

PRESS RELEASE

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ACMAD Poised to Bolster Climate Adaptation and Holistic Disaster Response in Africa

NIAMEY, NIGER - July 31, 2023 - The African Centre for Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNDRR), and CIMA Research Foundation, reports significant progress in developing the Africa Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action System (AMHEWAS).

A week-long meeting held in Windhoek, Namibia from July 24-28, 2023, consisting of the AMHEWAS Steering Committee and Technical Working Group sessions, rallied stakeholders from across Africa and globally. Climate experts, policymakers, community leaders, and international partners came together, championing the establishment of an integrated disaster response system across the African continent.

"AMHEWAS is our most collective ambitious initiative yet, aiming to coordinate a unified response across our continent. By leveraging modern technologies and facilitating information exchange, we ensure swift and effective actions to safeguard our people and environment," said **Andre Kamga Foamouhoue**, ACMAD General Director.

A key achievement of the AMHEWAS program is the establishment of three situation rooms, one each at the African Union Headquarters, ACMAD in Niamey, Niger, and the IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC) in Nairobi, Kenya. These centers aim to provide real-time disaster risk information, thereby enabling informed and timely decision-making.

However, challenges remain, including enhancing situation room operations, bridging the expertise gaps, and managing compounding disasters. Still, with continuous research, innovation products such as agricultural onset monitoring and forecasts, these hurdles also present opportunities for growth and improvement to strengthen disaster response mechanisms.

Ms Hellen Likando, the Director of Disaster Risk Management in the Republic of Namibia, pointed out recent events of sandstorms and floods in the country and called for AU Member States and development partners to support the full and speedy implementation of AMHEWAS.

The meeting also highlighted initiatives like the Impact-Based Forecast-Actionable Indicators ACMAD-UNOCHA in West and Central Africa, emphasizing the significant role of innovative tools and collaboration in mitigating climate change impacts.

Mr Harsen Nyambe, the AUC Director of Sustainable Environment and Blue Economy (SEBE), called upon the participants to enhance the process, underscoring the relevance of the AMHEWAS programme towards reducing disaster losses across Africa.

In the face of increasing climate change threats, the AMHEWAS Steering Committee concluded with a renewed commitment to build an effective, interoperable early warning system for Africa.

"We are pioneering a new era of proactive climate action, emphasizing interoperability, actionable forecasts, and on-the-ground action," the ACMAD General Director added.

About AMHEWAS

AMHEWAS is a program developed by the African Union Commission (AUC) aimed at contributing to the substantial reduction of disaster losses across the continent. It is an integrated system that works at the continental, regional, and national level, gathering all the stakeholders to support interoperability between early warning systems.

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