

# GUIDELINES ON

## **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONTINENTAL CIVILIAN CAPACITY MECHANISM FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (3CMDPR)**

### **I. BACKGROUND**

On its 1042<sup>nd</sup> Session that was held on 29 October 2021, the African Union Peace and Security Council considered and adopted a proposal by the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria (PSC/AHG/COMM.1042 (2021)) on the establishment of a "Continental Civilian Capacity Mechanism for Disaster Preparedness and Response". The establishment of the mechanism is in the spirit of Pan African Solidarity to build a "**Pan African capacity**" to reduce risks and threats to the stability of states.

The proposal on the establishment of the 3CDPR was discussed and adopted by the 4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment (STC-ARDWE), which was held from 13-16 December 2021, in virtual format. The STC-ARDWE **'ADOPTED** the report presented by the Commission on the establishment of the mechanism and **ENDORSED** the creation of a continental civilian capacity for disaster preparedness and response, which will draw from I African Member States' capacities to provide timely assistance to disaster stricken countries. Further, the STC-ARDWE **DIRECTED** the AU Commission to organise a meeting, as soon as possible, of national services of AU Member States in charge of civil protection and response to disasters, which will aim at agreeing on modalities, including financial and structural implications, to establish the civilian capacity'.

On its 40<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session that was held from 02-03 February 2022, the African Union Executive Council endorsed the report of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the STC-ARDWE (**EX.CL/Dec.1144(XL)**) and **'FURTHER ENDORSED** the creation of a continental civilian capacity for disaster preparedness and response, which will draw from African Union Member States' capacities to provide timely assistance to disaster stricken countries and **DIRECTED** the AUC Commission to organise a meeting of national services of AU Member States in charge of civil protection and response to disasters, with the aim of agreeing on modalities, including financial, legal and structural implications to establish the civilian capacity'.

### **II. THE CONTINENTAL CIVILIAN CAPACITY MECHANISM FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (3CMDPR)**

#### **a) Rationale of the creation of the mechanism**

The need to create a Continental Civilian Capacity Mechanism for Disaster Preparedness and Response arises from the increasing frequency and magnitude of disasters across the continent as well as rising vulnerability characterising disaster risk context in African states and

communities. The frequency of the occurrences of disasters on the continent has increased exponentially since

2015<sup>1</sup>. As illustration, for only the southern African region, cyclones have become prevalent and catastrophic, leaving behind many losses and damages. Other major risks threaten the continent, in particular recurrent risks (floods, forest fires, earthquakes, etc.) and those caused by technological accidents, including the risks caused by climate change.

Cognisance of the rising disaster risks, the African Union developed series of instruments to reduce risk and enhance response and recovery. In 2004, the African Union developed the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. Successive Programmes of Actions were developed to align the implementation of the strategy with other global frameworks, including the “Hyogo Framework: Building Resilience of Nations and Communities 2005-2015” and “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030”. Further, the AU Commission developed a number of programmes to facilitate implementation of Regional Strategy and its recent Programme of Action for the implementation of the Strategy and the Sendai Framework. Key among these programmes are: The Africa Multi-hazard Early Warning and Action System (AMHEWAS), Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance for Resilience in African Regions and Countries, Sahel Resilience Project and most recently, the Africa Urban Resilience Programme. Other AU initiatives that were developed to address the rising risk include African Risk Capacity, African Union Humanitarian Agency, as well as frameworks such as the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2032; Integrated Africa Strategy for Meteorology (Weather and Climate Services), inter alia.

Progress notwithstanding, when a disaster strikes, many African countries rely on international capabilities for search and rescue operations, even where such capabilities may exist in a neighbouring state or within the continent. With climate change, and other development challenges, the ability of states to respond to disasters arising from multiple crises may be significantly constrained. Recent years have also witnessed how hazards transcend national or region borders - further shrinking ability of each states to respond to them individually.

Hence, the establishment of a Pan African Mechanism for disaster preparedness and response will ensure African states under the aegis of the African Union will pool their resources together and respond effectively in the event of a major disaster by mobilizing and deploying African capacities and capabilities for preparedness and response. In this context, the African Union adopted the establishment of a **Continental Civilian Capacity Mechanism for Disaster Preparedness and Response (3CMDPR)** to undertake this mission.

## **b) Purpose of the Mechanism**

The purpose of the establishment of the 3CMDPR is to support AU member states affected by disasters. It will propose to act first on prevention, which requires member states to develop their capacities to respond to multiple risks, including through increased training and knowledge sharing, build a pan-African resource pool for disaster response, and provide assistance when the

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<sup>1</sup> Africa Biennial Report on DRR 2015-2018

## c) Objectives

The overall objective of the mechanism is to safeguard African people and their assets from disasters, through rapid African Union led response to disasters and strengthening of **disaster preparedness and response capacities of AU Member States** to be better equipped with necessary tools and facilities to reach out to the affected populations when a disaster strikes, build preparedness and response capabilities in peacetime and able to quickly mobilise resources for deployment in other African countries, and where necessary to facilitate African response punctually to global emergencies and disasters in the framework of international solidarity..

To achieve this objective, the mechanism aims to deliver on the following specific objectives:

- To coordinate resource mobilization and facilities from member states to be deployed in an event of a major disaster’;
- To facilitate rapid deployment of resources to disaster affected states and communities;
- To strengthen capacities and capabilities of AU member states to respond to disasters within its borders, and where their capacity is exceeded, they can request the mechanism to intervene;
- To establish a transnational online real-time early warning and information exchange platform, leveraging on the AMHEWAS situation rooms; and
- To facilitate pan-African disaster response to global emergencies and disasters.

## d) Intervention Areas

The mechanism will, on a permanent basis and in the event of disasters that exceed the capacity of a Member State, carry out the following tasks:

### (i) Preparedness

- Establish pool of resources, including human and material resources that are regularly inspected to ensure their readiness for deployment in an event of a disaster;
- Share best practices in crisis and disaster management;
- Build/strengthen capacities of civil protection and disaster management institutions of the member states in preparedness and response to disasters;
- Harmonize operating procedures for disaster preparedness and response;
- Support establishment of early warning systems and contingency planning and undertake regular simulation exercises for better preparedness and response to disasters;
- Bolster anticipatory actions for resilience;
- Undertake research to improve preparedness and response actions; and
- Promote risk awareness and risk communication.

### (ii) Response



➤ Facilitate rapid deployment of human and material resources across the continent for disaster preparedness and response;

- Intervene, upon request by states and in compliance with individual states' sovereign roles, to undertake preparedness and response activities such as but not limited to
  - evacuation, search and rescue operations, management of emergency operations centres, crisis communication, coordination of provision of immediate lifesaving interventions.;
  - Lead continental response and support host governments in coordinating international response activities;
  - Strengthen capacity of disaster management institutions of AU member states in assessment and timely declaration of state of disasters;
  - Provide technical support to states in assessment of losses and post disaster need assessment;

### **(iii) Guiding principles**

The mechanism will be guided by the following guiding principles:

- Inter-African solidarity;
- Respect for the principles of the Constitutive Act of the AU;
- Respect for the national legislation of Member States in this area;
- Respect for professional ethics, the principles of neutrality and integrity.

## **e) Legal and Structural considerations**

### **a. Structural aspects**

The detailed structure of the mechanism shall be developed and submitted long with the Statute. The Commission suggests the mechanism to be composed of of the following:

- Conference of Ministers in charge of Civil Protection and Disaster Risk Management of AU Member States (deliberative body ) and its Bureau.

The Bureau should comprise of 5 ministers and the formation of the Bureau will be guided by AU rules of procedures. The ARBE Department in addition to other departments that might be involved would be members of the Conference of Ministers
- Board of Directors. The Board shall be comprised of Responsible for Civil Protection and Disaster Management of AU member states
- Secretariat. It is recommended that t to have an operational structure which shall include Director General, assisted by a Deputy and a technical staff with a Scientific Advisory Committee and a Continental Training Centre and National Liaison Offices (focal point to be nominated by each Member State to coordinate with the Mechanism at the national level), among others

## b. Legal aspects

The mandate, composition and missions of each component will be defined in the statutes. The statutes of the mechanism provide for the establishment of five sub-regional response hubs, the location of which will be decided in consultation with the RECs and AU Member States in each sub-region in accordance with AU principles;

**The statutes of the "African Civil Preparedness and Response Mechanism" shall be submitted to the AU Executive Council and adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.**

### f) Financial implication

#### a. Financing sources

- The mechanism could be funded mainly through Voluntary contributions from AU Member States;
- Voluntary contributions from international agencies and/or private and public foundations
- Contributions from multilateral and bilateral partners;
- Possible recourse to AU special funds;
- Consider the creation of a new specific fund for disaster preparedness and response

**The commission suggests that the Member State that will host the headquarters of the mechanism will have a particular responsibility for its effective establishment and operationalization.**

#### b. Cost implications

The cost of establishment and operationalisation of the operational structure shall be developed and submitted along with the Statute.

### g) Process of establishment of the mechanism and way forward

- **13-16 December 2021:** 4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session STC-ATDWE endorsed establishment of the 3CMDPR, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- **2-3 February 2022:** 40<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council adopted the establishment of 3CMDPR, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- **5-6 February 2022:** 35<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of AU Heads of State and Government approved the report of the 40<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council that adopted the establishment of the mechanism, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- **23 March 2022:** Consultation between AUC and Embassy of Algeria on implementation of the Executive Council Decision, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- **30 November 2022:** Note Verbale for inclusion of progress report on the establishment of the mechanism will be submitted for inclusion in the agenda of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council to be held in February 2023.



➤ **7-9 December 2022:** Inputs on and adoption of this Concept Paper for the establishment of the mechanism by AU Member States' Heads of Civil Protection and Disaster

Management.

- **7-9 December 2022:** Adoption of survey tool for assessment of existing capacities and best practices for disaster preparedness and response in AU member states that could be potentially be utilised for pan-African responses.
- **7-9 December 2022:** Adoption of action plan for the development of the Statute of the mechanism.
- **20 December 2022:** Progress report on the establishment of the mechanism will be submitted for inclusion in the 42<sup>nd</sup> AU Executive Council session in February 2023.
- **February 2023:** 42<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council will endorse the progress report.
- **28 February 2023:** Member states will return completed questionnaire for the assessment of existing best practices and capabilities for disaster preparedness and response that could be potentially be deployed for pan-African response.
- **31 May 2023:** Draft Statute will be developed and translated in all AU languages and shared with AU member states for inputs.
- **30 June 2022:** Member States provided inputs on the draft Statute to AU Commission for consideration and validation by Member States.
- **29-31 August 2023:** Draft Statute will be discussed and validated by Member States' Heads of Civil Protection and Disaster Management.
- **23-27 October 2023:** Statute for the establishment of the mechanism will be endorsed by the competent STC.
- **January 2024:** AU Permanent Representative Committee will consider the Statute and will discuss the legal and financial aspects and will recommend its adoption at the next Session of the Executive Council to be held in February 2024.

**February 2024:** The Ordinary Session of the Executive Council will endorse the Statute and will submit them to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Upon approval by the Heads of State, the statutes will enter into force with an orientation on when the mechanism will become operational

NB: the dates for 2023 and 2024 are indicative