

Maputo Declaration on the Commitment by SADC to enhance Early Warning and Early Action in the Region

We, the Ministers responsible for Hydro-Meteorological Services and Disaster Risk Management, representing the Heads of States and Governments of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), meeting in the City of Maputo, in the Republic of Mozambique on this day of 8 September 2022;

Noting with concern, the WMO publication “The Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes (1970–2019)”, in Africa, 1,695 recorded disasters caused the loss of approximately 731,747 lives and economic damage of US\$ 38.5 billion, and the recent increase of extreme weather and climate events in Southern Africa, which have become more frequent and intense, with devastating impacts such as the loss of life and damage to livelihoods, agriculture and food security, human settlements, ecosystems and includes displacement of populations that negatively impacts the socio-economic circumstances of our Member States;

Acknowledging the recent call by the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to lead a new initiative with partners, to provide every citizen on the planet with access to reliable, accurate and timely disaster Early Warning Systems within the next five years and will build on the African Union's Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Action System (AMHEWAS) and present an action plan to achieve this goal at the 27th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP-27) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in Sharm El Sheikh, the Arab Republic of Egypt, later this year;

Taking into account the decision by SADC and its Member States to prepare and contribute to the UN Secretary General's initiative to enhance preparedness for, and to be more responsive to, disasters triggered by hydro-meteorological hazards in the region; supported by the collective efforts of the African Union Commission (AUC), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), Climate Risk Early Warning System (CREWS) in partnership with African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET), African Ministers Council on Water (AMCOW) and African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) as well as other Agencies and international Organizations such as Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Save the Children, Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) and the Private Sector;

Commending the AU and SADC for making Climate Change a standing agenda item at their annual Summits, given its impact on increasing disasters;

Appreciating the generosity of the Government of the Republic of Mozambique to host this meeting so that the outcomes can contribute to disaster risk reduction, early warning systems, climate change adaptation in SADC, as well as COP-27;

Welcoming the appointment of His Excellency Felipe Jacinto Nyusi, President, Republic of Mozambique as the African Union Champion for Disaster Risk Management;

Recalling the Protocol on the establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council, which established the African Peace and Security Architecture, particularly its Articles 6((b), (e), (f), 12 (4), Art. 13 (3) (f) and Art. 15) anchored on early warning, prevention, humanitarian action and disaster management;

Further recalling the African Union Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.943 (XXX) of January 2017, which endorsed the Programme of Action (PoA) for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Africa, and the Mauritius Declaration on the Implementation of the Sendai Framework in Africa and which was reaffirmed by the Nairobi Declaration;

Noting the Tunis Declaration (2018) encouraged African States to strengthen Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems and the Specialised Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC-ARDWE) called upon the African Union to establish a continental Multi-Hazard Early Warning System;

Also noting Executive Council Decision which adopted the African Institutional and Operational Framework for Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action as well as the AU Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032) and the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology (Weather and Climate Services) (2021-2030).

Further noting World Meteorological Organization Executive Council Decision on United Nations Global Early Warning/Adaptation Initiative in the context of the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2024–2027;

Recognising that the above-mentioned Decisions are bearing fruit in meeting the African Union's aspirations, which will further contribute to reduced disaster mortalities and economic loss at the micro level, as well as improved disaster risk management at the macro level, due to improved availability and access to early warning information, as well as harmonized early warning systems;

Noting with concern that the scientific projections of future climate disruptions made by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) point to the increasing frequency and severity of weather and climate conditions in Southern Africa which will ultimately slow down developmental progress towards the achievement of the targets of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030, the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.417 (XIX) which establishes the Agreement for the Establishment of the African Risk Capacity (ARC) Agency and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union;

Also noting with concern that such projections highlight how the nexus between climate change and development sectors, in particular food security in Southern Africa must be a priority to all the region's governments and how investments in anticipatory action can have a positive role in ensuring prevention and resilient/adaptive approaches that contribute to effectively preventing famine and related food insecurity, loss of livelihood, and transmission of infectious and vector borne diseases ;

Recognising that Early Warning Systems are a proven effective, and feasible climate adaptation measure that saves lives and are shown to provide nearly a tenfold return on investment, in line with the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report on Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, which recognizes early warning systems, climate services and disaster risk management activities as key cross-cutting adaptation options, that enhance the benefits of other adaptation measures when combined;

Stressing the need to take decisive action to adapt to and actively combat climate change through the reduction of disaster risk and enhancements to societal preparedness through the implementation of Early Warning Systems that facilitate Anticipatory Action.

Acknowledging, among others:

- The adoption, by the African Union, of the Integrated African Strategy on Meteorology (weather, water and climate services);
- The WMO-coordinated international operational cooperation and initiatives in support of enhanced prediction and warning capabilities for hydro-meteorological hazards, including the WMO Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF);
- The adoption of the 2022-2032 African Union Climate Change and Resilient Strategy by the AU;
- The adoption of the Africa Institutional Framework for Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action leading to the establishment of AMHEWAS Situation Rooms by the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with support from partners;
- The establishment of the SADC Humanitarian and Operations Centre (SHOC), a sub-regional Multi-Hazard Disaster Management Centre in Mozambique by SADC;
- Climate Risk Early Warning Systems (CREWS) initiative on early warning of disasters in the South West Indian Ocean (SWIO); and

- The various initiatives by regional and international partner organizations in support of early warning and early anticipatory actions.

Observing, among others:

- that governments in SADC are at varying stages of preparedness for disasters, especially when it comes to operational coordination, having the necessary legislation and a multi-sectoral approach to disaster risk management (DRM);
- challenges in the execution of the full value chain of Early Warning to Early Action and emergency response in many SADC Member States;
- that there are in some cases, delays in declaring states of emergency on hydro-meteorologically induced and other disasters;
- the absence of well-coordinated and fully functional legislation and policies on disaster preparedness, including those disasters of a transboundary nature;
- that there may be inadequate support provided (infrastructure, capacities, etc) to those nationally designated disaster early warning agencies and civil protection authorities to enable SADC Member States to fully prepare governments for future disasters, especially from hydrometeorological hazards;
- that early warning and action through the establishment of triggers, SOPs, thresholds and better collection, storing and analysis of data related to predictive capability, can improve responses to the consequences of extreme weather and climate events that lead to disasters, as well as open data policy;

Commit to:

- Support and take an active role to ensure all citizens, and in particular the most vulnerable communities, (children, women, internally displaced people, people living with disabilities, and so forth) in SADC are covered by effective Early Warning and Early Action System initiatives;
- Establish, where absent, appropriate standing operating protocols, enact enabling national policies and legislation on meteorology and disaster risk management;
- Provide additional support to the human, financial and infrastructure capacities of the entities responsible for early warning and early action, particularly the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and National Disaster Management Agencies and increase collaboration between Member States in this regard in the SADC region and on the African continent.
- Encourage and enhance coordination among national and international entities and private partners involved in disaster related activities;
- Facilitate timely declaration of states of emergency by the Heads of State and Government in SADC to allow swift humanitarian assistance;

- Ensure adherence to applicable legislation on the nationally designated single authoritative voices on the provision of weather, water and climate-related early warnings to prevent the release of conflicting and unauthorised warnings and information;
- Strengthen the last mile outreach, public education, advocacy and awareness on hydrometeorological hazards and disasters;
- Engage the appropriate government and partner entities to catalyse appropriate contingency funding for emergencies associated with hydrometeorological, geophysical and epidemiological disasters;
- Recognise that timely multi-risk analysis and early warning information for various socio-economic sectors contribute to building resilient systems and livelihoods, thereby minimising the likelihood of emergencies caused by natural hazards;
- Fast track the operationalisation of SHOC;
- Develop a specific programme with clear deliverables to ensure that every citizen in the SADC region is covered by early warning systems with appropriate indicators that will be monitored on a regular basis; and
- Take an active role in the activities leading up to COP 27 and implementation of the agreed actions thereafter;
- Support operationalisation of AMHEWAS and its operability with regional and national systems thereof;
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HEREBY:

Urge the UN System's Agencies, Funds and Programmes, Inter-governmental Organizations, Regional Organizations, Development Partners, and Non-Governmental Organizations to continue to collaborate with SADC and its Member States in their efforts to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and avert, minimize and address losses and damage associated with hydro-meteorological disasters

We, the Ministers do hereby adopt this declaration on this 8th day of September 2022.