



ELEVENTH REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON NATURAL DISASTERS IN WEST AFRICA (GECEAO)

(MONROVIA, 7 July 2017) – “I am extremely impressed with the excellent discussion we have held with our partners in the past three days, within the framework of ECOWAS Humanitarian Policy and in efforts to harmonize programs aimed at disaster prevention and response “, said Mrs. Florence Iheme, the Director of Humanitarian and Social Affairs of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The West African States held the eleventh Regional Consultation from 5 to 7 July in Monrovia, Liberia, aimed at strengthening disaster preparedness and response in the region. The Consultation brought together 14 states from the Economic Community of West Africa States and representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (IFRC), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other humanitarian actors including UN agencies, NGOs and private sector.

"ECOWAS states are working together to ensure that Disaster Risk Reduction, Prevention and Preparedness are the drivers of security and development in the region in the long term," said Mr. Aristide Dagou, the Director of Civil Protection of Benin and the current president of GECEAO.

During the three-day consultation, participants reviewed provision of the climate forecasts for the 2017 rainy season; discussed preparedness initiatives and measure being adopted in various countries of the region; looked at updates from the World Humanitarian Summit and the involvement of the private sector in humanitarian action. The ECOWAS Humanitarian Action Plan was assessed and priorities for the 2018-2022 plan discussed. Participants also reflected on various topics such as the implementation of cash transfers in emergency response, health emergency preparedness and set up of emergency medical response teams; and the implementation of the « one model agency » for disaster management. Liberia had an opportunity to present efforts taken to set up its newly established disaster management agency and the challenges facing the country since the end of the Ebola epidemic.

The regional consultation on disaster preparedness and management has been organized annually since 2007 under the aegis of ECOWAS with the support of UNOCHA and IFRC.

Photos available at <http://www.unocha.org/rowca/> and <http://geceao.org/>