



2017 ACECD Africa Conference on Economic Costs of Disasters

23-25 October 2017
Pretoria, South Africa

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CONCEPT NOTE

23 -25 October, 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

The world is currently experiencing an alarming increase in the occurrence and magnitude of disasters. This has been attributed largely to global climate change. Since 1980, eight of the world's ten deadliest natural disasters have occurred post-2000, the most devastating being the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, with 222,570 fatalities. In 2015, a total of 1,565 earthquakes with a magnitude of 5 and above were recorded worldwide. According to the 2013 World Disasters Report, floods accounted for 44 % of deaths caused by natural hazards – more than any other natural disaster, including storms, which accounted for 41 % of total casualties. There is therefore a clear concern worldwide among decision-makers, experts, businesses and communities regarding the rising number of disasters and their severe impact on livelihoods.

During the implementation period of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005 – 2015) (HFA)¹, the world made significant progress in reducing disaster mortality. At the conclusion of the framework's span, and with the introduction of the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR), it was generally acknowledged that the world had taken great strides in saving lives during disasters. However, a concern emerged that while progress had been achieved in reducing mortality, disaster-related economic losses were rising. Between 2000 and 2012, a reported **1.2 million people** were killed while about **2.9 billion people** were affected by natural disasters. Damage to infrastructure and livelihoods were estimated at **1.7 trillion dollars**. This constitutes a significant loss through infrastructural damage, closed-down businesses, general deterioration of livelihoods for affected populations.

Continentially, Africa has experienced its fair share of disasters, just like other continents. Although the scale of disasters in Africa is generally smaller than in other continents such as Asia, their effects on affected populations have been devastating. This is largely due of the high levels of vulnerability of populations in African countries. Out of 100 disasters reported worldwide, only 20 occur in Africa, yet the continent suffers 60% of all disaster-related deaths. The WorldRiskIndex² clearly illustrates this casual relation and shows that out of the 15 countries with the highest level of vulnerability to disasters, 13 are situated on the African continent. Indeed, countries like Liberia (ranked 56th), Zambia (ranked 66th)

¹ The HFA is a 10-year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards. It was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in the [Resolution A/RES/60/195](#) following the 2005 World Disaster Reduction Conference

² The WorldRiskIndex is calculated by the University of Stuttgart ranking 171 countries by multiplying vulnerability with exposure to natural hazards (cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, floods, and sea-level rise) and is an integral part of the WorldRiskReport published by UNU-EHS and Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft.

STEERING COMMITTEE: Dr. Greenwell Matchaya, Ms. Kehinde Balogun, Prof. Justice Nchunu, Ms. Beatriz Lopez, Dr. Wilfred Lungu, Mr. Millan Atam, Ms. Vilma Hossoni, Dr. Ololade Dosunmu, Mr. Dehounam Ahokposso

and the Central African Republic (ranked 71st) have high levels of vulnerability as opposed high levels of exposure to hazards. The latter are mainly epidemics, endemic diseases, drought, floods, agricultural pests and bush fires, even though some areas are also susceptible to earthquakes, cyclones and volcanic eruptions. The natural hazards interact with human-induced hazards, such as armed conflicts, air, road and railway incidents, as well as industrial hazards such as mining accidents and chemical spills. Other contributing factors include rapid urban population growth, forced migration, environmental degradation, precarious urbanisation, food insecurity, poverty, fragile economies, infrastructures and institutions, and cultural and political instability. Diseases and conflicts also have a devastating impact on livelihoods and assets. For instance, throughout Africa, there are 500,000 measles-associated deaths each year and the direct and indirect costs of malaria are estimated at US\$ 1.7 billion per year. Since 1980, conflicts have caused at least 3.7 million excess deaths and cost the region about US\$ 13 billion annually; equally destructive, wars have destroyed 70 % of the health networks of some countries, and have left behind 30-40 million landmines, making Africa the most mine-infested continent in the world³.

In 2016, the continent was hit by the worst drought in over 30 years as a result of the El Nino phenomenon⁴, affecting over 40 million people in the Southern African region alone. This crisis prompted the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to launch a USD 2.4 billion appeal to assist populations in need of urgent food assistance.

When a natural disaster strikes, decades of development achievement in a country can be eroded in a very short period of time. Funds which are normally earmarked for development planning and implementation are moved towards responding to the disaster. **It is therefore crucial that States invest in prevention, preparedness, response and recovery in order to minimise the effects of disasters.** On the continent, public resources alone cannot address all Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) needs. Governments therefore need to engage and partner with other stakeholders in order to find holistic approaches to preparedness, response and recovery. One such partner is the private sector.

The role of the private sector is therefore crucial in addressing these issues adequately. However, Africa is lagging behind in its private-public cooperation generally and in the

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9170231>

⁴ El Nino is a warming of the central to eastern tropical Pacific that occurs, on average, every two to seven years. During an El Nino event, sea surface temperatures across the Pacific can warm by 1-3 degrees F or more for anything between a few months to a year or two. El Nino impacts weather systems around the globe so that some places receive more rain while others receive none at all, more extremes becoming the norm (UNOCHA, 2016).

DRR domain in particular. The private sector has generally been overlooked when it comes to DRR in Africa. Often, public sector stakeholders are not quite sure how best to engage the private sector. Yet, when disasters strike, the private sector is also affected and therefore has a strong interest in their preparedness, given that average global economic losses due to disasters range between 250-300 billion USD annually⁵. It is against this backdrop that **the private sector should be more involved in Disaster Risk Reduction in order to assist governments build resilient economies and achieve their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

2. THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030

In order to reduce disasters and build a resilient continent, African countries together with other United Nations Member States signed and adopted in March 2015 the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR)** in Sendai, Japan. The SFDRR is a disaster management framework that provides guidelines towards DRR over a 15 year period. It outlines seven global targets and four priorities for action to be achieved and implemented by 2030 by the Signatory States. The seven targets are: (a) Reduction in global disaster mortality; (b) Reduction in the number of people affected; (c) **Reduction in disaster economic loss in relation to GDP**; (d) Reduction in damage to critical infrastructure; (e) Increase in the number of countries with DRR strategies; (f) Enhancement of international cooperation to developing countries; and (g) Increase in the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems (EWS) and disaster risk information. These targets will have to be achieved through the four following priorities for action: 1) Understanding disaster risk; 2) Strengthening risk governance; 3) **Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience**, and 4) Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “build back better”.

The SFDRR emphasizes that States have the responsibility to prevent and reduce disaster risks through its implementation. It also acknowledges that responsibility should be shared among different stakeholders. For instance, both the private and public sector should actively invest in DRR as well as in building resilient economies and communities. **Both the Sendai Framework’s target of reducing disaster economic losses and the third priority for action of investing in disaster risk are an invitation to the private sector to work with State parties in implementing the framework. The private sector**

⁵ Global Assessment Report, 2015

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therefore has an interest in investing in DRR to ensure mitigation and business continuity when a disaster strikes.

The Sendai Framework will be in its third year of implementation in 2017. Hence, close monitoring and evaluation of progress made by African countries is crucial and will determine how much financial and technical assistance will be required from the private sector and other stakeholders to reduce disaster risks.

3. 2017 ACECD: THE AFRICA CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC COSTS OF DISASTERS

The Africa Conference on Economic Costs of Disasters with a focus on **“The Role of The Private Sector in Disaster Risk Reduction,”** will take place in Pretoria, South Africa. It will be **the first continental conference to focus exclusively on the active involvement of the private sector in DRR.** This platform will bring together decision-makers from both the private and public sectors - including industry leaders, entrepreneurs, practitioners, scientists, national and local government officials, environment and development economists, academia, civil society organisations and others - to discuss the current and future economic impacts of disasters on the African continent. This conference will further explore best practices and approaches on how governments and the private sector can best work together to reduce disaster risk, build resilience and achieve sustainable development in Africa.

The conference is an invitation to the private sector to take an active part in investing in DRR and creates a platform for both public and private sectors to explore and discuss the best partnership approaches. It will also cover challenges and future direction on the implementation of the Sendai Framework, as well as strategies on how the private sector can actively invest in DRR to reduce economic losses and help build more resilient African economies and communities.

4. 2017 ACECD SUB-THEMES

The sub-themes of the **2017 ACECD** will focus on the four priorities of action identified by the SFDRR emphasising on how the private sector can actively contribute to each priority through various forms of investments. The private sector industries will further be broken down to address the different priorities, aligned with their respective business sector.

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- **Priority 1:** Understanding disaster risk;
- **Priority 2:** Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk;
- **Priority 3:** Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience;
- **Priority 4:** Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to “Build Back Better” in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Private sector industries include but are not limited to

- Banking and Finance;
- Insurance;
- Specialised Service Providers;
- Information Technology and Telecommunications;
- Education;
- Construction;
- Mining;
- Manufacturing;
- Retail;
- Logistics;
- Agriculture;
- Health;
- Pharmaceutical; and
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

5. 2017 ACECD SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The four specific objectives of the 2017 ACECD are outlined below:

- I. To **provide a platform** where ;
 - a. private and public stakeholders can meet to discuss the economically ways that contribute to disaster and disaster risk reduction in the African continent;
 - b. governments can promote synergies and initiate partnerships with relevant private sector industries to address disaster risk financing challenges;
 - c. private sector can identify business opportunities for developing DRR products and services.
- II. To debate and share **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) best practices** and **trends** in the implementation of the SFDRR in Africa.
- III. To present academic **research findings** in relation to the conference’s theme.

6. 2017 ACECD EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of the 2017 ACECD will include:

1. Compiling and disseminating **conference proceedings** including figures on economic losses against national GDPs and on how these can affect efforts towards achieving the SDGs and the targets of the Paris Agreement;
2. Drafting and signing a **Multi-sectoral Declaration** on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in DRR ;
3. Developing an action plan/framework for engaging the private sector in DRR in line with the Sendai Framework targets and priorities for action.

7. 2017 ACECD DATE AND VENUE

The Africa Conference on Economic Costs of Disasters will be held **in Pretoria, South Africa, from Monday 23rd to Wednesday 25th of October, 2017.**

8. 2017 ACECD TARGET AUDIENCE

The **2017 Africa Conference on Economic Costs of Disasters** is targeted at decision makers and practitioners from both the private and public sector. Specifically, participants should come from governments, businesses, CSOs, academia, scientists, community leaders, the youth, and other major groups whose activities or decisions could contribute towards DRR and resilience strengthening of African economies and communities.

9. 2017 ACECD PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

Opportunities for partnership and sponsorship exist. For more information on our partnership and sponsorship options, kindly revert to our partnership and/or sponsorship package that will be available on the conference website (*under construction*).

10. 2017 ACECD REGISTRATION FEE

Early Bird (<i>Registration no later than 30 June 2017</i>)	\$200 USD
Regular Fee: (<i>Registration between 1 July and 15 August 2017</i>)	\$250 USD
Late Registration (<i>Registration between 15 and 31 August 2017</i>)	\$300 USD
Student Discount:	(<i>Limited sponsorship opportunities available T&Cs apply</i>)

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11. 2017 ACECD WEBSITE

A dedicated conference website is under construction that will contain all relevant information pertaining to the conference.

Gravitazz Continental Initiative

The conference is hosted by **the Gauteng Province Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) and the Gauteng Provincial Disaster Management Centre (PMDC)** in coordination with the **Gravitazz Institute for Disaster Reduction and Emergency Management** NGO based in Midrand, South Africa.

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