

Declaration of Intent

Emergency Preparedness and Response Workshop

Johannesburg, 7 December 2007

At the Emergency Preparedness and Response Workshop held in Johannesburg from 5-7 December 2007, participants agreed that flood and cyclone threats, exacerbated by climate change, necessitate immediate and concerted action. In specific, that these threats transcend national borders and therefore require national, regional and international partnerships that serve to strengthen national capacities for preparedness and response. In order to avoid duplication of efforts and to maximise the existing resources, the participants agreed that this partnership must extend beyond the workshop to include all key stakeholders, in particular other SADC member states. And further that many of the solutions to identified challenges exist within the region, and should be capitalized upon for the region.

Participants recognize that their firm commitment to regional solidarity and cooperation must be established within existing cooperation frameworks, specifically the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and, at special invitation, those Indian Ocean countries who are not members of SADC. To this end, they commit to engaging the leadership of SADC through national and multilateral channels.

Meanwhile, the participants agreed that it was imperative that they immediately begin to better organize themselves to allow for enhanced coordination. In order to accomplish this, the participants agreed to:

1. Establish and maintain a *Practice Network* of emergency management specialists to facilitate exchange of experience,
2. Develop and maintain guidance on existing human, technical, financial and training resources that can be drawn upon in preparation for and in the event of a disaster,
3. Establish country-to-country and country-to-partner mechanisms, systems and protocols that allow for the free circulation of aid resources and emergency personnel in the region,
4. Establish regional rapid response capacities for sudden onset disasters,
5. Strengthen the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) and national Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs) to conduct rapid assessments and facilitate needs analysis, and
6. Systematically integrate HIV and AIDS, gender, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Early Recovery (ER) considerations into all elements of emergency preparedness and response.

Participants further agreed that the SADC Disaster Risk Management Team should be reactivated to oversee, guide and contribute to the implementation of the above core commitments, and in the longer term to ensure that lessons learned are fed into contingency and response planning, including strengthening regional ownership of these processes. While the necessary consultations take place towards this end, and in particular to facilitate rapid response during the current flood and cyclone season, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) shall facilitate the formation of a Regional Flood and Cyclone Support Task Team, comprised of national and regional level UN, NGO, donor and government and disaster management authorities.

UN-OCHA will also facilitate partnerships between governments; regional organisations; UN departments, agencies and inter-governmental organisations; international organisations; non-governmental organisations; and donors to realize these core commitments, on the understanding that meaningful action is dependent on the full engagement and participation of all stakeholders.

Participants will meet in one year's time to evaluate progress in meeting the core commitments outlined in this document.

The participants called upon SADC and Indian Ocean governments to adequately resource disaster preparedness and response measures and encouraged donors with the ability to support regional collaboration to invest in their efforts.

The participants that drafted and endorsed this Declaration of Intent include:

National disaster management authorities from the Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe;

Regional organizations, including the Regional Vulnerability Assessment Committee (RVAC) and national VAC representatives from Madagascar, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe;

National platform for HIV/AIDS representatives from Madagascar (UNAIDS), Malawi (UNAIDS), Mozambique (UNAIDS and the Mozambican National AIDS Council) and Zimbabwe (UNAIDS and Zimbabwe National AIDS Council);

UN agencies, departments and inter-governmental organisations, including the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR); UNAIDS, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Southern Africa Human-development Information Management System (SAHIMS);

International organizations, including the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC); and

Non-governmental-organizations, including ActionAid, CARE, Oxfam, Plan International, Save the Children United Kingdom (Save-UK), TearFund and WorldVision.

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The below is a compilation of further key recommendations arising from the workshop, which are to be considered for further action by the SADC Disaster Risk Management Team / Regional Flood and Cyclone Support Team.

1. Convene another conference at a higher, ministerial level to achieve successful engagement with SADC and Indian Ocean countries.
2. Develop a time-bound action plan clarifying next steps following the workshop; and the responsibilities of each participating organization. This should include a basic mechanism for monitoring progress towards the commitments outlines in the *Declaration of Intent*.
3. In collaboration with host countries, assess national capacities in order to help countries in their efforts to meet the prerequisites for accessing regional support.
4. Find ways to bring countries to the same level of cluster implementation and coordination capacity.
5. Develop stronger links between weather and climate change scientists and policy makers, in order to enable better and more coherent analysis of the risk.
6. Develop capacities to model the impact of weather and climate change on the region.
7. Support further training and discussion of the human rights of those internally displaced by natural disasters, including possibly holding a regional workshop on human rights challenges, such a forced relocation and durable solutions.
8. Support the development and sharing of promotional and educational material to help build disaster preparedness awareness in vulnerable communities.