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The African Union and the African Risk Capacity Group launch the Gender and Disaster Risk Management Platform



Mr Ibrahima Cheikh Diong, UN-ASG / Director-General, African Risk Capacity Group and H.E. Amb. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment at the AU at the GDRM Platform launching today.

Johannesburg, May 11, 2021 – To ensure the integration of Gender equality and women empowerment issues in the disaster risk management (DRM) landscape, the African Union (AU) and

the African Risk Capacity (ARC), have launched the Gender and Disaster Risk Management (DRM) platform. The new platform is expected to contribute to the development and management of knowledge on the issues of gender and DRM in the continent. The launch took place today through a virtual ceremony attended by both institutions.

The Platform will assist in addressing the disproportionate impacts of weather-related and other natural disasters on vulnerable populations which have resulted in devastating toll on lives and livelihoods. Experience has shown that women, children, the elderly, and people living with disabilities are unequally affected by perils. And with climate change increasing the frequency, intensity, and unpredictability of extreme weather events in Africa, it becomes imperative that disaster risk reduction efforts address the issue of gender for sustainable adaptation and resilience.

Speaking at the launch, H.E. Amb. Josefa Leonel Correia SACKO, Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture at the African Union Commission expects that the Platform will be valuable for developing policy actions to build capacity and strengthen the resilience of women, children, and other vulnerable groups. “The Gender Platform will strongly complement the efforts of the African Union Commission in strengthening critical partnerships for effective disaster risk management in the region and, especially promote equal access to capacity building, mitigation and other adaptation initiatives that are already accessible from the African Risk Capacity and other actors within the space”, she stated.

The new Platform, in line Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want – will help promote the steps the continent is taking to advance the gender aspects of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) issues across the region within the context of the Sendai Framework. The AU and ARC recognise that Gender and DRM are crosscutting development issues that must be addressed to successfully build resilience of Member States and communities.

In his remarks to launch the Gender Platform, the United Nations Assistant Secretary-General / Director-General of the ARC Group, Mr. Ibrahima Diong, indicated that understanding how gender relations shape women’s and men’s response capacities is critical to the Group’s disaster risk reduction work. “We are very mindful of the peculiar challenges faced by women and men during and post catastrophes especially in terms of roles and responsibilities towards recovery.” It is important to note, he continued, that, “Disasters do not discriminate; and we know that adopting an equal opportunities approach to DRR is a win-win for families, communities, and Government. Therefore, in collaboration with our partners, we will continue to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated in every step of our country engagement to promote adaptation and resilience in a sustainable manner.”

The Platform will also serve as a medium for stakeholders to increase their know-how in regard to the practical steps for gender mainstreaming in DRM, and as a mechanism for knowledge development and sharing, policy dialogue and advocacy on gender transformative DRR approaches. This is in addition to assisting to promote a ‘culture of insurance’ among ARC Member States.

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About ARC Group:

African Risk Capacity (ARC) Group consists of ARC Agency and ARC Insurance Company Limited (ARC Ltd). ARC Agency was established in 2012 as a Specialized Agency of the African Union to help the Member States improve their capacities to better plan, prepare and respond to weather-related disasters. ARC Ltd is a mutual insurance facility providing risk transfer services to the Member States through risk pooling and access to reinsurance markets. ARC was established on the principle that investing in preparedness and early warning through an innovative financing approach is highly cost-effective and can save upward of four dollars for every dollar invested ex-ante.

With the support of the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, France, the European Union, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the United States, ARC assists the AU Member States in reducing the risk of loss and damage caused by extreme weather events affecting Africa's populations by providing, through sovereign disaster risk insurance, targeted responses to natural disasters in a more timely, cost-effective, objective and transparent manner. ARC is now using its expertise to help tackle some of the other most significant threats faced by the continent, including floods and outbreaks & epidemics.

Since 2014, 62 policies have been signed by the Member States for cumulative insurance coverage of US\$719 million for the protection of 72 million vulnerable populations in participating countries.

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