MISSION REPORT

JOINT VISIT TO SADC HUMANITARIAN AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE (SHOC), NACALA, MOZAMBIQUE

25 -29 April 2022

1. Background

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Ministers approved the establishment of the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC) as part of the implementation of the Council's August 2019 decision to expeditiously operationalise the SADC Disaster Preparedness and Response Mechanism. The Council of Ministers also accepted the offer by the Republic of Mozambique to host the SHOC as well as the roadmap for its operationalization jointly developed by both the SADC Secretariat and the Government of Mozambique. The SHOC is situated in Nacala, in the Nampula province of Mozambique.

The Centre aims to coordinate humanitarian and emergency support to SADC Member States affected by disasters within the region, thereby contributing to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and resilience building. The Centre was inaugurated by His Excellency Filipe Nyusi, the president of the Republic of Mozambique and the then SADC chairperson in June 2021. Following the establishment of the Centre, the Government of Mozambique, through the Embassy of the Republic of Mozambique to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent Mission to the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, requested the African Union Commission (AUC) to support the Centre. The request was made to the AUC Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE), which houses the DRR Unit. The DRR Unit is under the DARBE's Directorate of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE)

In response to the request by the Government of Mozambique, the AUC facilitated a joint assessment mission to assess the needs of the SHOC in order to identify opportunities for support, in close collaboration with the relevant International Cooperating Partners (ICPs), and also to link-up the Centre with continental programmes related to DRR, namely the establishment of Regional Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Situation Rooms. The assessment mission's findings were to consider and build upon the observations of the SADC Assessment mission held 5-11 June 2021 that sought to assess the suitability of the proposed site and premises as well as the progress in the joint implementation of the Roadmap for the establishment of the SHOC. The joint assessment was organised in collaboration with the SADC secretariat and relevant partner organisations already working closely with the AUC.

The joint mission to the SHOC was conducted from the 25th to 29th of April 2022. The joint mission team was composed of staff of the African Union Commission, SADC Secretariat, International Federation for Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and CIMA Research Foundation supported by the Government of Mozambique through the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGD). The mission was also joined by local DRR stakeholders based in Maputo, Nampula and Nacala.

1.1. Mission Objective

The purpose of the mission was to assess the needs of the centre and to explore opportunities for stakeholders and partners to contribute to the sustainable operations of the centre. The mission also sought to share the continental Multi-Hazard Early Warning System products that may be useful for the functioning of the Centre, as part of the AUC process of establishing regional centres for Disaster Risk Management. Furthermore, the mission also sought to identify challenges and make recommendations for possible mitigative measures.

1.2. Assessment Method

The mission involved bilateral courtesy visits with the President of INGD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Director for International and Regional Cooperation, as well as the Provincial Authorities in Nampula Province. A meeting was held with the DRR stakeholders based in Maputo as well as with the Working Group responsible for the operationalisation of the SHOC. During these meetings, presentations were made by INGD, SADC and AUC to update the stakeholders on the progress made toward the operationalization of the SHOC. The AUC presented on the continental Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Situation Room and how that fits into the architecture of the SHOC. Discussions focused on identification of needs, highlights of work done by various stakeholders as well as understanding of challenges and opportunities.

1.3 Progress on the Operationalization of the SHOC

A roadmap to operationalize the SHOC was developed by the SADC Secretariat together with the Government of Mozambique, which included the following actions:

- Establishment of Governance Documents for the SHOC: ***The draft Intergovernmental Agreement for the Operationalization of the SHOC*** has been developed which will provide a legal basis for the Centre, and will come into force once two-thirds of SADC Member States endorse it.
- The SHOC Hosting Agreement, which will take into consideration the SADC Protocol on Privileges and Immunities, to be signed between the SADC Secretariat and the government of Mozambique is almost finalised.
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the SHOC have been developed to guide regional actions for the SHOC
- Approved interim structure and budget to kick-start the operationalisation of the SHOC while the Secretariat facilitates the processes of having the MOA endorsed by a two-thirds majority of SADC Member States.

2. Assessment Findings

The assessment mission's findings build upon the observations of the SADC Assessment mission held 5-11 June 2021, and reflect on progress made in the implementation of the SHOC operationalization roadmap.

The team acknowledged the high political support from the SADC Secretariat and Member States as demonstrated by: (i) the donation of the facility by the Government of Mozambique, (ii) the commitment of funds to operationalise the centre for the first three years, and (iii) the decision of SADC Member States to further develop the capacity and functions of the SHOC.

Furthermore, the team recognized the geographic location of the SHOC as presenting multiple benefits in terms of logistics due to the close proximity to the Nacala Airport and deep seaport. In addition, the fact that the town of Nacala is serviced by a railway connecting it to several SADC countries is a great advantage.

The identified location presents multiple benefits in terms of logistics as it is close to the Nacala Airport, the deep seaport, and is serviced by a railway connecting to several SADC countries. The assigned building appears in good condition and with adequate space to accommodate activities planned for the interim period.

Additional space is available in the adjoining area, allowing for further expansion of the centre, on a needs basis. The close-by Air force base is an additional element that guarantees security for the entire area.

The assessment team has also highlighted key elements that are relevant for the future development of the SHOC. These include the following:

2.1. The situation of the SHOC in a Cyclone Pathway

Notwithstanding its strategic location in terms of logistics, the SHOC facility is on the path of cyclonic disturbances. There is a need to put measures in place to mitigate potential damage to the SHOC emanating from future extreme weather events.

2.2. *Connectivity and infrastructure*

In order for the SHOC to be effective, it has to be linked to the continental, regional national Humanitarian Centres of all SADC Member States and to the SADC Secretariat at all times. This will be facilitated through telecommunication and internet connectivity, which will require both broadband and multiple redundancies to ensure effective data management and communication even in critical situations. The Internet is not yet present but SADC started the negotiation with the internet provider. A preliminary Floors plan has been prepared (see Annex 1), and it is going to be revised based on the actual need of the SHOC (Sit room and Server room at first, Communication room with separate access). Plans have been put in place by the SADC Secretariat to preliminarily address these needs with local providers.

Connectivity in terms of infrastructure/roads is also critical for the SHOC. It was observed that the SHOC has the strategic advantage of being located close to the airport and one of the major harbours in Mozambique. Equally important is the fact that it is situated close to the main railway network. However, the road that connects Nacala city to the SHOC would need major improvement and regular maintenance to accommodate the increase in traffic associated with the functions of the SHOC.

2.3. Environmental Impact Assessment

The absence of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is of concern as it limits an in-depth understanding of potential impacts and threats caused by the SHOC on the social, natural and health dimensions of Nacala as well as the SHOC itself in the long run. There is therefore a need to carry out an EIA and thus put in place the eventual mitigation measures required.

2.4. Condition of the building and Utilities

The building is in good condition. It has two stories, with utilities and functioning air conditioning. Services such as kitchen and toilet are present and adequate for all personnel. The work of the SHOC requires a consistent power supply from the grid, therefore it is crucial to invest in other sources of power, especially because it was noted that power outages do occur.

This assessment mission reiterated the findings of the SADC mission conducted in June 2021 on land availability for expansion. It observed that there are 20 hectares of land that are potentially available for the expansion of the SHOC to include training and warehousing facilities, among others. It would be crucial for SADC to engage the Government of Mozambique to request more land to accommodate the needs the SHOC will have as it expands its operations to include any other activities that will enhance its capacities.

2.5. *Relationship Between SHOC and Regional /National Entities*

The Centre will work with the national agencies responsible for DRR/M in the SADC Member States. It will facilitate collaboration between national DRR/M and meteorology and hydrological sectors. The SHOC will also facilitate collaboration and linkages with the AUC Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (MHEWS) Situation room and other Regional Centres. The Centre is expected to facilitate coordination of transboundary risks where hazards transcend national and regional borders.

The AUC established the MHEWS Situation room at the AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa. The situation room and a Strategic Framework for the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS) Programme were endorsed by the STC and the AU Executive Council and AU Assembly. The AMHEWAS Programme aims to develop a continental Early Warning System that is linked to the Regional and National Systems to facilitate better coordination of disaster preparedness and response efforts. Currently, the situation room is staffed with three officers and produces a continental watch and situational reports. The situation room is connected to the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) and IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC) situation rooms. The

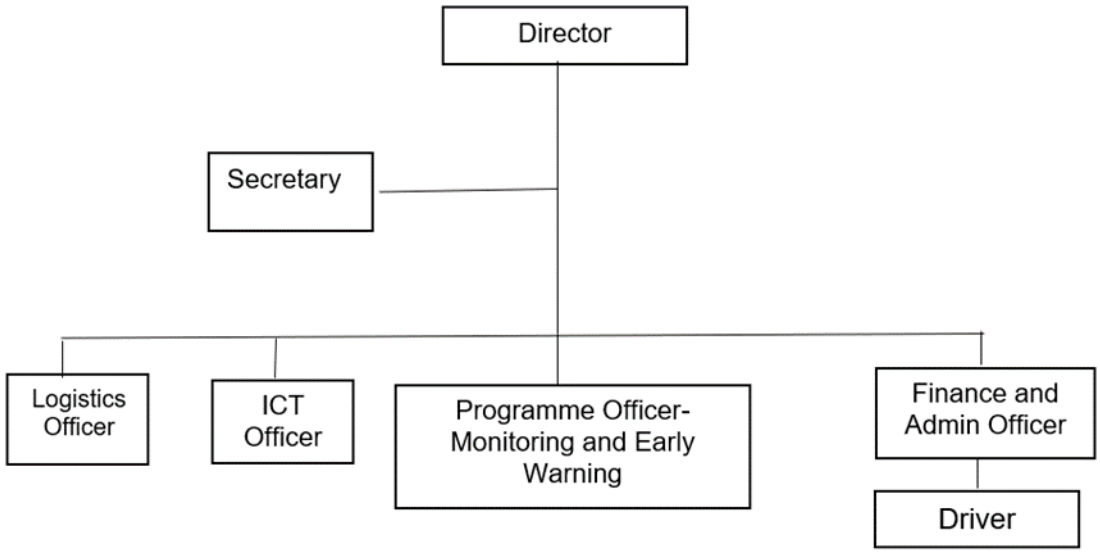
immediate objectives are to connect other RECs' systems and the SHOC will need to be taken on board in this process. The SHOC will benefit from being incorporated into the network of Regional situational rooms that will be connected to the continental situation room.

The SHOC is potentially a platform for the collaboration between DRR, Meteorology and Hydrology sectors. There are already a number of climate centres in place that the SHOC can benefit from in terms of technical support and collaboration. These include the SADC Climate Services Centre, ACMAD and ICPAC.

While there are plans to conduct training of staff within the SHOC and the SADC region, there is room to extend the training destinations beyond the region. For example, SHOC can benefit from training by AUC under its Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action Project. There are several other regional and international training centres and programmes from which the SHOC can benefit.

2.6. Funding and other resources:

The SADC Council of Ministers have approved an interim structure (as outlined below) to facilitate the operationalization of the SHOC for a period of three (3) years starting from the 2022/23 financial year. The Council further approved a budget to facilitate the administrative set-up of the SHOC including the installation of ICT network infrastructure and cabling to facilitate communication.



The assessment observed however that while funds have been committed for the preliminary setup phase of the SHOC, there is a need to raise funds for operations and expansion of the SHOC as available funds are only for the establishment of the SHOC. There is a need for mobilization of funds to sustain further operationalisation and expansion of the SHOC.

2.7. SHOC Operations and Sustainability Plan

SHOC operationalization is ongoing over multiple lines; staffing, procurement of furniture, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), SOPs, software and platforms, and capacity building. Overall SOPs are in place and regulate the general functioning of the SHOC. Dedicated SOPs are going to be developed for the operation of the different functions of the SHOC (Sit Room, Logistic, etc.).

A three-year development plan for the SHOC is in place (Annex 2) and it identifies staff needs and budget for equipping the centre. As with any plan, it will need to be updated as the implementation proceeds and it will be complemented by a long-term sustainability plan that SADC is committed to developing.

To have a functioning MHEWS in place, the national and regional Multi-Hazard Monitoring and EWS need to be mapped out and collated into a database and need to function in a knowledge management platform run by the SHOC. Staff need to be trained in assessing and operating this system. Furthermore, a loss & damage, historical impact database for SADC is needed to make accurate predictions on the impact of upcoming events. In addition, a menu of forecasts, and the available hydro-meteorological information in SADC needs to be collated and operationalised in the SHOC.

New needs especially for technology may emerge as a result of new developments in the technology sector and as disasters gain complexity and intensity. The SHOC will need to be equipped for such developments.

2.8. Banking system - funds transactions.

It was noted that the banking system in Mozambique can be slow under certain circumstances and this can challenge the SHOC operation during emergencies when relevant funds might need to be transferred to SHOC for enabling response.

3. SWOT Analysis

The assessment team has conducted a joint analysis of Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) for the SHOC. The results of the SWOT analysis are summarized in Table 1

Table 1: SHOC SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
● Political support and commitment for implementation and funding ● Strategic location in relation to the SADC region ● Secured funding from Member States for the Interim activities (3 year) ● SHOC Facility donated by the Republic of Mozambique ● International Airport at close proximity ● Deep Sea Port at close proximity, creating access to island states ● Railway connection and network ● Air force base at close proximity ● Storage facilities ● New building	● The Environmental Impact Assessment has not yet been done ● Lack of a backup electricity system – generator ● Telecommunication/Internet connectivity (mobile data, satellite connection) ● Lack of furniture Assessment ● Poor road transport infrastructure within the host town ● Funding gap for operational action ● Lack of long-term funding ● Slow banking system - funds transactions ● Lack of means of transport (vehicles) for the operation of the Centre
Threats ● The facility is on the path of the cyclonic disturbances ● Electricity outages ● Is location suitable for international staff welfare – accommodation, banks, school etc. ● Competing priorities for funding	Opportunities ● Land expansion - staff houses, ● Adequate space for improved infrastructure ● International Airport that can still be expanded to support the SHOC. ● Sustainable solutions through renewable energy – solar ● Tap into the SADC Secretariat Satellite ● Building capacities for regional DRR ● Strengthen collaboration with partners and ICPs- WFP capacity development, JICA infrastructure and South-South knowledge management with other AHA centres ● Fundraising for SADC for the SHOC ● Innovation solutions ● Linkages with the AUC EWS

4. Recommendations

4.1. *Risk Assessment and Mapping*

Conduct Multi-Hazard Risk Assessment and Mapping in the Nacala area to identify potential challenges to the functionality of the SHOC and to implement adequate mitigation measures.

4.2. *Backup system for the internet*

The operations of the SHOC depend highly on internet reliability. It is designed that SHOC communications will be through internet platforms at all times. Any breakout of internet connections will mean a break in operations of the SHOC. To ensure maximum connectivity all the time, installations of internet satellites are proposed at the moment.

4.3. *Energy Mix*

It was noted that electricity is volatile and therefore it is important to have backup power in the form of a generator as well as solar energy to ensure a good and consistent power supply for load balance.

4.4. *Rehabilitation of transport infrastructure*

Recommends the government to rehabilitate the transport/road infrastructure in the host city/province to allow speedy movement of goods and vehicles during response operations.

4.5. *Resource mobilisation*

There is a need to mobilise resources and establish partnerships to support the operations and expansion of the SHOC. For example, staff training may need to go beyond the opportunities within the region and infrastructure upgrades may be necessary based on new developments, etc. Resources have to be mobilized for these.

4.6. *Diversify telecommunication:*

The SHOC will facilitate coordinated communication on disaster preparedness and response with Member States, regional, continental and global DRM stakeholders. It is therefore crucial to ensure that various means of communication are always available, such as ground and mobile phone, satellite, as well as VHF radio, among others.

4.7. *Fast-track the putting into force the SHOC interim operations and structure*

The SHOC interim structure will be established through secondments of staff from SADC Member States, and this process may be protracted which will hinder expeditious operationalization of the SHOC. Similarly, lengthy procurement processes of the SHOC office furniture and ICT equipment may further delay the operations. There is an urgent need to fast-track these processes.

4.8. *Acquisition of extra land*

The SADC should consider negotiating with the Government of Mozambique for the acquisition of extra land to expand the activities of the SHOC.

4.9. *Procurement of vehicles*

There is need for mobilisation of resources to procure vehicles ensure efficient means of transport for smooth operation of the SHOC.

4.10. *Hosting agreement*

The MOA SHOC which will enact the provisions of the SADC Protocol on privileges and immunities should be fast-tracked.

4.11. *Cooperation with Continental and Regional Situation Rooms and other relevant initiatives*

Establish and improve the working coordination between the SHOC, Regional Situation Rooms, and Continental Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action Situation Rooms for Knowledge and data sharing.

The AUC, SADC and Government of Mozambique should convene follow up meetings to map out the way forward in terms of linking the SHOC with the Continental Early Warning situation room. The Situation Room at the AUC is already linked to IGAD and ICPAC systems and the plan is to link other RECs and eventually Member States.

The AUC is also working towards establishing an AU Humanitarian Agency. Through the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, there is an opportunity for the SHOC to collaborate with the AUC on policy guidance as well as capacity building on humanitarian response.

The AUC department of Infrastructure and Energy may need to be roped in as the process of establishment of the SHOC unfolds, to give technical support on infrastructure issues, especially as there is a need to make the supporting infrastructure (ICT, roads, ports, etc.) in the host city fit for purpose to ensure the centre responds efficiently to disasters in the region

5. Way Forward

Partners agreed on the findings and the set of recommendations formulated in this report and are committed to supporting SADC and the SHOC in addressing them. Partners are going to deliberate in their respective organisations on the specifics of the support, according to their mandate.

The AUC and SADC and the Government of Mozambique will need to hold follow up meetings to map out the support and joint activities to support the centre. The AUC will have to provide orientation on the MHEWS situation room to relevant staff and officials within the SADC and the Government of Mozambique. Capacity-building activities may also be arranged, including learning visits to the AUC MHEWS situation room. An MOU may need to be

signed between AUC, SADC Secretariat, and the Government of Mozambique to outline collaborations and support.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: SHOC Floor Plan

Annex 2: Comprehensive budget of the interim start-up activities and interim staffing structure for the SADC humanitarian and emergency operations centre (SHOC)