**ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF
WEST AFRICAN STATES**

**COMMUNAUTE ECONOMIQUE
DES ETATS DE L'AFRIQUE
DE L'OUEST**

ECOWAS POLICY FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT (DHA)

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACMAD	African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development
AMCEN	Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment
AU	The African Union
DES-PADS	Deputy Executive Secretary – Political Affairs, Defence and Security
DM	Disaster Management
DHA	Department of Humanitarian Affair
DMOs	Disaster management organizations
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring GroEERT ECOWAS Emergency Response Team
EPF	ECOWAS Peace Fund
IACPs	Inter Agency Contingency Plans
ECOWAP	ECOWAS Agriculture Policy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
HIV/AIDS	Human Immuno Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OMC	Observation and Monitoring Center
PADEP	Peace and Development Programme
PRSPs	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
SEAF	Special Emergency Assistance Fund
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Educational Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UN/ISDR	UN Inter-agency Secretariat of ISDR
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In general, ddisasters triggered by natural hazard events have increased in occurrence and severity in the sub-region, particularly the Sahelian zone, since the last three decades. Over 75% of the West Africa's population lives in areas affected at least once in every two years by a tropical cyclone, flood, drought or an earthquake. Hundreds of people and their livelihoods in West African countries are periodically exposed to, at least, one disaster event caused by vulnerability to natural hazards.

Between 2000 and 2001, 13% of Africa's population (35 million) were recorded affected by at least one form of disaster. In West Africa, natural hazards compounded by conflicts impact heavily on food security and compromise efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and other tropical diseases. Disasters and conflict are linked and are mutually reinforcing.

Disasters put development at risk and development choices can likewise generate new disaster risks, The increasing interest of ECOWAS member states in disaster risk reduction has mainly been driven by efforts to fulfill its peace and security mandate, including the management of humanitarian outcomes of conflicts. The focused attention on disaster issues culminated in the establishment of disaster reduction as an operational theme. The ECOWAS Council of Ministers 51st Session in December 2003 in Accra established a Technical Committee on Disaster Management to recommend ways to operationalize a disaster prevention and reduction capacity.

This Policy document is presented in three parts: Part I provides the background to the Policy, an introduction, a summary of reviews of disaster management practices and capacities in West Africa, including key challenges, and, justification for a policy for disaster risk reduction for West Africa. Part II covers the policy vision, statement, objectives, scope and principles, in addition to the focus areas, strategies and priorities for action under the Policy. Part III covers the institutional mechanisms for implementation

The Policy focuses on reducing disaster risks through development interventions by looking at managing disaster risks as a development challenge. Hence, the recommendations cover actions in sustainable development aimed at strengthening the sub-regional capacity for disaster risk management. The Policy addresses disasters triggered by natural hazards that may be exacerbated by conflict but will not contain explicit interventions on conflicts.

Priorities for action under the Policy include:
- supporting development and sub-regional networking of national platforms for disaster reduction
- promoting expansion of the various early warning systems in operation and facilitating their coordination and harmonization
- supporting public awareness and advocacy of disaster reduction
- integrating disaster risk reduction principles in the harmonization programme and Agriculture Policy of ECOWAS and in national development policies
- developing sub-regional disaster response capability based on the ECOWAS Standby Force and the ECOWAS Emergency Response Team (EERT)

CONTENTS

PART I

1.   Introduction

Disasters arise from the interaction of hazards with vulnerability. In West Africa, several natural hazards constitute disaster threats. These include geological events (such as earthquakes), hydro meteorological phenomena (such as flood, drought and windstorms) and biological factors (such as disease epidemics). Due to the high vulnerability of individuals and communities, the occurrence of these natural hazards often results in disasters that destroy life, property and the environment and undermine West Africa's development. Disasters also jeopardize achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and slow down the process towards sustainable development. However, efforts are underway at all levels to address the problem.

At the international level, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990 – 1999), the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) launched in 2000 focused global attention on the need to address the issue of disaster reduction. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) addressed disaster reduction as a key issue of sustainable development. Consequently, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 provided strategic directions and set five areas of priority for further expanding, deepening and strengthening local, national, regional and international actions to reduce disaster risks.

At the regional level, the African Union has, together with the NEPAD Secretariat, developed the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (the African strategy), with the support of the UN Inter-agency Secretariat of ISDR (UN/ISDR), in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Development Bank. The Strategy was endorsed by the 10th Meeting of the Africa Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and was favourably noted by the 2004 African Union Summit, which called for the formulation of the Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Africa Strategy (2005-2010).

The Africa Ministers responsible for disaster risk management at its first AU Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), held 5-7 December 2005 in Addis Ababa Ethiopia developed the African Programme of Action for DRR which was later on approved by the Executive Council, in Khartoum, Sudan, December 2005 (Decision EX.CL/Dec 250 - VIII). Implementation of the strategy rests at the sub-regional and national levels.

The organizational mandate and programme mix of ECOWAS allow its Secretariat to coordinate the development of a sub-regional strategy and programme that integrates disaster risk reduction into the sub-regional poverty reduction, security, and sustainable development agenda. Articles 22 and 29 of the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS provided for cooperation by members to strengthen existing institutions to manage natural calamities, provide food aid in the event of serious food shortages, and, to establish early warning systems. The Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security, mandated the development of effective policies that will help alleviate the suffering of the population and restore life to normalcy after complex humanitarian emergencies and disasters.

Consequently, over the last couple of years, ECOWAS has increasingly focused its attention on disaster issues culminating in the establishment of disaster risk reduction as an operational theme.

The Secretariat participated in reviews of disaster risk reduction by the UN/ISDR in 2002, for the Africa Strategy in 2003 and in some workshops. Then, the ECOWAS Council of Ministers 51st Session in December 2003 in Accra established a Technical Committee on Disaster Management to recommend ways to operationalize a disaster prevention and reduction capacity. A meeting of the Committee in March 2005 outlined the scope of the ECOWAS mechanism for disaster management, which has been developed into this Policy.

2. Review of Disaster Reduction and Management in West Africa: Status and Major Challenges

2.1 The Disaster Problem in West Africa

Disasters triggered by natural hazard events have increased in occurrence[i] and severity in the sub-region, particularly the Sahelian zone, since the last three decades. Other significant hazards include diseases[ii], pest (particularly locust invasions), deforestation, forest degradation, flooding, sea erosion, sea level rise, coastal wetlands degradation, invasive alien species, and wildland fire. Lower and more variable rainfall levels during the last three to four decades have contributed to worsening desertification, food security, natural resource degradation and coastal vulnerability. Climate change factors are likely to worsen drought conditions and coastal erosion, change vegetation patterns, and increase tidal waves and storm surges. Large-scale seismic activity is rare but active fault areas experience earthquake swarms involving minor tremors. Other hazards include transportation, industrial and chemical accidents and technological systems failure.

The extent of vulnerability to hazards determines the extent of the impact of disasters. Vulnerability to natural hazards in the sub-region will likely worsen due to several factors, including the high poverty level, negative population and demographic trends, development-generated factors, such as inadequate public investment to maintain and enhance resilience, fragile environment, conflict, and, HIV/AIDS.

2.2 Status and Major Challenges of Disaster Reduction in West Africa

Recent reviews[iii] done by the UN/ISDR have identified gaps in five areas of disaster risk reduction in West Africa.

2.2.1 *Prioritizing disaster risk management and developing institutional base*

Status: National authorities recognize the need to develop and strengthen institutions required to build resilience to hazards. Consequently, political commitment to disaster risk reduction is increasing in the sub-region. Countries are establishing and developing national platforms for promoting disaster risk reduction in the context of development, including Mali, Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal.

The effort in developing the ECOWAS disaster management mechanism with a financing facility is further evidence of this. However, many countries are yet to develop national policies, legislation, or plans for disaster risk reduction. Some countries recognize grassroots disaster volunteers[iv] and community level structures of civil protection organizations, but national policies and plans have not explicitly focused on either risk reduction or strengthening local coping strategies.

The establishment of national platforms for disaster reduction was requested in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution 1999/63 and in the United Nations General Assembly resolutions 56/195, 58/214 and 58/215. The expression 'national platforms' is a generic term used for national mechanisms for coordination and policy guidance on disaster risk reduction that need to be multi-sectoral and inter-disciplinary in nature, with public, private and civil society participation involving all concerned entities within a country (including United Nations agencies present at the national level, as appropriate). National platforms represent the national mechanism for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

Major challenges: The major challenge is to how to make disaster risk reduction a priority development concern, including strengthening the capacity of the ECOWAS Secretariat to support disaster risk reduction in the sub-region.

2.2.2 *Developing and strengthening disaster risk assessment and early warning*

Status: Disaster risk assessment is low in the sub-region: data collection on hazards, particularly small-scale hazards and impacts is not common or systematized, risk indexing is yet to begin, risk maps are generally unavailable and land use capability maps do not indicate natural hazard risks. Early warning systems covering food security, drought and climatic factors operate in the sub-region[v]. However, mechanisms for warnings on desertification and other major hazards are largely undeveloped or are limited to risk surveillance and monitoring. The emerging ECOWAS Peace and Security Observation System is yet to be integrated in disaster early warning systems. National early warning institutions are not well facilitated but improved networking and partnering arrangements with external partners have helped to alleviate the constraint of weak data collection and analysis capabilities. The capacities of several sub-regional institutions[vi] that provide vital services for risk assessment and early warning need to be strengthened and their output made more people-centered.

Major challenges: (a) promoting the practice of hazard and vulnerability assessment, monitoring and early warning; (b) strengthening all elements of famine and food security early warning systems in operation in the sub-region and harmonizing the various systems; (c) monitoring desertification and climate impacts.

2.2.3 *Enhancing use of knowledge and innovation to reduce disaster risks*

Status: National information systems are not geared towards generating, analysing and disseminating information on disasters. A sub-regional disaster information sharing house does not exist. On the demand side, the capacity within disaster management organizations (DMOs) to analyze available data is often weak. Some countries have made public information more easily available through press pluralism that bodes well for disaster mitigation and response but public access to disaster information is generally inadequate. ACMAD initiated an innovative approach to disseminating weather information to farmers in the Sahel through solar rechargeable radios but expansion is hampered by the relatively high cost of the radios. Education and training systems do not incorporate instruction in disaster risk reduction while research and analysis on risk behaviour in the sub-region is relatively lacking. Various means are utilized to create public awareness of disaster risk reduction, including official events and the media but the language and mode of media presentations are often not people-centered.

Major challenges: (a) expanding and enhancing generation and dissemination of disaster risk information (b) integrating disaster risk reduction in formal and informal education, (c) enhancing research and innovation in disaster management.

2.2.4   R*educing development risk factors*

Status: Rain-dependent agrarian and primary-commodity based economies and poverty contribute to the high vulnerability to natural hazards in the sub-region. Countries have pursued pro-poor growth policies but some policies have not enhanced the resilience status of the sub-region while food insecurity persists. The ECOWAS Agriculture Policy (ECOWAP) is aimed at sustainable food security and poverty reduction partly by reducing famine and other disasters triggered by natural hazards through interventions in early warning, hazard management, post-conflict food crises and other areas. National disaster management frameworks also emphasize food security as a requirement for disaster risk reduction through several interventions[vii]. To further manage natural hazards and environmental degradation, countries have implemented interventions to protect and better safeguard the natural capital base but many factors, including lack of effective legislation, hamper compliance.

National authorities have developed policies to regulate and ensure integrated land resource use but physical planning and economic planning are not integrated. Consequently, the regulatory framework for land use planning and physical development is weak while compliance with settlement planning and development policies, controls, and standards is low. This is partly because national disaster management policies do not clearly aim to integrate disaster risk reduction in national development policies, planning and implementation processes. Also, many national poverty reduction strategies do not directly link with disaster risk reduction.

Major challenges: These include: (a) improving the design and enforcement of public regulations on physical development; (b) meeting food security challenges with existing drought and desertification management programmes; (c) addressing regional, trans-boundary and emerging risks, such as crop pest infestation, migratory livestock herding, and, invasive alien species; (d) coordinating and ensuring complementarities between disaster risk reduction and conflict management; (e) expand public-private partnerships; (f) enhance and expand measures for social protection.

2.2.5   *Strengthening preparedness and response*

Status: Preparedness planning involves contingency planning, early warning and evacuation. Countries have developed national contingency and evacuation plans but the quality varies[viii]. Also, countries are unable to rehearse contingency plans[ix]. Several countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Togo have completed Inter Agency Contingency Plans (IACPs) with OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF and other agencies of the United Nations system to coordinate the assistance of development agencies to national response efforts but the institutional and physical infrastructure for emergency management remains limited. For example, most countries lack central facilities for coordination, command and control of response interventions in emergencies. The recent development of a mission control centre for emergency management by Nigeria offers an example of good practice. Early warning systems contribute positively to emergency preparation and response in the sub-region but the

integration of early warning into emergency management planning is limited and, disaster management information systems do not adequately distinguish between localized crises and acute emergency situations.

Development partners provide humanitarian assistance in times of disasters but are increasingly focusing their assistance on long-term development while the ability of countries in the sub-region to adequately finance disaster response requirements is limited. Logistics problems persist in the management of emergency assistance, targeting commodity distribution can be inadequate, and, there are sometimes imbalances between the mix of food and non-food assistance. However, increasingly innovative approaches to emergency response linking relief to development are emerging, including cash-for relief, instead of food, small-scale water harvesting, and, integration of food, health and functional education programmes.

Major challenges: (a) enhancing the capacity for sub-regional emergency response and contingency planning; (b) integrating early warning into disaster management; (c) harmonizing national emergency systems; (d) strengthening interaction between disaster managers and development practitioners; (e) developing voluntarism in emergency management.

3.   Justification for a Policy for Disaster Reduction in West Africa

There are several reasons for designing and implementing a common policy for disaster reduction in West Africa, including the following:

a) Increasing disasters in the sub-region, due partly to increasing vulnerability and emerging hazards, can only be addressed effectively through disaster reduction interventions at both national and sub-regional levels.
b) There is growing recognition that globally investment in disaster reduction saves far more expenditures on response.
c) Resources spent on responding to disasters that recur frequently need to be reallocated to development interventions that help reduce the risk of future disasters.
d) There is the need to utilize post-disaster recovery and reconstruction opportunities to reduce disaster risks through risk-sensitive development interventions.
e) There is a global move towards balancing disaster response with disaster reduction in managing disasters.
f) Disaster reduction is a development challenge that should be addressed through development interventions that help prevent and reduce disaster risk.
g) Countries in the sub-region are developing frameworks for disaster risk reduction; there is the need for a sub-regional policy framework to support national efforts in this direction.
h) ECOWAS has increasingly focused its attention on disaster issues in accordance with the Revised Treaty; it requires a policy framework for disaster reduction to guide its actions in moving forward.
i) The Policy fulfills mandatory requirements of ECOWAS under the Revised Treaty and the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security.
j) Regional Economic Communities are required to design disaster reduction policies and programmes under the Africa Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.

PART II

4.   The ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction

4.1   Vision

The vision of the Policy is a sub-region of resilient countries and communities in which natural hazards do not negatively impact development and where development processes do not lead to accumulation of disaster risks from natural hazards.

4.2   Policy Statement

The policy for disaster reduction of ECOWAS is to facilitate sustainable integration and development of West African States and Governments through promoting and supporting effective disaster risk management that helps create safer and resilient communities in social, economic and environmental terms.

4.3   Objectives

The objectives of the ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction Policy are to:

- Provide an inter-governmental framework for collaboration and partnership for ECOWAS Member States in Disaster Risk Management;
- Promote integration of disaster risk reduction into ECOWAS Member States National Development Policies, Plans and Programmes;
- Facilitate ECOWAS Member States to develop and strengthen institutions, mechanisms and capacities for building resilience to hazards;
- Promote incorporation of risk reduction approaches in emergency preparedness, rehabilitation and recovery programmes of ECOWAS Member States;
- Enhance the contribution of disaster reduction to peace, security and sustainable development of the sub region.

4.4   Scope of the Policy

This document presents ECOWAS policy framework for disaster risk reduction in the sub-region. The Policy would focus on areas of importance to the West African situation under the guidance of the Africa Union Strategy for disaster risk reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The Policy focuses on reducing disaster risks through development interventions. Recommendations under the Policy would not narrowly focus on disaster management, but cover actions in sustainable development aimed at strengthening the sub-regional capacity for disaster risk management.

Issues of conflict and their humanitarian implications are at the centre of ECOWAS interventions currently and are providing the impetus for developing sub-regional capacities in disaster risk reduction. There exists a two-way relationship between disasters and conflicts: not only do conflicts

affect disaster outcomes but the type, onset and intensity of conflicts are also influenced by environmental factors and circumstances. Because both natural and conflict disaster situations result in humanitarian crises that undermine individual, country, regional and ecosystem security, both will be addressed in a complementary manner under the peace and security mechanism of ECOWAS. Thus, the Policy will address disasters triggered by natural hazards exacerbated by conflict but will not contain explicit interventions on conflicts, except in areas of collaboration under the EPF Peace and Development Programme (PADEP). Furthermore, achieving the objectives of the Policy will contribute to reduction of conflict.

The Policy is not a detailed prescription or blueprint for national action but it is an expression of agreed principles, objectives, priorities and institutional aspects of developing effective, efficient and sustainable disaster risk management in the sub-region. Consequently, the Policy would not contain details on operational matters or detail descriptions of components of priority actions. The latter would be the covered in follow-on documents including a Programme of Action for the Implementation of the ECOWAS Policy and Mechanism for Disaster Reduction.

4.5   Principles of the Policy

The Policy will be guided by the following principles:

1) Recognizing that effective disaster reduction involves empowering people and local communities to act to protect their lives, property and the environment, ECOWAS will play a catalytic role in enhancing self-protection by promoting adoption of effective coping capacities at the national and local level.

2) Mindful of the inter-connectedness of livelihood, technological, political and other threats and hazards, ECOWAS will adopt a multi-hazard approach that addresses small, recurrent and localized disasters and large infrequent disasters triggered by natural, technological and other threats.

3) In the event that the capabilities and resources of member states are unable to cope with impending, occurring or past disasters, ECOWAS will provide material, financial and other emergency management assistance to member states upon their request to develop emergency preparedness and response activities.

4) Aware of the need to utilize existing disaster management capabilities, ECOWAS will address disaster issues by supporting and supplementing local, national and international capacities and efforts in disaster reduction and management.

5) Recognizing that the effects of emergencies last after the physical manifestation of hazards end, and recognizing that risk reduction as a key objective of rehabilitation and recovery in policy and in practice, ECOWAS will adopt a contiguum, long-term approach involving the simultaneous delivery of relief, rehabilitation and development services.

6) Aware that disaster reduction is not a stand-alone sector but that it requires integrating capacities across stakeholders, ECOWAS will adopt multi-stakeholder participatory approaches, including community and volunteer participation, in designing and implementing programmes and activities under the Policy.

7) The Policy will also pay attention to the gender perspective and the cultural diversity of the sub-region.

8) The development and implementation of programmes under the Policy will emphasize cost-sharing by all partners.

9) To ensure effectiveness of sub-regional disaster management, the Policy will promote and support partnerships at three levels: (a) between different role players, including civil society, within countries, (b) among member states, and (c) between countries, ECOWAS and the international community.

10) Recognizing the need to ensure sustainability of interventions under the Policy, the Technical Committee and member states will agree on what conditions will trigger the ECOWAS assistance under the Policy and the terms under which member nations can access that assistance. Issues to consider will include: (a) eligibility criteria (b) the quantum of support to be provided under each access, (c) number of times a country can access support under the facility, (d) expected cost-sharing and other complementary inputs by accessing countries.

5.   Policy focus areas, strategies and priority actions

The Policy comprises five areas of focus and associated strategies and priority actions as follows:

5.1 Focus area 1:   Enhancing disaster reduction by making it a development priority with the requisite institutional capacities

Strategy 1.1:   Making disaster risk reduction a priority in ECOWAS requires incorporating disaster risk reduction principles in the development agenda and programmes of the Community. To emphasize the priority status of disaster reduction in the agenda of ECOWAS, the Authority of the Heads of State and Government will take a Decision to adopt the Policy. To further demonstrate strong and committed leadership, the Authority will dedicate a portion of the ECOWAS Peace Fund to financing the Policy and facilitate co-financing of the Policy by all stakeholders.

Priorities for Action:
- promote integration of DRR into the ECOWAS development agenda and programmes, including agreeing a Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Policy;

Strategy 1.2:   Committed leadership empowers those at risk to achieve protection from disaster impacts by discharging its governance responsibilities. A major responsibility is the development of conducive institutional conditions for disaster risk reduction. The Policy will contribute to the development of national frameworks for disaster risk reduction by promoting the establishment or strengthening of national platforms for disaster risk reduction.

Priorities for Action:
- support creation, strengthening and sub-regional networking of national platforms for disaster reduction with strong policy, legislation and resource base, and, community and volunteer participation

Strategy 1.3: Disaster risk reduction systems can play significant catalytic roles in enhancing self-protection by safeguarding and strengthening local coping mechanisms, capacities and institutions. This requires that local survival strategies inform national and sub-regional disaster assistance interventions. The Policy proposes to facilitate strengthening of sub-regional capacity for disaster reduction, including through increased use of local consultants and service providers in the sub-region.

Priorities for Action:
- Develop and strengthen specialized sub-regional institutions for disaster risk management services
- Develop database on and strengthen disaster risk management capacity, including local expert capacity and coping strategies, in the sub-region, particularly as part of the ECOWAS Emergency Response Team (EERT), and in Africa.

Strategy 1.4: ECOWAS recognizes that it can best meet its responsibilities in humanitarian assistance if it builds the internal capacity to support disaster risk reduction. The Policy will, consequently, focus on progressively enhancing the capacity of the Executive Secretariat in disaster risk reduction, including through institutional structuring, human resource development and technical assistance. A major component of this capacity is a mechanism for concerted sub-regional action to support efforts to reduce disasters in the long run and meet emergency needs in the immediate aftermath of disasters.

Priorities for Action:
- develop disaster risk reduction capacity of the ECOWAS Secretariat, including creation of a sub-regional Mechanism for Disaster Risk Reduction with a financing facility

5.2 Focus Area 2: Reducing disasters by improving identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning of risks

Strategy 2.1: West Africa is best with a multitude of hazards and threats; consequently, the risk setting changes frequently. Therefore, reducing disasters effectively requires a multiple-risk approach underpinned by comprehensive and continuous monitoring of hazard and vulnerability threats. Such a monitoring system has to foster understanding of disaster risk trends and be useful for normal development planning and for disaster early warning during times of crises. It should also contribute to learning, adaptation and accountability. The Policy will support the development of standard risk assessment and monitoring instruments based on participatory approaches for the sub-region. It will also achieve this by coordinating agreement on a common set of risk data collection formats and analysis methodologies, indicators and presentation guidelines.

Priorities for Action:
- Promote the understanding and practice of risk identification and assessment, including through development and supporting use of guidelines, standard procedures, operational manuals, handbooks, maps, training modules, and similar tools;

Strategy 2.2: The Policy will also support strengthening of the technological capacities for risk data collection, storage and exchange. In addition, it will develop the seasonal climate outlook forums scheme as a useful model for seasonal forecasting of climate-related hazards, and, strengthen sub-regional disaster management service institutions.

Priorities for Action:
- support strengthening hazard monitoring capacities, particularly:
  - disaster risk information capacity, including national statistical records, collection and management
  - development of systems of indicators of disaster risk and vulnerability at national and sub-regional levels
  - the technological base (equipment and systems) for risk surveillance and monitoring
  - regional disaster management service institutions;

Strategy 2.3: For risk reduction to be effective, improved risk knowledge and strengthened technical monitoring need to feed into people-centered warning systems[x]. This will ensure timely and accurate dissemination of informative and comprehendible warnings and other information on all hazards targeted at those at risk. This depends on strengthening the institutional base of warnings. Consequently, the Policy will facilitate balanced and coordinated development of the major international drought and food security warning systems in operation in the sub-region, emphasizing the dissemination and preparedness elements. The Policy will also support interventions to directly link risk assessment processes and early warning systems, and, to develop risk databases, including indicators of complex humanitarian emergencies.

Priorities for Action:
- promote understanding of the concept of and requirements for early warning, involving risk knowledge, technical monitoring and warning service, dissemination and preparedness;
- promote expansion of the scope of hazard coverage, timeliness of warnings, accessibility to people of various early warning systems in operation and facilitating their coordination and harmonization
- develop gender-sensitive disaster and humanitarian indicators for integration in the early warning system of the ECOWAS Observation and Monitoring Center (OMC) and in the PADEP.

5.3 Focus Area 3: Building safe and resilient societies by enhancing the use of knowledge

Strategy 3.1: The Policy believes that disasters can be substantially reduced if people are well informed, guided and motivated to develop a culture of disaster prevention and resilience through improved access to knowledge, information and communication on disaster risk reduction. This requires the development and strengthening of capacities to transform risk information and knowledge (from education, training and tradition) into sound disaster risk reduction judgment and action at all levels. The Policy will adopt various approaches to help enhance public awareness of disaster risk reduction including: (a) supporting increased interactions between disaster managers and the public through the media, (b) promoting integration of disaster education in formal and non-formal education systems, and, (c) disseminating good practices.

Priorities for Action:
- Support public awareness and advocacy of disaster reduction

Strategy 3.2: To further help enhance access to information and expand information dissemination, the Policy will support a pilot regional disaster risk reduction information service based on networking of national information services and the general strengthening of public communication mechanisms. The Policy will promote public-private partnerships that increase the availability and adaptive use of modern information and communication technologies, including space technology and geographical information systems, for disaster reduction. These partnerships will stress the integration of these modern technologies with local and traditional modes.

Priorities for Action:
- Develop and strengthen disaster information systems and networks, including development of pilot sub-regional disaster information service
- Develop disaster education, training, research and technology programmes

Strategy 3.3: To enhance research and innovation in disaster reduction, support for the development of training programmes in disaster risk reduction will be tied to the strengthening of sub-regional disaster service institutions under the Policy. Priority issues to research include: the risk implications of development interventions, cost-benefit of disaster risk reduction interventions, development policy constraints to disaster risk reduction, prospects for risk sharing instruments as disaster management tools, and climate change effects in West Africa.

Priorities for Action:
- Support programmes to monitor and review national progress in disaster risk management, including undertaking and publishing sub-regional and national baseline assessments

5.4 Focus Area 4: Reducing underlying risk factors by addressing priority development concerns through disaster reduction interventions

Strategy 4.1: Reducing underlying risk factors require mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in development policies, planning and implementation. This should start with a fundamental attitudinal change: both development and disaster communities need to recognize that disaster risk reduction is a development challenge. Meeting this challenge depends on promoting risk-sensitive development and development-oriented risk reduction. Towards this end, Policy interventions in Focus Area 3 above to enhance dialogue and collaboration between disaster management practitioners and development policy makers and planners will directly contribute to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in development.

Priorities for Action:
- integrate disaster risk reduction principles in the economic and financial policy harmonization programme of ECOWAS and in national development policies

Strategy 4.2: In addition, the Policy will promote the integration of disaster risk reduction in national sustainable development strategies, as the PRSP and UNDAF. Also, the Policy will be coordinated with the ECOWAP to facilitate achievement of food security, stable agricultural incomes and integrated land and water management. Given the very strong linkages between the environment, vulnerability and poverty in Africa, the Policy will encourage the integrated and sustainable use and management of environmental and natural resources, including management of effects of climate variability and change.

Priorities for Action:
- Promote integration of disaster reduction in the implementation of the ECOWAS Agriculture Policy, emphasizing gender aspects, to ensure food security for resilience
- Support integration of disaster reduction strategies with climate change adaptation, particularly drought management and desertification control
- Facilitate sustainable ecosystems and environmental management

Strategy 4.3: The Policy will emphasize disaster risk reduction through interventions to address sources of vulnerability, including the major health challenges in the sub-region. Epidemics of malaria and communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS, cholera and celebrospinal meningitis (CSM) either constitute, or predispose people to, disaster. Also, disasters from natural hazards can create favourable environmental and other conditions for disease epidemics. Consequently, the Policy will support mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in health interventions and promote utilization of the health and human resource development programmes of ECOWAS to address the complex factors driving these heath challenges in the sub-region.

Priorities for Action:
- Support mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into health sector development interventions

Strategy 4.4: It is essential that physical planning integrates socio-economic and spatial planning to promote sustainable land use, orderly settlement development, critical infrastructure protection, and, public safety. The Policy will encourage national authorities to strengthen regulatory interventions, provide incentives to those who apply such measures, and, show the way through demonstration of good practice. In addition, the Policy will work with construction professional associations to promote increased compliance by their members with these standards and codes while encouraging the private sector and other role players to ensure universal compliance.

Priorities for Action:
- collaborate with appropriate authorities and groups to enhance public regulation on land use, physical development and infrastructure protection

Strategy 4.5: Financial tools endow individuals and communities with the financial wherewithal to strengthen their prevention and coping capabilities. The Policy will encourage initiatives that promote effective financial intermediation to widen access to affordable financing, and risk spreading and transfer, such as through microfinance and insurance schemes.

Priorities for Action:
- support identification of viable financial instruments for disaster risk reduction

5.5 Focus Area 5: Improving effectiveness of response through stronger disaster preparedness

Strategy 5.1: Enhancing response through more effective preparedness requires developing strong and efficient response preparedness with disaster risk reduction focus. Disaster management can be strengthened and re-oriented towards the disaster risk reduction approach by ensuring complementarities between disaster mitigation and disaster response. The Policy will ensure linkage between hazard risk management, response capability and long-term recovery by supporting measures to strengthen preparedness for effective response. Ensuring this linkage also requires integration of disaster risk reduction into post-disaster relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction processes through risk-reducing interventions during the response phase.

Priorities for Action:
- Support strengthening of national disaster response capacities and their re-orientation towards a disaster risk management focus
- Develop programmes for information sharing and cooperation between disaster managers and the development community

Strategy 5.2: Minimizing the divergence between emergency management and development requires adequate and prompt financing of post-disaster development activities. Integrating emergency management and development also depends on local capacities for development management at the community level. Another factor is the capacity of national disaster authorities to manage comprehensive recovery programmes involving rehabilitation and reconstruction with international assistance. The Policy will adopt and encourage strategies that develop response capacity and balance immediate emergency needs with measures to bridge the relief-rehabilitation gap. A key ECOWAS tool for fostering post-disaster development is the Peace and Development programme (PADEP) of the ECOWAS Peace Fund (EPF). The policy will promote integrated post-disaster development by supporting implementation of gender-sensitive interventions under or linked to PADEP, particularly those that promote economic recovery of local economies in post-emergency periods. The Policy will also strengthen the process of developing zonal bureaux for emergency monitoring by implementing recovery and rehabilitation interventions through the bureaux.

Priorities for Action:
- enhance sub-regional contingency planning through preparation of a Sub-regional Emergency Management Plan that links the disaster mechanism to relevant programmes such as the OMC and PADEP

Strategy 5.3: The ability of member states to respond effectively to disasters depends on their internal response capabilities, both civil and non-civilian, and the ability to rapidly deploy such response mechanisms in emergencies before external assistance arrives. A crucial component of

this internal response capacity is the complement of trained civilian experts, including volunteers, in relevant multi-disciplinary fields of humanitarian assistance management who are located in situ in member states and are available for rapid deployment, either alone or together with security and agencies, in times of emergencies. Thus a key strategy will be to nurture the spirit of volunteerism, particularly from civil society at community levels, and to support development of effective civilian-military cooperation in emergency management. The existence of such capability in member states will facilitate sub-regional coordination of emergency response interventions. A key tool for achieving these objectives is the planned ECOWAS Emergency Response Team (EERT) which will constitute civil deployment along emergency and peacekeeping missions. The EERT will be used to develop capabilities of first responders to emergencies (such as the fire, medical, police, military and medical services) at the national level. The EERT will also provide the basis for national emergency planning and for coordinating sub-regional response, particularly to managing cross-border emergencies. Consequently, the Policy will promote development of the EERT and its integration in the both disaster emergency and peace support operations of ECOWAS.

Priorities for Action:
- develop sub-regional disaster response capability, including the EERT, as part of the sub-regional mechanism for disaster management
- coordinate and support review and rehearsal of sub-regional preparedness and contingency plans for major hazards

PART III

6.   Operational arrangements for implementing the Policy

6.1   Implementing structures

6.1.1   Existing institutions and structures

Various institutional actors have key roles to play in implementing the Policy. These are:
- ECOWAS Council of Ministers
- ECOWAS Disaster Management Technical Committee
- ECOWAS Executive Secretariat
- National Governments
- Major Groups, including civil society, private sector and the scientific community
- African Union Commission
- National Platforms for Disaster Risk and national chapters of the ECOWAS Emergency Response Team
- United Nations system
- International Development Partners.

6.1.2   Proposed new structures

All the above institutions and structures already exist but, to ensure effective management of the Policy, three new structures will be created within ECOWAS. These are as follows:
a) a committee of ECOWAS Council of Ministers to be called the Ministerial Disaster Management Steering Committee
b) an Inter-Departmental Coordinating Committee within the ECOWAS Secretariat to be composed of Directors of the Departments of Humanitarian Affairs, Defence and Security, Observation and Monitoring Center (OMC), Political Affairs, Agriculture and Environment, and, Human Resource Development. The Committee will be coordinated out of the office of the Deputy Executive Secretary for Political Affairs, Defence and Security (DES-PADS)
c) a Disaster Management Unit within the Humanitarian Affairs Department of the ECOWAS Secretariat.

The links between all these structures are shown in an organogram in Figure 1.

6.2.   Implementation responsibilities and functions

The respective responsibilities of the key structures in implementing the Policy are as follows:

6.2.3.1   ECOWAS

6.2.3.2   ECOWAS Ministerial Disaster Management Steering Committee
a) provide overall oversight of the Policy
b) act on behalf of and report to the Council of Ministers

Figure 1

Organogram of structures for implementing the ECOWAS Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction
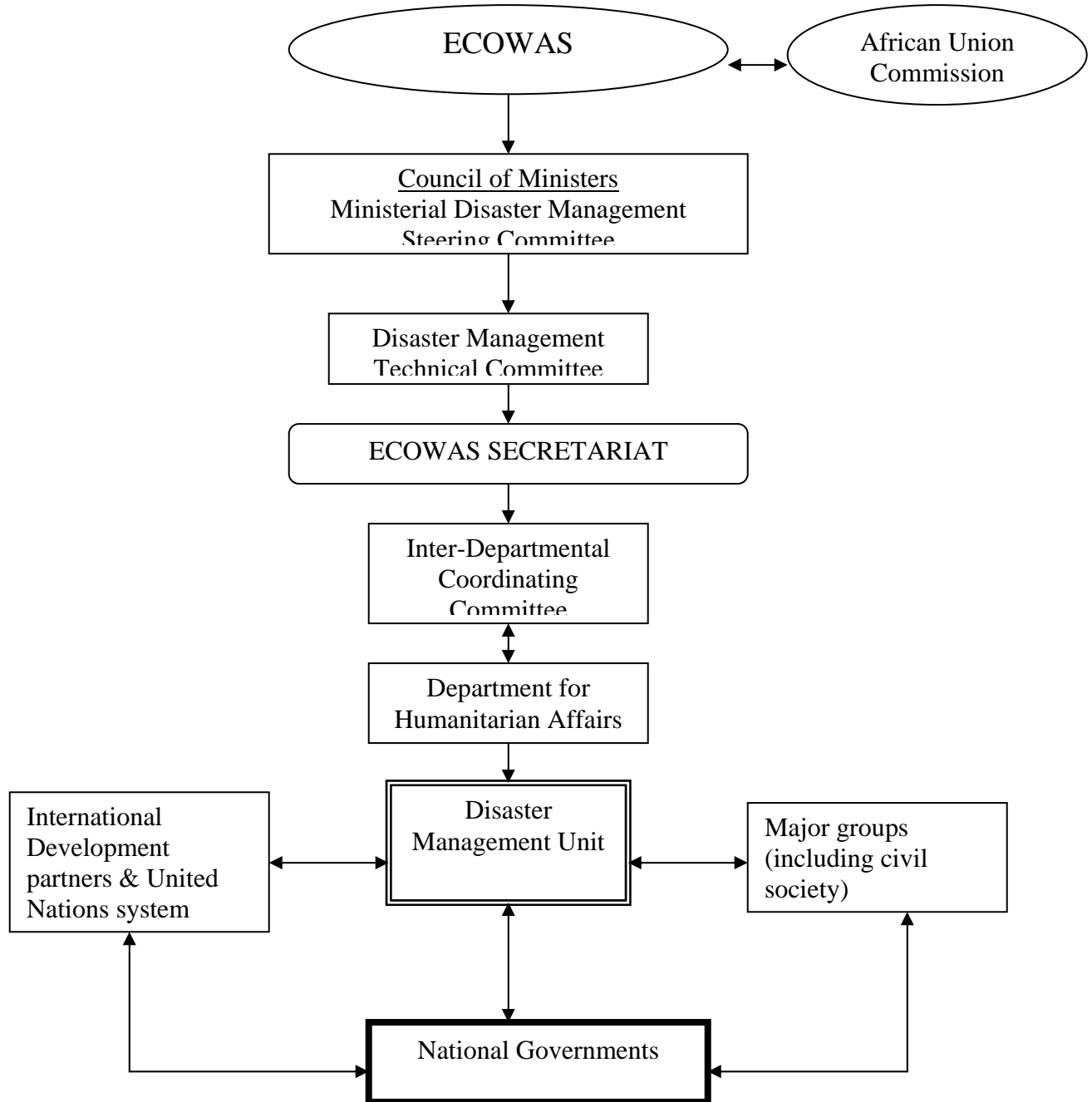
6.2.3.3   ECOWAS Disaster Management Technical Committee
a) provide technical oversight of the Policy
b) provide consultation platform for the review of the Policy
c) report to the Council of Ministers

6.2.3.4   ECOWAS Executive Secretariat
a) coordinate the implementation of the Policy within ECOWAS, between ECOWAS and member states, and, between ECOWAS and other Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Union Commission and International Development Partners
b) provide guidance on implementation of the Policy to states
c) coordinate states initiatives under the Policy at the sub-regional level
d) facilitate provision of vital sub-regional information services for disaster risk reduction, such as early warning and research that support disaster management
e) facilitate and coordinate sub-regional financial resource mobilization to supplement national efforts
f) facilitate, support and coordinate sub-regional capacity development initiatives under the Policy
g) develop sub-regional and national indicators and prepare periodic reporting on progress towards achieving the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction objectives to assist countries measure their progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

These responsibilities of the Executive Secretariat will be met through the functions of the Inter-Departmental Coordinating Committee and the Disaster Management Unit as indicated below.

6.2.3.5   Inter-Departmental Coordinating Committee
a) coordinate operational programmes of ECOWAS Departments that bear on disaster reduction particularly those of Agriculture and Environment, Human Development, Infrastructure and Industry, Defence and Security, and, OMC
b) provide management oversight of ECOWAS response actions under the Policy during regional disasters and national disasters with sub-regional impacts
c) recommend initiation of sub-regional emergency management procedures during emergencies to the Executive Secretary
d) promote incorporation of disaster risk reduction approaches in ECOWAS programmes
e) report to the Deputy Executive Secretary for Political Affairs, Defence and Security (DES-PADS)

6.2.3.6   Disaster Management Unit
a) facilitate incorporation of disaster risk reduction approaches in ongoing thematic ECOWAS programmes
b) provide secretarial and other support services to the Inter-Departmental Coordinating Committee
c) support coordination and harmonization of national disaster risk reduction practices and capacities based on a framework for inter-country cooperation in disaster operations
d) initiate and coordinate financial resource mobilization to support activities under the Policy
e) support capacity building at the national level in disaster risk reduction and management
f) operate as a central point of call for emergency assistance to states in the sub-region

g) process requests from member states for emergency assistance under the Policy for review by the Inter-Departmental Coordinating Committee

h) coordinate multi-country disaster assistance requests to international development partners in cases of multi-country disasters or national disasters with sub-regional impact

i) undertake joint risk assessment and disaster loss assessment with national authorities

j) operate as a clearing house of disaster management information in the sub-region

k) manage sub-regional monitoring of disaster reduction interventions at country level.

6.2.3.7   *National Governments*

a) exercise primary responsibility for implementing the Policy at national and community levels

b) create conducive environment for disaster reduction interventions at local and national levels

c) provide strategic guidance to major groups and partners in implementing disaster reduction initiatives

d) monitor implementation of the Policy at local and national levels.

6.2.3.8   *Major groups*

a) participate in developing the Policy

b) partner governments to design and implement disaster risk reduction initiatives at local, national and sub-regional levels.

6.2.3.9   *The African Union (AU) Commission*

a) provide guidance on sub-regional implementation of regional initiatives in disaster risk reduction

b) coordinate implementation of the Policy with the ARSDRR, other sub-regional strategies and international frameworks

c) facilitate and manage ECOWAS access to financing under the Special Emergency Assistance Fund (SEAF) for sub-regional emergencies

d) coordinate sub-regional input into regional reporting on progress in achieving the ARSDRR and HFA objectives.

6.2.3.10   *International Development Partners*

a) provide assistance and resources for sub-regional initiatives

b) encourage increased commitment from national leaders for disaster risk reduction

c) advocate for support for sub-regional disaster reduction programmes at international for a

d) support integrated and coordinated disaster reduction by harmonizing their assistance for disaster management at the country level.

6.2.3.11   *The United Nations and its programmes and specialized agencies*

a) incorporate the Policy in country development assistance programming

b) provide assistance and resources for sub-regional initiatives in disaster reduction

c) develop global and regional indicators and prepare periodic reporting on progress towards achieving the Hyogo Framework objectives to assist countries and ECOWAS measure their progress.

7. Financing the Policy

7.1 Sources of financing

Experience has shown that inadequate financial resources undermine the efficient and sustainable operation of disaster management mechanisms, particularly during emergencies. Consequently, the Policy establishes a disaster management window under the ECOWAS Peace Fund to provide core financial resources for implementing its programmes and activities. Thus, the Fund would serve as a principal source of financing the Policy and as seed funding to attract donor support.

Other sources of financing the Policy will include complementary co-financing of related areas, such as conflict monitoring, desertification, and, agriculture, and, new funding from states, development partners and the private sector. Regarding major groups, the Policy will encourage innovative approaches that allow citizen contribution to risk reduction services. These include participatory approaches that promote inter-group partnerships in implementing the Policy at the national and community levels.

7.2 Resource mobilization and partnership issues

The Policy will pursue an active strategy of resource mobilization and partnerships with role players, particularly the private sector, civil society and international development partners (IDPs). Priority areas for action will include the organization of a forum for IDPs, as part of the process of finalizing the Policy. This Forum will agree on a financing framework for the Policy and reporting arrangements between the ECOWAS Secretariat and IDPs on partner resources. Partnership arrangements to be concluded under the Policy will include agreements on key partnership principles and arrangements for North-South and South-South, as well as intra-ECOWAS, cooperation.

8. Monitoring and reviewing the Policy

Disaster risk reduction policy-making needs to be evidence-based. Effective tracking of movement towards disaster reduction objectives at community, national and sub-regional levels and beyond depends on monitoring information on disaster risks.

8.1 Institutional responsibilities

The ECOWAS Secretariat, acting through the Disaster Management Unit, is responsible for devising sub-regional indicators for national authorities to report on. These indicators will represent milestones in implementing the Policy and in achieving agreed outcomes and impacts. The Secretariat will report on progress towards achieving the Policy and the objectives of the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction to member countries and development partners. National governments will have primary responsibility for monitoring the Policy at the country level, using participatory approaches. Sub-regional disaster management service institutions will provide scientific and specialized data and information to facilitate identification, assessment and monitoring of hazards.

8.2   Monitoring indicators

At the sub-regional level, several indicators will be utilized to monitor the implementation, outcomes, and impact of disaster reduction interventions under the Policy, including the following:

- adoption of the Policy and its Programme of Action by the Council of Ministers
- number of countries with national platforms for disaster risk reduction
- availability of financing for emergency assistance under the ECOWAS Peace Fund
- number of countries undertaking risk mapping
- number of countries operating early warning systems
- extent of public awareness of early warning
- number of countries introducing disaster management as part of school curricula
- number of research programmes in disaster risk management in sub-regional institutions
- number of countries including disaster reduction included in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) or other development strategy frameworks
- adoption of disaster safe principles by professional associations of engineers
- adoption of guidelines for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in development by national disaster management authorities and major groups
- number of countries revising their emergency management plans to include disaster risk reduction principles
- number of countries instituting EERT structures

8.3   Sources of monitoring information

Existing national statistical systems and relevant international databases will provide the means to verify evidence on movement towards meeting disaster reduction objectives. Monitoring formats and protocols to be agreed will be consistent with the Hyogo Framework for Action and feed into monitoring requirements of the African Regional Strategy.

8.4   Country progress reporting arrangements

Countries will report periodically to ECOWAS on progress in implementing the Policy. The Disaster Management Unit and states will agree the scope and frequency of reporting, reporting formats, feedback arrangements, and, validation procedures.

8.5   Policy review process

It is important that the experience gained from monitoring should inform the management of the Policy through effective learning from monitoring. This would lead to effective review of the Policy. The Policy will be reviewed every five years within established ECOWAS procedures for reviewing its policies.

[i] West Africa accounted for 15 percent of cumulative disaster events in Africa between 1975 and 2002 but the number of disasters in the sub-region rose by 94 percent from the 1970s to the 1990s. Already 154 disasters have occurred during the first five years of this decade, compared to 136 during the past two decades.

[ii] Epidemics accounted for 40% of disasters in the sub-region during 1975 to 2003, compared to 20% by flood and drought, and cause most human fatalities and debilitation. However, the most pervasive disasters in terms of the numbers of people affected and disruption to livelihood support systems are those due to flood, drought, and famine.

[iii] These include: (1) the global review of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) in 2002; (2) sub-regional review of early warning for the Second International Early Warning Conference in 2003; (3) review of disaster risk management in Africa for developing the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2003; (4) national reporting by some ECOWAS countries for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005.

[iv] Volunteers are persons and institutions that choose to assist in providing disaster management services, are registered in a volunteer's register and trained to be part of emergency management teams at the local level. Legal frameworks need to cover developing the capacity, command structures, activation and deployment, indemnity, and, compensation of the volunteers.

[v] Major international drought and food security warning systems in operation in the sub-region are the Famine Early Warning System Information Network (FEWSNET), Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (FIVIMS), Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS), Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) and the Early Warning and Agricultural Production Forecast Project (AP3A) of CILSS.

[vi] These include the Africa Centre for Meteorological Applications to Development (ACMAD), the Regional Centre for Training and Application in Agro-meteorology and Operational Hydrology (AGRHYMET), and, the Regional Remote Sensing Centre (CRTO), Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE) in Senegal, and, the Centre for Remote Sensing and Geographical Information systems (CERGIS).

[vii] These include as support for small-holder production, minimization of on-farm risks, land and environmental resource conservation, community productive capacity development, early warning to ensure safety of food stocks, vulnerability assessment for planning mitigating interventions, and, relief interventions

[viii] in terms of coverage of key response interventions, scope of national and hazard coverage, integration of sectoral contingency plans, coordination of various role players in emergencies, and, incorporation of risk-reducing practices in relief assistance.

[ix] Simulation pays off in enhancing response. The authorities the Gambia simulated a transportation disaster in 1999 that revealed critical issues, including: confusion among the actors as to their roles, inadequate materials for response, long-lead time in assembling members of task forces, inadequate recognition of the key role of local people, and inadequate public awareness and readiness. When the Jola boat disaster occurred in the Senegal, a neighbouring country, soon after, the lessons of the simulation became invaluable in shaping the Gambia's response to the disaster.

[x] Early warning systems should comprise four components for: (a) hazard detection, observation and forecasting, (b) warning formulation, (c) warning dissemination, (d) response to warnings.