On Wednesday, 23 October, Teresa Pinto, AUC, and Marco Massabo, UNDRR, moderated this session focusing on implementation of the AMHEWAS at the national level.

Jim James Yonazi, Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, Tanzania, described how Tanzania's recently inaugurated National Emergency Operation and Communication Centre Situation Room in Dodoma operates. He said it receives real-time data on current and emerging risks from the Tanzania Meteorological Agency and circulates it to responders working in different areas. Yonazi said the situation room in the Prime

Minister's Office provides coordination and directs the required response.

Lusajo Ambukege, AUC, outlined ongoing and planned support by the AUC to Member States, including:

- establishing interoperable EWS situation rooms at the national levels;
- developing common protocols and platforms for sharing data and risk information;
- facilitating the adoption and use in Member States of the principles of co-designing, co-creation, and co-production of AMHEWAS products; and
- supporting Member States in building resilient cities through the Africa Urban Resilience Programme that focuses on urban resilience and disasters.

Agnes Kijazi, Regional Director for Africa, WMO, identified some of the needs on the continent to ensure the successful implementation of AMHEWAS, including a skilled workforce at the national level, and meteorological information and observation systems. She outlined support available from her organization, such as:

- the WMO Integrated Global Observing System that helps members build observing capacity and achieve better data coverage;
- the Global Telecommunication System that facilitates the flow of data and processed products according to WMO standards; and
- the WMO Systematic Observations Financing Facility that provides financial and technical assistance to support countries with generating and sharing weather and climate observations.

Stella Ngugi, IFRC, underlined some important elements to consider when providing risk information and disaster warnings. She stressed that complex technical guidelines must be inclusive,



Panel speakers for the working session 'Taking the AMHEWAS from Continental to National'

context-specific, and translated into a language that communities can understand and act on. Ngugi called for:

- strong legislative frameworks and governance structures to regulate how to ensure local actors and agencies are integrated into early warning processes; and
- robust tools to better understand the risks that communities face, such as context-specific vulnerability assessments.

Seminar Ngaryamngaye, Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), presented on the recently established ECCAS Situation Room in Douala, Cameroon. He called for additional support to fully operationalize it, noting a lack of experts and hazard data to make the facility fully effective.

Eltson Eteckji, Chairperson, African Science and Technology Advisory Group, discussed how science and technology can contribute to EWS, such as through advancing hazard modeling and forecasting and using different algorithms to accurately identify patterns and impacts in Africa. He added that science and technology can ensure effective use of traditional knowledge systems for early warning, as well as design language- and culturally-sensitive communication tools tailored to different communities.

In the ensuing discussion, participants called for a paradigm shift from business as usual to more investment and effort on early action. One participant noted that local communities sometimes ignore disaster warnings and then face the consequences. Eteckji suggested that, to ensure communities respond to them, warnings should be culturally sensitive and specific.

Is Nature Africa's Secret Weapon in the Fight Against Climate Change? On Thursday, 24 October, Gina Bonne, Indian Ocean Commission, moderated this session, asking whether enough is being done to harness nature's strength.

Fruzsina Straus, Disaster and Conflicts Branch, UNEP, pointed to NbS, such as reforestation and wetland conservation, as a bridge between climate action and DRR. She explained NbS both absorb carbon and create natural buffers to protect communities from floods and droughts, and urged working with nature to build resilience and address climate change. Straus noted that loss and damage is at the intersection between climate change adaptation



Fruzsina Straus, Disaster and Conflicts Branch, UNEP

and DRR; therefore, although it is embedded in the UNFCCC process, it is also essential to DRR.

Florian Waldschmidt, Climate Risk Analytics, United Nations University, discussed how decision makers can integrate risk analytics for financing and supporting scalable NbS. He described how climate risk analytics can enhance understanding of both the value and impact of nature and NbS. He said analytics simulate different climate and intervention scenarios and evaluate how economic and non-economic assets are affected by different risks and adaptation measures such as NbS. Waldschmidt described the recently-concluded climate risk analysis of adaptation measures undertaken under the World Food Programme's resilience programme in Niger.

Tadesse Desta, IFRC, showcased the IFRC's tree planting projects. She explained the multiple roles of trees in providing a defense against climate change and disasters, providing a source of income for farmers, and enabling participation in the voluntary carbon market.

Anuj Kapoor, Founding Director, Green People Green Earth, discussed some of the strategies that can be used to drive NbS in Africa. He underlined the importance of educating investors on the need to undertake climate-friendly activities and the benefits of NbS. Kapoor identified drivers of NbS such as companies' engagement with corporate social responsibility, and regulations such as the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. He concluded by underlining the need to build investors' trust in sustainability programmes, such as through hybrid financing and by providing long-term reliable data.

Four breakout groups then convened to consider:

- policy coherence and nature as a connector (Group 1);
- decision-making, financing, and scalable NbS (Group 2);
- community engagement and gender considerations of NbS (Group 3); and
- private sector engagement, financing options, and innovation (Group 4).

Summarizing their discussions, Group 1 said NbS should be integrated into frameworks such as building codes and land use laws, stressing that legal and policy frameworks are the



Delegates gather for the working session 'Is Nature Africa's Secret Weapon in the Fight Against Climate Change?'

foundation for DRM and environmental protection. Group 2 identified lack of political buy-in and limited understanding of the value of ecosystems as barriers to scaling up NbS. Group 3 called for land use law reforms to empower and enable women to undertake NbS, and underlined the need for education and awareness raising. Group 4 called for clear identification of the roles of the private sector, governments, and development institutions, so that all stakeholders clearly understand what they are required to do. They also identified the need to consider NbS as a viable business.

Special Sessions

Launch of ARISE Africa Network: On Thursday, 24 October, Terry Kinyua, Co-Chair, ARISE (Act now, be Resilient, create Impact, help Societies, Expand your Network), moderated this session, which saw the launch of the ARISE Africa Network. She presented slides on the objectives of the global ARISE Network and its role in DRR. Kinyua affirmed the importance of engaging the private sector to cope with the growing number of climate-related disasters in Africa. She explained that the continent was unprepared to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, which it is still recovering from, while facing ongoing and frequent disasters. She said the only solution is to involve all sections of society to find innovative solutions.

Salimah Jaulim Islam, Cap Business Océan Indien, said risk management tools should be used in all business models to prepare for disasters and minimize their impacts on society and the economy. To effectively create sustainable solutions, she said translatable data is crucial, along with unique strategies for each business, as a one-size-fits-all model will not work given the range of business sizes in Africa.

Kinyua followed this presentation by inviting perspectives from audience members on their respective country's or organization's experiences in engaging the private sector in DRR efforts.

Audience member comments focused, *inter alia*, on the need to:

- work with local governments on smaller scale, high-impact projects, which can “move the needle” in private sector

- engagement for DRR action more effectively than national governments can;
- engage micro, small, and medium enterprises and informal business, particularly stakeholders involved in construction and infrastructure;
- build African private sector funding rather than continuing to rely on traditional donor funding; and
- influence the private sector to recognize their social contract with their community and be a part of it rather than spend money on advertising.

Amjad Abbashar, UNDRR Regional Office for Africa, announced the launch of three related networks: ARISE Kenya, ARISE West Africa, and ARISE Africa. Providing remarks and signing the Terms of Reference for the respective networks were; Mercy Kimalat, founding CEO, Association of Startup and SMEs Enablers of Kenya; Aminou Akadiri, CEO, Federation of West African Chambers of Commerce and Industry; and Michael Sudarkasa, CEO, Africa Business Group.

Parliamentary Forum for African Members of Parliament on Disaster Risk Reduction Action: This special session was held on Thursday, 25 October, to provide an opportunity for African parliamentarians to engage with the critical DRR agenda. It aimed both to enhance parliamentary understanding of the Sendai Framework and increase understanding among parliamentarians of their crucial role in DRM.

The session resulted in an Outcome Statement in which African Members of Parliament resolve to, among other things:

- mainstream DRR, climate change adaptation, risk governance, and risk-proof investment and resilience, into their countries' development plans;
- assemble African Members of Parliament for DRR and Action champions drawn from all subregions of the continent; and
- establish a Parliamentary Forum for DRR to facilitate collaboration among lawmakers and advance DRR initiatives across Africa.

Elevating Africa in the G20: This special working lunch session convened on Thursday, 24 October. Hosted by the South



Family photo of the ARISE Africa participants

African Government, the session presented and communicated South Africa's preliminary vision for its 2025 Presidency of the G20 DRR Working Group. It also provided an opportunity for DRR stakeholders in the region to provide input on key innovations, needs, and practices that should shape the G20 DRR Working Group's work.

High Level Meetings

The El Niño Southern Oscillation in East and Southern Africa: Zeynu Ummer, UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa, moderated this session on Thursday, 24 October. Setting the scene, Kamal Kishore said strong capabilities and teleconnections provide long lead times for anticipating future events, requiring increased sophistication in forecasting impacts across multiple sectors for economy-wide action. He highlighted:

- emergency humanitarian responses are insufficient because livelihoods are also affected;
- communicating probabilistic seasonal forecasts is complicated, necessitating accessible language; and
- financing needs can be anticipated early for El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events.

Anderson Banda, SADC SHOC, highlighted current predictions of an imminent La Niña lean period while Southern and Eastern African countries are still recovering from an El Niño-associated drought in 2023-2024. He noted some seasons are lean even in normal times, expressing concern about conditions in the longer term.

Ko Barrett, Deputy Secretary-General, WMO, said the ENSO is the most predictable driver of seasonal or year-long climate variability, encompassing naturally recurring changes in rainfall and temperature. She nevertheless cautioned that robust scientific evidence indicates climate change may be changing the ENSO, thus increasing uncertainty about how climate impacts will manifest. Barrett confirmed WMO's September

2024 update forecasts a 60% chance of weak and short La Niña effects between October and December 2024, increasing the chance of either drought or wet conditions and high temperatures after decades of already increasing temperatures. She commended countries' cooperation in producing and sharing meteorological predictions with other countries, but noted continued data gaps from insufficient monitoring stations in some regions.

Reena Ghelani, UN Assistant Secretary-General and Climate Crisis Coordinator for the El Niño/La Niña Response, said countries are reporting new ENSO impacts and cited lessons learned, including: during the 2020-2023 droughts there was little famine, unlike during a 2011 drought, because resilience building became the focus; and increasing resilience will obviate the need for massive humanitarian assistance that is no longer considered the appropriate model for assistance.

She highlighted remaining challenges, including:

- gaps between forecasting and data and on-the-ground operations;
- insufficient progress in turning forecasts into action;
- some populations remain vulnerable despite humanitarian responses and efforts to increase resilience;
- continually increasing food insecurity; and
- a continuing need for empowering women to meet SDG targets.

The panel discussion was followed by a short video presentation in which voices from impacted communities conveyed the impact of the ENSO on their lives. The moderator then welcomed AU Member States to provide short statements.

Ethiopia, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe all echoed the unprecedented number of cyclones, droughts, and floods, as well as food insecurity, that their countries are facing. They outlined several policies and strategies being adopted or implemented to mitigate damage caused by disasters before they



Zeynu Ummer, Director, UNDP Resilience Hub for Africa, moderated the high-level event 'The El Niño Southern Oscillation in East and Southern Africa.'

strike, including: harnessing science to predict climate shocks before they occur; strengthening infrastructure and building codes; and implementing smart agriculture techniques.

Harsen Nyambe, AUC, noted that although it is daunting for Africa to experience disasters so acutely, the good news story is how effectively governments are mobilizing to combat these crises.

DRR in Landlocked Developing Countries: Huw Beynon, UNDRR, moderated this event on Thursday, 24 October. He noted LLDCs lack access to ports, transit corridors, and global markets, but are vulnerable to cross-boundary disasters.

Rabab Fatima, Under Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, via video message, highlighted the upcoming Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) in Botswana in December 2024. She noted that: half of LLDCs are in Africa; half of these are also LDCs; and 54% of their land is dryland, which is subject to drought, flooding, and cyclones. She called for education in risk management, technology, and local knowledge and practices for accelerating implementation of the Sendai Framework.

Kamal Kishore emphasized cross-border and regional cooperation on connectivity infrastructure, cross-border resources and hazards, and economic activity. He offered UNDRR assistance on implementation of the DRR elements of the Gaborone PoA for LLDCs, which is expected to be adopted at LLDC3.

Participants then drew attention to:

- integration of DRR into global platforms and into key sectors including transport, infrastructure, food security, health, and water;
- limited institutional resources, trained personnel, and coordination mechanisms to fully integrate DRR into economic and development planning;
- international conflicts diverting attention and resources away from long-term planning towards emergency response and exacerbating, rather than addressing, root causes of disaster vulnerability;
- the need for decentralization to empower local authorities to develop local solutions and mobilize resources to improve resilience-building; and
- local and rural people's need for access to loans to invest in farming for food security.

Tanzania described a national initiative on clean cooking that aims to reach 80% of the population. She welcomed a regional learning platform where countries can learn from one another how clean cooking practices have been adopted by their local communities.

Burundi described the unique set of risks LLDCs face in dealing with disasters. Noting how women and children are disproportionately impacted by disasters, he urged other Member States to ratify the Kampala Convention, providing protection and assistance to internally displaced people in Africa.

Participants then watched a video presentation by Botswana, Chair of the Group of LLDCs in New York. She highlighted LLDC3's expected adoption of the Gaborone PoA (2024-2034) to guide the sustainable development efforts of LLDCs over the next decade.



Rabab Fatima, Under Secretary-General and High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, delivers a keynote address via video message.

Closing Ceremony

On Thursday, 24 October, the AfRP-9 closing ceremony commenced with a performance by the Ilhuna Meme Cultural Group. Moderating the session, Hellen Likando, Namibia, commended the ambitious yet achievable recommendations outlined in the Windhoek Declaration.

Amjad Abbashar, UNDRR Regional Office for Africa, applauded the fact that this Forum included representation from eight children and youth groups and 15 groups representing persons with disabilities. He added that, while Africa carries a heavy burden from the legacy of colonialism and a disproportionate number of disasters, it is also a continent defined by hope and potential.

Anderson Banda, SHOC, thanked the Forum's organizers and highlighted the Windhoek Declaration, saying it demonstrates Africa's commitment to taking early warning forward at the regional level, including by slowly and incrementally establishing situation rooms.

Harold Bundu Saffa, AUC, thanked the Namibian Government and the Forum co-organizers for their excellent work. He congratulated everyone on successfully producing the Windhoek Declaration to advance African DRM and called on all stakeholders to maintain momentum and implement the Declaration through comprehensive actions.



Traditional dancers perform at the start of the closing ceremony.

I-Ben Natangwe Nashandi, Namibia, expressed gratitude to all participants, organizers, and partners who contributed to making the Forum a success. He noted that the Windhoek Declaration will allow Africa to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework and its Programme of Action for Africa. He concluded by encouraging countries to mainstream commitments made here into national frameworks.

The Forum concluded at 6:17pm.

Report of the Eighth High-Level Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction

Pre-Ministerial Segment: Presentation and Discussion of the Windhoek Declaration

On Wednesday, 23 October, moderator Rodney Sinvula Sikopo, Deputy Director, Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation, Namibia, opened the Pre-Ministerial Segment for consideration of the draft Windhoek Declaration. Paulus Ashili, Directorate, Disaster Risk Management, Office of the Prime Minister, Namibia, introduced the draft declaration.

Participants were invited to comment on the draft. Several country representatives requested that the draft should:

- reference other members of the Early Warning for All Initiative, such as the WMO, International Telecommunication Union and IFRC;
- build on what already exists at the national and regional levels rather than “reinventing the wheel”; and
- recognize that DRR programmes should be country-driven and reflect national contexts.

Participants agreed to continue considering the draft during the Ministerial Segment on Thursday.

Opening Ceremony

On Thursday, 24 October, I-Ben N. Nashandi opened the Eighth High-Level Meeting on DRR. Kamal Kishore highlighted that rapid and unplanned urbanization, unsustainable land use practices, environmental degradation, and conflict increase Africa’s vulnerability and disaster risk. He, however,



I-Ben Natangwe Nashandi, Executive Director, Office of the Prime Minister, Namibia



Duncan O. Ochieng, Ministry of Interior and Coordination, Kenya

noted progress, such as the just-launched ARISE Africa Network and the innovative solutions being implemented by cities. Kishore remarked that these confirm that DRR is not a side story but rather an essential development issue for Africa, underlining the Windhoek Declaration’s aims to provide clear guidance on where to focus efforts over the next few years.

Duncan O. Ochieng, Ministry of Interior and Coordination, Kenya, representing the Chair of the outgoing AfRP Bureau, urged the incoming Bureau to leverage the achievements of the Nairobi Declaration and use the Windhoek Declaration to propel DRR efforts in Africa.

Anderson Banda, SADC SHOC, observed that parliamentarians and ministers play a pivotal role in implementing the Sendai Framework and its PoA for Africa. Highlighting the importance of robust and contemporary policies and legal frameworks in ensuring enough financial, human, and other resources for DRR implementation, he urged all ministers and members of parliaments to continue championing regulations and legislation at the national, regional, and continental levels. Banda called on parliamentarians to familiarize themselves with, and adopt, the DRR Toolkit for Parliamentarians and act as DRM advocates in their constituencies.

Harold Bundu Saffa, Chair, Permanent Representative Committee Sub-Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water, and Environmental Issues, AUC, underscored that disasters spare no one and strike everywhere, from the most powerful nation to the weakest. He said what makes the difference is the ability to respond to disasters and, highlighting that “prevention is better than cure,” pointed to the AMHEWAS Programme as an example of proactive action. Saffa requested partners to fully support AMHEWAS in order to contribute to disaster prevention in Africa.

Josefa Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, AUC, speaking via video message, remarked that through its establishment of situation rooms and the provision of timely advisories, the AMHEWAS Programme is leading the way in

improving Africa's preparedness for hazards. Highlighting the next five years as pivotal for accelerating implementation of the Sendai Framework and its PoA for Africa, she said ongoing work by the AUC and its partners is key to ensuring a resilient and prepared Africa and called for increased DRR investment to safeguard Africa's development gains.

John Mutorwa called for a paradigm shift, from being reactive to being proactive in commitments towards addressing disaster risk. He said the Windhoek Declaration is a comprehensive roadmap to guide a collective strategic and programmatic approach towards reducing disaster impacts and building resilience to protect communities and ensure Africa's developmental aspirations are not derailed.

Election of the Bureau and Adoption of the Agenda

Kenya, the outgoing Chair of the AfRP Bureau, expressed appreciation for the efforts of all members of the outgoing Bureau for their efforts in translating the Nairobi Declaration into action.

The High-Level Meeting elected Namibia as the new Chair of the AfRP Bureau, and Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Tunisia, and Kenya as Bureau members.

Consideration and Adoption of the Windhoek Declaration

John Mutorwa opened consideration of the draft Windhoek Declaration. I-Ben N. Nashandi, as Chair of the Drafting Committee, and Paulus Ashili, Namibia, introduced the draft.

Kishore reiterated the importance of adopting a whole-of-society approach to DRR, and highlighted that the purpose of the Declaration is to supplement, not supplant, national DRR efforts.

Ministers then considered the draft page by page. There were suggestions from the floor to reference specific meetings in the draft, as well as to reflect the authoritative nature of national meteorological agencies.

The Ministers and Heads of Delegation adopted the Windhoek Declaration as amended.



Duncan Ochieng, National Disaster Management Unit, Kenya (right), hands over the chairmanship of the AfRP Bureau to **John Mutorwa**, Deputy Prime Minister, Namibia (left)



Thulisile Dladla, Deputy Prime Minister, Eswatini

Closing Ceremony

Thulisile Dladla, Deputy Prime Minister, Eswatini, expressed appreciation to all participants for their efforts in moving the DRR agenda forward in Africa.

The Eighth High-Level Meeting was brought to a close at 11:12am.

Upcoming Meetings

12th World Urban Forum: The 12th World Urban Forum (WUF12), convened by UN-Habitat, will focus on localizing the SDGs, shedding light on the local actions and initiatives required to curb the current global challenges affecting the daily life of people, including unaffordable housing, rising living costs, climate change, the lack of basic services, and ongoing conflicts. **dates:** 4-8 November 2024 **location:** Cairo, Egypt **www:** wuf.unhabitat.org/wuf12

2024 European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction: The European Forum for DRR (EFDRR) is the regional platform structure for Europe. The 2024 Forum will assess progress on the regional EFDRR Roadmap for DRR 2021-2030 and build capacities of authorities and stakeholders to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. **dates:** 6-8 November 2024 **location:** Budva, Montenegro **www:** efdr.undrr.org

2024 UN Climate Change Conference: This event will include the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 29), the 19th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 19), and the sixth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 6). The 61st sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA 61) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI 61) will also meet. **dates:** 11-22 November 2024 **location:** Baku, Azerbaijan **www:** unfccc.int/cop29

UNCCD COP 16: The 16th session of the COP to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 16) will take place in December 2024, co-organized by the UNCCD and the Government of Saudi Arabia. **dates:** 2-13 December 2024 **location:** Riyadh, Saudi Arabia **www:** unccd.int/news-stories/notifications/sixteenth-session-unccd-conference-parties-cop-16-riyadh

Sixth High-level Meeting of Ministers and Authorities on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in the Americas and the Caribbean: This meeting will discuss progress made in the regional implementation of the Sendai Framework and prepare the region towards the Eighth Session of the Global Platform for DRR. It will be preceded by a high-level and multi-stakeholder forum on Early Warning for All. **dates:** 5 December 2024 **location:** Basseterre, Saint Kitts and Nevis **www:** www.undrr.org/event/sixth-high-level-meeting-ministers-and-authorities-implementation-sendai-framework-disaster

Third UN Conference on LLDCs (LLDC3): LLDC3 will explore innovative solutions to challenges faced by LLDCs and build meaningful, strategic partnerships to unlock the potential of LLDCs. The Conference will convene under the theme “Driving Partnerships for Progress.” **dates:** 10-13 December 2024 **location:** Gaborone, Botswana **www:** www.un.org/en/landlocked

2025 Arab Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction: The sixth Arab Regional Platform for DRR, themed “Building Resilient Arab Communities: From Understanding to Action,” will take stock of progress and agree on the way forward to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework and the Arab Strategy for DRR. It will develop a political declaration, the Kuwait Declaration for DRR, reflecting the commitment of Arab countries to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework and the Arab Strategy for DRR. **dates:** 9-12 February 2025 **location:** Kuwait City, Kuwait **www:** www.undrr.org/event/6th-arab-regional-platform-drr

Eighth Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GP2025): GP2025 is expected to assess and discuss progress made in the implementation of the recommendations put forward through the Political Declaration of the high-level meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 adopted by the UN General Assembly in May 2023. It will give practical guidance to accelerate its further implementation through wide stakeholder engagement. **dates:** 2-6 June 2025 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **www:** www.undrr.org/event/eighth-session-global-platform-disaster-risk-reduction-gp2025

For additional upcoming events, see: sdg.iisd.org

Glossary

AAP	Anticipatory Action Protocol
AfRP	Africa Regional Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
AI	Artificial intelligence
AMHEWAS	Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CDRI	Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
CLARE	CLimate Adaptation and RESilience programme
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENSO	El Niño Southern Oscillation
EWS	Early warning systems
GDP	Gross domestic product
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
NbS	Nature-based solutions
PoA	Programme of Action
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	small island developing States
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WMO	World Meteorological Organization



Family photo of ministers and heads of delegations attending AfRP-9