

SADC Ministers responsible for Disaster Risk Management and Ministers of Finance seek more resourcing and responsive disaster risk reduction frameworks in the Region

'Enhancing Regional Disaster Preparedness and Response' was the theme of the first extra-ordinary Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Disaster Risk Management and Ministers of Finance, held in June 26, 2015 at Harare, Zimbabwe. The Ministerial Meeting was preceded by the Disaster Risk Reduction Technical Committee, comprising of Heads of National Disaster Management Authorities on the 23rd June 2015 and the Senior Officials Meeting on June 24 & 25, 2015.

The meeting was organised by the SADC Secretariat specifically by the Disaster Risk Reduction Unit under the auspices of the Directorate of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs in collaboration with the Government of Zimbabwe. Through the support from European Union funded SADC Regional Political Cooperation Programme, the meeting was attended by twelve (12) Member States with the exception of Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritius and Seychelles. The SADC Directorates of Food, Agriculture and Natural



Participants of the DRR Technical Committee Meeting

Resources, Social & Human Development and Special Programmes, Infrastructure and Services, primarily Climate Services Centre and Water sectors were in attendance.

The SADC Region is exposed to a wide range of hazards and disasters that frequently

result in heavy loss of lives and livelihoods, displacement of large populations, disruption of economic activities, destruction of assets and loss of investment. The Hazards that affect the Region include floods, drought, snow, volcanic eruption landslides, tsunamis, tropical cyclones, storms, wild fires and earthquakes. These hazards increase the risk of shortages of water, outbreaks of diseases such as Malaria, cholera and other diarrhoeal diseases, malnutrition and stunted growth, foot and mouth diseases in animals and other negative impacts.

Following the decision by Council of Ministers at its meeting of March 2015, the Ministers responsible for Disaster Risk Management and Ministers Responsible for Finance met jointly to discuss the hazards and disasters affecting the region as well as to develop response modalities and mobilise resources.

During the current season of 2014/2015 a number of Member States namely Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe were affected by floods with several deaths, displaced persons and destruction of infrastructure. At the same time a number of Member States in the southern and western parts of the Region are experiencing a serious drought situation with expected food shortages. These Member States include Zimbabwe, Botswana, north-western South Africa, Malawi, Namibia and southern Angola.



Deputy Executive Secretary; Finance & Administration and Director; Organ on Politics and Defence Cooperation during the Ministers Meeting

The Ministers agreed to appeal to Member States, International Cooperating Partners (ICPS) to provide assistance to affected Member States, and also requested Member States to provide regular updates of their situations and humanitarian needs to the SADC Secretariat. The Ministers also commended Member States that provided assistance to flood affected Member States during the current period; these included Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Ministers, also urged Member States to urgently mobilise resources to import food to cover the deficits for the 2015/2016 marketing year, including encouraging regional sales from those with a surplus. Member States were urged to promote agricultural solutions that are adaptable to the changing climate and reduce over-dependence on rained agriculture.

The Ministers further urged Member States to prioritize Disaster Risk Management programs with adequate funding and urged Members to ensure mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction into all sectors.

In order to promote systemic regional integration and sustainable development, the Ministers directed the SADC Secretariat to develop a comprehensive regional disaster risk reduction strategy which should include regional response mechanisms and a humanitarian assistance framework. They also agreed to the establishment of a regional disaster preparedness and response fund and development of an integrated early warning system to ensure effective information dissemination on hazards faced by the region.

The Ministers urged Member States to domesticate the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and called on the Member States and SADC Secretariat to review current national and regional DRR policies and strategic frameworks to align them to the Sendai Framework on DRR 2015-2030.

In conclusion, the Ministerial Meeting commended the Government and people of Zimbabwe for hosting the meeting with special thanks to His Excellency, President Robert Mugabe, chairperson of both African Union and SADC Region for attending the Sendai Conference, in Japan and for presenting the Africa Region Position on DRR to the conference in March 2015.



SADC Ministers Responsible for DRM & Ministers of Finance together with Senior Officials