



**Outcomes and Recommendations of the
Pre-Season Preparedness and Planning Workshop**

5-8 October 2010

Gaborone, Botswana

The 2010 Pre-Season Preparedness and Planning Workshop was held under the theme “Strengthening Partnership for Effective Disaster Risk Reduction”. During the event, the SADC Secretariat, its Member States and their International Cooperating Partners highlighted the importance of being able to react fast to emergencies and develop effective contingency plans, as well as the operational structures required to implement such plans. Further, they agreed that the governments of this region, with support from their cooperating partners, have made much progress and in some cases set a very high standard for preparing for and responding to disasters. However, the focus now is to move beyond this to ensure even greater disaster risk reduction.

Given that disasters are often trans-boundary in nature and thus require regional responses, there are key challenges facing DRR implementation in the region, specifically: 1) institutional frameworks for DRR at the regional, national and, in some cases, local/community level, which are often underfunded and not coordinated; 2) lack of comprehensive and constantly updated risk assessments and analysis; 3) lack of information and knowledge management systems; and, 4) the need to reduce underlying risk factors.

Furthermore, this situation is exacerbated by HIV and AIDS with southern Africa, which remains the epicentre of the global epidemic, with infection rates of above 20 percent in a number of countries.

Drought and food insecurity continue to be recurrent problems for many countries in southern Africa. It is expected that about four million people will be food insecure for the 2010-2011 agriculture marketing year. Similarly, current malnutrition rates in the region are still among the highest in the world. Additionally, cholera has become endemic in the region, and, with other epidemics, including measles and malaria, continue to cause significant loss of lives.

Against this backdrop and with climate change likely to worsen the frequency and magnitude of hydro-meteorological hazards, governments and partners need to implement radical measures to ensure community safety and protection of economic assets. The upward trend in disaster frequency and impacts is likely to continue unless we act now and decisively. Good disaster risk reduction depends on coordination efforts of all involved and at all levels.

The region is expected to receive above average rainfall this season, particularly in the period January to March 2011. It is thus important to plan for possible flooding. However, some areas are also expected to receive below normal rainfall.

Therefore, to build community resilience to disasters, it is critical to assist governments, regional organisations and other stakeholders to protect and improve rural livelihoods, reduce vulnerability to shocks and link short-term emergency assistance with longer-term sustainable development initiatives.

To this end, in line with the programme of action for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction for the period 2006-2015, SADC still has a critical role to play in facilitating DRR and promoting sustainable development. Thus, the SADC Secretariat, its Member States' national disaster authorities and their International Cooperating Partners agreed that, subject to availability of funding and within a reasonable timeframe for implementation (not exceeding one year), the following points should be taken into consideration:

- A SADC Inter-Ministerial meeting needs to be convened urgently to discuss the DRR agenda, in order to enhance its implementation within SADC;
- Member States and partners need to develop protocols amongst themselves regarding collaboration on DRR issues, with support from the SADC Secretariat;
- Member States and collaborating partners are urged to further mainstream and institutionalise DRR into their sector programmes as well as within the MDGs and poverty reduction strategies;
- Member States are encouraged to continue conducting and participating in cross-country multi-sectoral disaster simulations, as such activities can lead to enhanced regional partnerships for DRM;
- The SADC Disaster Risk Reduction Unit (DRRU) urgently needs to be strengthened to provide leadership and coordination regarding DRR matters in the region;
- A mechanism is required in southern Africa to access ISDR support; and Member States also requested the assistance of ISDR's partners in sourcing funding for national DRR activities;
- The Early Warning Centre in the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security Cooperation should be utilised to disseminate early warning information on hazards and disasters, including floods, cyclones and epidemics;
- Collaboration and support to the regional climate service centre and academic institutions should be strengthened for research and information dissemination on DRR. To achieve this, mapping and capacity needs assessments are recommended;
- Contingency Plans should to be submitted to the SADC DRR Unit by 31 December 2010; and
- The SADC DRR Unit should periodically disseminate updates on the progress made in the implementation of recommendations.

In addition, partners noted the following:

- SADC Member States, in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Africa Regional Strategy for DRR, are encouraged to revise the SADC DRR Strategic Plan in due course in order to address specific needs of Member States;
- The national, regional and international institutions participating in this meeting (referred as 'the partners') are committed to supporting the SADC Member States in the implementation of the

- SADC DRR Strategy and assisting the SADC DRR Unit in its facilitation of such processes;
- Such partner support can only complement strong engagement by the Member States to provide tangible support to the SADC DRR Unit;
 - In order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the SADC DRR Unit and to assess the expectations of Member States, partners hereby express their willingness to support the capacity needs assessment planned by the DRR Unit. This assessment shall serve as the baseline for discussing and devising future capacity development plans and activities in line with the revised SADC DRR Strategic Plan; and
 - The partners recommend a fully-funded, dedicated, sustainable system-wide coordination on DRR at the regional level in southern Africa. The partners request that UNISDR and UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNBCPR) play a larger role in this process.

The SADC Member States present recognized the challenges facing the DRR Unit at the Secretariat and urged the International Cooperating Partners to assist in terms of strengthening capacity at the SADC DRR Unit, in terms of funding and expertise, as well as in its implementation of the SADC DRR Strategy. On their part, SADC Member States committed to ensure sustainability of programmes and activities thereafter.

In closing, participants agreed that all these recommendations should be endorsed and approved by the Director of the Organ at the SADC Secretariat.