

CSO Statement at the Africa-Arab Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018

We, the Civil Society Organisations present at this Africa-Arab Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, and on behalf of fellow CSOs across the African region, confirm our commitment to supporting the achievement of the targets set out in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Over the past few years, CSOs have continued working at the frontline and witnessing the impacts of hydro-meteorological hazards on people across the continent – communities relying on agriculture and livestock as main income-generating activities are continuously impacted by large and small-scale disasters (such as drought, floods, storms, landslides).

For example, this year's drought in Southern Africa has led to unprecedented consequences in all countries in the region, with impacts spreading to sectors such as tourism in South Africa. The 2018 Southern Africa drought is impacting a region which was still recovering from previous years' droughts, and has highlighted the role of climate change in exacerbating pre-existing conditions of risk. In West and Central Africa, the rainy season has been dramatic in many countries, including those known as the driest of the region. The estimation of losses and damages including death are not yet finished being assessed.

Sea-level rise is threatening coastal areas and small island states throughout the continent. It is important to remember that in Africa, twenty-eight are coastal countries

There is an increasing realisation that these hazards alone do not trigger a disaster. What creates disasters is primarily the vulnerability of communities, which increases in light of actions and "non-actions" taken by governments and civil society.

We recognise the worsening effects of conflict and violence in fragile states, which lead to increased vulnerability of already marginalised communities. In some regions in conflict, it is almost impossible to assist or conduct preventive actions that may contribute to reduce the vulnerability of communities.

We welcome the fast economic growth much of the region is experiencing, however we are concerned about its potentially adverse impacts on our environment: pollution and environmental degradation are worrisome phenomena that may become even more impactful when cities and countries continue their growth without regulated measures. The sustainability of our economies depends on maintaining the environment.

We recognise the need to join forces to address these pressing regional challenges that act as obstacles for achieving resilience at all levels, from local to regional, and to fulfil the targets of Africa Union's Agenda 2063. We recognise that disaster risk reduction policies, practices and actions in line with the Sendai Framework for DRR can promote coherence among various global policies and frameworks, in particular the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda, and can contribute to sustainable change in the lives of communities impacted by large and small-scale disasters.

We reiterate the need for civil society to be integrated in decision-making processes, as a key actor who brings the voices and the perspective of communities at the frontline of disasters. We urge governments to recognise civil society actors as partners, not as beneficiaries (as knowledge contributors in plans and policy design and development), and to foster collaboration among state

and non-state actors to support each other and deliver on commitments. The citizens must make the government accountable to deliver the commitments made to the SFDRR.

We welcome our governments' progress in achieving the commitments set out in the Plan of Action and in the Common African Position presented at the Global Platform in 2017. We call on them to take action to achieve Target E in an integrated and inclusive manner, ensuring DRR strategies at the national and local levels are truly representing the risks and threats on the ground including climate-related risks. Risks and threats should be tackled in all their dimensions, through an integrated risk management approach that takes into consideration climate change adaptation, DRR and ecosystem management, that brings together all sectors, and is gender transformative, whilst also ensuring the linkages between top-down and bottom-up mechanisms.

We call for government to pursue economic growth and development with a DRR lens, to foster the idea of risk-informed development that can make it sustainable. Civil society organisations can facilitate this process by:

- acting as bridge-builders through learning, connecting communities and actors;
- liaising and coordinating with government on Disaster Informed development policies at local national and regional level;
- implementing national education programs on Disaster Risks Management jointly;
- increasing domestic resource allocation for disaster risk reduction and investments in climate services, while ensuring institutionalisation and integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation into development sectors vertically and horizontally, in line with the commitments made in the Common African Position at the 2017 Global Platform for DRR.

We commit to promoting coherence between existing global frameworks by:

- i. Sharing our respective knowledge to identify gaps in and between policy formulation, implementation, evaluation and reform;
- ii. Contributing to making DRR policy more effective and in-line with all complementary global and regional frameworks, national sectoral strategies and policies, and local context;
- iii. Supporting inclusive and participatory DRR policy processes at all stages and at all levels,

We also commit to ensure community participation to be the pillar of building back better in preparedness for response, recovery and reconstruction

We are ready to support the development of multi-hazard early warning systems, that takes into account threats such as diseases, environmental degradation, violence and instability.

Thank You !!!!