

WEST AFRICA SUB-REGIONAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON RISK ASSESSMENT

25 -27 NOVEMBER 2009

DAKAR
SENEGAL



1. Background

Increased incidence of disasters triggered by natural and man-made hazards over the last decades have resulted in high vulnerability of West African peoples to socio-economic losses and slowing down the process towards sustainable development that poses treats to the region's ability to achieve the MDG's. In the light of the above concern, the ECOWAS Commission has increasingly focused its attention on issues culminating in the establishment of disaster risk reduction as operational theme. Consequently, a sub-regional policy on disaster risk reduction was developed in collaboration with the UNISDR Regional Office for Africa and adopted by the Authority of Heads of State and Government at the 31st Ordinary Summit in Ouagadougou on January 19 2007.

In line with Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and the Africa Regional Strategy and its programme (2006-2015), The ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction was developed with the aim of creating a sub-regional entity of resilient countries and communities where natural hazards and disasters do not negatively impact economic, social and environmental development.

The policy suggests strategic direction and the development of an Action Plan to achieve these objectives. Presently, the main challenge is how to transform this policy and the guidelines provided in the policy document into actions by policy makers, decision makers, disaster managers and development practitioners at the sub regional, national and community levels in West Africa.

In this regard, The ECOWAS commission is proceeding with development of programmes to facilitate the implementation process for mainstreaming DRR into sustainable development planning and activities in West Africa. To do so, the Commission encourage its member States to be fully engage in development of knowledge and skills required for effective risk assessment including incorporation of emerging risks and other hazards and effective dissemination of risk assessment information in the sub-region. The ECOWAS Commission encourage also member States to development and strengthen national instruments for information sharing and exchange of best practices and other mechanisms to enhance coordination and collaboration among DRR stakeholders.

During recent meetings conducted by the ECOWAS Commission to address disaster risk reduction issues in West Africa, it was generally agreed by all stakeholders that the main challenges for the sub-region is to achieve effective disaster risk identification, monitoring and mapping. Some countries in the sub-region carried out risk assessment activities mostly on ad hoc basis, even where it is practiced; it wasn't very detailed and has predominantly focused on one or few hazards that may cause considerable impacts.

National capabilities for generating knowledge on risks are determined by countries' capabilities in science, technology, availability and sustainability of observation networks and research, which are generally limited in West Africa.



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2. Objectives

The main objective of this training workshop is:

- to train West African DRR focal points on concepts of hazard assessment, risk analysis and vulnerability mapping in order to develop the understanding of the role of risk assessment within the national risk reduction process
- to analyse the need and value of risk assessment across different sectors in the West African sub-region region
- to agree on the methodology for national risk assessment in West Africa by presenting different risk assessment and mapping tools using geo-information data and techniques.
- to establish a sub-regional network of sub-regional stakeholders involved in risk assessment to further engage them and enhance regional cooperation in information sharing and exchange and coordination to compliment each other's efforts and enhance effectiveness in addressing the common challenges in building resilience to disasters.
- to discuss opportunities for ECOWAS member States to be engaged on data sharing protocols and transboundary joint activities on disaster risk reduction.



3. Expected Outcomes

- Build capacity of West African DRR focal point on risk assessment, risk analysis and risk mapping
- Build strong partnership and networking between stakeholders within the sub-region on data sharing and exchange by initiating transboundary risk assessment activities
- Etc.

4. Duration & Venue: The West Africa sub-regional training workshop on risk assessment will be held from 25 to 27 November 2009 in Dakar, Senegal.

5. Languages: English & French.

6. Participants

The West Africa sub-regional training workshop on risk assessment is intended for: (1) ECOWAS Member States DRR focal points, sub-regional organization officials who are responsible for disaster reduction; (2) officials in charge of DRR or DRR-related issues in UN agencies, donor countries and international organizations; and (3) technical and scientific sector and civil society institutions.

It is to be noted that due to financial constraints, the ECOWAS Commission and the UNISDR secretariat, the main organizers of the Meeting, will only be able to cover the costs of one (1) participant from each Member States and one (1) participant from each technical and scientific organisation. This participant shall preferably be the head or representative of the National Platform, national coordinating mechanism for DRR or Focal Point for Disaster Reduction. Participants from UN



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agencies, donor countries and international organizations are requested to cover the cost of their participation in the training workshop.

7. Organizers

The risk assessment training workshop will be convened by the ECOWAS Commission and UNISDR Africa Office with financial support from the World Bank through the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR).



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