

SUMMARY

Feasibility Study for Establishing a Technical Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction in Southern Africa

1. Introduction

- Disasters triggered by natural hazards are affecting more than 200 million people annually; global data on disaster reveals that between 1900 and 2010, disasters have been increasing
- More than 95% of all disaster-related deaths occur in developing countries; these countries also suffer economic losses that are 20 times greater, as a percentage of the global internal product, compared to industrialized nations
- Chronic rural poverty, exacerbated by drought and environmental hazards, determines the rural-urban migration of those populations in search of a livelihood; there is a link between an increasing “informal” urbanisation, lack of basic services and growing vulnerabilities
- Governments are increasingly turning to an agenda that focuses on disaster preparedness along with longer-term prevention and mitigation, not only on disaster response
- Responding to large-scale disasters attracts resources away from development, leaving countries with depleted resources for engaging in a more sustainable recovery process; investing in disaster prevention compared with disaster response can save as much as 12 USD in disaster losses for every single USD spent on disaster

2. Rapid disaster risk profile of southern Africa

- Southern Africa is very exposed to the impacts resulting from recurrent climatic-related hazards such as cyclones, floods and drought, compounded by the effect of global warming
- Other natural threats are earthquakes and volcanic activity, while some disasters are caused by anthropogenic interventions (land/environmental degradation, uncontrolled urbanisation, etc.)
- This study focuses on Mozambique, Madagascar, Malawi and Union of Comoros, which are well representative of the kind of natural threats and vulnerabilities which can be found in southern Africa

3. Existing policy and institutional framework

- This chapter highlights what already exists regarding DRR in terms of policies, strategies, key initiatives and active institutions and organisations at the different levels
- Any new entity meant to be established will have to fit within these policy and institutional frameworks, without competing nor conflicting with them, but rather complementing and supporting them, creating synergies and addressing needs and gaps

At the global level (Hyogo Framework for Action - HFA; United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction - UNISDR)

At the continental level (DRR Strategy of the African Union - AU)

At the sub-regional level (Southern Africa Development Commission - SADC DRR Unit; Indian Ocean Commission – IOC; Regional Inter-Agency Coordination and Support Office – RIACSO; role of the World Bank, UNDP and FAO; Disaster Preparedness Programme of the European Commission’s Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid (DIPECHO); Academic institutions and networks; role of bilateral donors, e.g. United States of America and the United Kingdom; role of international NGOs)

At the national level (Existing DRR framework in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Union of Comoros, in terms of key policies and strategies, and main actors such as government institutions, UN, NGOs, working groups, bilateral donors, etc.)

4. The role of UN-HABITAT

- UN-HABITAT is facilitating the ‘Dimsur’ process since 2008, and formally since 2010. In Southern Africa UN-HABITAT has worked in several DRR projects since 2002 in Mozambique, from 2004 to 2007 in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, since 2009 in Namibia and since 2010 in Malawi and Madagascar.
- Some of the most relevant DRR programmes of UN-HABITAT worldwide are on-going in Pakistan (earthquakes and floods, since 2005), Sri Lanka and Indonesia (tsunami, since 2005), Peru and Iran (earthquakes, since 2007), Haiti (earthquakes, since 2010)
- Strategy on “*Sustainable Relief and Reconstruction*” (SRR); filling the gap between the short term humanitarian imperative and longer term reconstruction and development priorities.
- Effective recognition of UN-HABITAT’s role by Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2008; its DRR core activities are:
 - supporting local initiatives and capacities to build resilience
 - focusing on shelter rehabilitation and livelihoods restoration: “*building back better*”
 - promoting innovative land-use management and planning
 - ensure continuation of critical infrastructure and services in case of crisis
- Recognizing this work, UN-HABITAT has also been mandated by its Member States through resolution *23/18/April 2011* to focus increasingly on DRR.

5. Justification for undertaking the feasibility study

- High disaster risk profile of the sub-region; compounding effects of climate change and growing vulnerabilities; existing policy and institutional framework still does not provide for all the required answers to build the needed capacity at the different levels and reduce disaster risk; DRR is a matter of vital importance for ensuring a sustained development process
- There is need to: (i) derive maximum benefit from the positive progress regarding DRR that was observed in the sub-region during the last decade; (ii) to gradually reduce the dependency from external agents and move away from a project-based approach by establishing a solid partnership and creating synergies among countries
- Representatives of the respective disaster management departments of Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Union of Comoros, targeted by both ECHO and the World Bank regarding DRR, were invited by UN-HABITAT in Nairobi, Kenya, in April 2010, to discuss the idea of establishing a sub-regional DRR technical centre for southern Africa; the 4 countries endorsed the idea and formally requested to UN-HABITAT to explore the feasibility of such proposal
- DIPECHO funding was obtained and a strategic partnership was established with UNISDR

6. Scope and methodology of the study

- The scope of this study is *to assess the feasibility, under present and foreseeable conditions, of establishing a Disaster Risk Reduction Technical Centre in Southern Africa to provide regular support to all interested stakeholders and primarily to national institutions mandated for implementing the*

existing DRR policies and strategies defined at the national level, in line with the guidelines provided by the HFA, the AU and the SADC

- In this initial phase, only 4 countries are participating (Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and the Union of Comoros), which are, well representative of the geographical, institutional, political and linguistic differences and spectrum of vulnerabilities to natural hazards existing in southern Africa
- The study is concerned with DRR, and from this perspective covers climate change adaptation (CCA)
- Three specific objectives are defined:
 - (i) **to identify the problems and the needs** to be addressed at both country and sub-regional levels in terms of DRR institutional capacity, strategies, policies and implementation of activities
 - (ii) **to make a critical analysis of the risks and opportunities** regarding the possibility of establishing the centre, in order to define clearly its added-value
 - (iii) **to derive recommendations** for establishing such a centre, focusing on the feasibility conditions

The following activities were carried out during the elaboration of the study:

- **A Steering Group (SG) was formed** during a workshop organised in Lilongwe, Malawi, in the beginning of February 2011, to monitor the implementation of this study. The SG, which is chaired by UNISDR and facilitated by UN-HABITAT, is composed by representatives of the 4 initially concerned countries (Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique and Union of Comoros), SADC, ECHO, the World Bank and UNDP. Terms of reference of the SG were defined. During the workshop it was clarified that despite the facilitation of the UN system, **the whole process of establishing the centre should be “owned” by the participating national governments**
- A **questionnaire** was developed to guide the information-gathering process in the 4 countries and among existing concerned institutions/organisations dealing with DRR in the sub-region
- **Country visits** were consequently carried out between February and June 2011; consultations were held with key-informants within government (DRR focal point ministry, sectoral ministries and other departments), international organisations (in particular the UN system and the World Bank), the National Red Cross Societies and non-governmental organisations; discussions were also held with organisations operating at the sub-regional level, such as the UN RIACSO chaired by UNOCHA and based in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the Senior DRR Advisor of the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR); a visit to the SADC DRR Unit located in Gaborone, Botswana, was also planned but had to be cancelled at the last minute; two academic institutions/networks based in South Africa were visited (the Disaster Mitigation for Sustainable Livelihoods Programme and Peri Peri U at the Stellenbosch University and (ii) the African Centre for Disaster Studies at the North-West University); the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) was also visited
- A workshop was organised in Johannesburg, South Africa, end of June - beginning of July 2011, to get a feedback from all stakeholders on the draft feasibility study; in addition to representatives from the 4 countries, UNISDR and UN-HABITAT, representatives of the donor community (USAID; World Bank), SADC, AU, Peri Peri U, North West University, UNOCHA, FAO and some NGOs also participated; UNDP and ECHO could unfortunately not come; **several opinions were collected and integrated to the study resulting in its substantial reformulation; preliminary decision-making steps for assessing the feasibility of establishing the centre were undertaken**, such as agreeing on its potential location, its governance model and management structure, its mandate and deliverables as well as an in-depth risk analysis; this workshop also allowed **measuring the political will of the countries and test the interest of some partners to support the process**; an advocacy and resource mobilisation strategy was discussed; it was agreed that a formal endorsement of the highest political bodies at country level should be obtained, as well as a broader involvement of the civil society

- A second round of country visits and sub-regional consultations took place between August to October 2011 to further analyse the critical issues raised concerning the feasibility of the establishment of the centre; in general, **all technical aspects regarding this feasibility need to be cleared before a political endorsement can be achieved at higher levels**
- A final validation of the feasibility study is to be obtained in Maputo, Mozambique, end of November - beginning of December 2011; this event will also serve for preparing a **concept note regarding the centre (mandate, model, governance, strategy, management and sustainability)**, formulating a **project proposal for mobilising funds for its initial phase** and learning more from the ADPC experience

Limits of the study:

- ❖ Due to time and funding limitation, the study could not include a more in-depth mapping of all existing stakeholders with an activity or action related to DRR
- ❖ The study is not concerned with the question of whether to establish a centre or not; it is concerned with the feasibility of establishing a centre, which includes an in depth analysis of the risks involved
- ❖ The study does not provide a solid and detailed cost-analysis for its feasibility, but rather identifies the requirements that will need to be covered to ensure that the centre, if established, can be sustained

7. Problems and needs identification

Problems

- Hazard profiles and vulnerabilities are already significant in the participating countries; this is compounded by the effects of climate change and environmental degradation caused by man
- Governments are concerned on their ability to cope with all these disasters as they lack of capacity, information, technical understanding and resources
- There is a proliferation of organisations undertaking climate change work in the sub-region, as well as uncoordinated DRR actions mainly supported by external funding/actors
- Africa is the fastest urbanising continent which is leading to increasing numbers of people living in highly vulnerable locations without access to basic services and support
- There are varying levels of understanding, still limited capacities and resources and a growing list of other priorities for addressing DRR consistently and obtain concrete impacts at community level
- There is emphasis on disaster preparedness and response with support from external partners; existing sub-regional networks merely relate to food security and early warning in the short-term; no networks nor country exchanges with a real DRR focus seem to be available in the sub-region
- Despite being “neighbours”, these four countries are using three different languages
- There is still lack of overall sensitization and DRR culture at the different levels
- Academic initiatives need to be more linked to national and regional DRR programmes
- Decentralisation of capacities for enabling local authorities to carry out DRR activities is still weak
- Sometimes institutional DRR mandates are confusing and inter-sectoral coordination ineffective
- There are difficulties to generating effective information for decision-making on DRR

Needs

- Enhance and develop national DRR capacities through knowledge acquisition, experience sharing, on-the-job technical support and information management

- Focus on other key components of the HFA (priorities 1 to 4) in addition to disaster preparedness
- Promote greater coherence of DRR activities/plans and coordination within the sub-region
- Make a stronger linkage between DRR and CCA
- Translate DRR programming into concrete actions implemented on the ground
- Better utilise existing DRR capacities in the sub-region (hence reducing dependency on external support), establish more effective networks and organise country exchanges
- Move away from DRR projects supported by external funding, which are time-bounded and isolated
- Address consistently the language issue among the four participating countries
- Raise awareness and build a DRR culture at both national and local/community levels
- Further decentralise capacities for enabling local authorities to carry out DRR activities
- Clarify urgently conflicting/confusing institutional mandates at national level, and promote better inter-sectoral coordination for implementing the DRR agenda more efficiently
- Promote more national and sub-regional forum/platforms of discussion around DRR
- Further strengthen the DRR legal framework at the national level

8. Risks and opportunities in establishing the centre

Risks

- Lack of financial sustainability (*High-Medium Risk*)
- Lack of a consistent “political buy-in” from the participating countries (*Medium Risk*)
- The initiative of establishing such a centre might be too ambitious (*Medium Risk*)
- Potential duplication with existing DRR structures/institutions/networks (*Medium-Low Risk*)
- Poor UN coordination (*Medium-Low Risk*)
- Lack of concrete actions at community level (*Medium-Low Risk*)
- Long establishment and legalisation process of the centre (*Medium-Low Risk*)
- Difficult inter-country communication and cooperation (*Medium-Low Risk*)
- Differences between the hazard profiles of the four participating countries (*Low Risk*)
- Detailed agenda and purpose of the centre are still unclear (*Low Risk*)

Opportunities

- Establish a permanent sub-regional institution which can provide technical support on DRR to national governments, SADC, NGOs, UN partners and community-based organisations beyond the life of projects and programmes, with aim at gradually reducing the dependency from external support
- Better serve and further strengthen the implementation of DRR practices, policies and activities at national level
- Enable knowledge, information sharing and exchanges between countries with aim at reinforcing capacities at the national level
- Maximise the use/strengthen existing capacities and expertise in the sub-region, so that needed expertise can be readily mobilised upon demand from the countries or other partners

- Optimize the use of available resources and increase coordination for addressing common DRR concerns and challenges in the sub-region
- Establish a defined agenda that aims at covering key thematic and capacity gaps, such as the urban theme, to meet the current demand and add value; build innovative programmes
- Create an enabling environment to bring the DRR and CCA agendas more effectively together.
- Assist countries in developing a sustainable recovery and longer-term DRR programme
- Complement/reinforce the work of the SADC DRR Unit through the provision of technical support
- Further increase the understanding of DRR at the national level and raise awareness at all levels
- Increase the visibility of national governments/partners on DRR/CCA at the regional/global scales
- Communication in the three official languages spoken in SADC

9. Recommendations

Overall goal of the centre

To provide DRR technical assistance and knowledge to fill the gaps and address the needs of national programmes, in alignment with the existing national, SADC and AU policies and strategies, with as ultimate aim to build resilience of communities to natural disasters.

Main focus areas of the centre

- targeting all five priorities of the HFA
- establishing a genuine partnership with the SADC DRR Unit
- serving as platform for the discussion and interchange of good practice, experience and knowledge in DRR and for maximising the use of existing expertise in the sub-region
- establishing synergies between CCA and DRR agendas
- proposing innovative DRR programmes and activities
- addressing the needs of vulnerable communities by providing technical support for awareness-raising and implementation of practical actions

Preferred model

- **the technical centre is an autonomous, multi-stakeholder institution**
- **it should be endorsed by national governments**
- **a certain proportion of the centre's activities should be virtual**

Importantly, on 1 July 2011 it was agreed by consensus among the 4 countries initially participating to this initiative that the centre should be established in Mozambique.

Deliverables during the 2-year inception phase

- in-depth assessment of existing gaps and needs in current national/regional programmes/capacities
- provision of ad-hoc technical advice to national governments and other stakeholders on DRR policy, strategy, plan and project formulation
- implementation of a stock-taking exercise covering DRR and CCA activity across the sub-region
- development of a DRR/CCA monitoring and evaluation framework

- preparation of an outline research programme covering key DRR and CCA elements
- creation of a forum for debate on shared DRR issues and exchange of knowledge/experience
- development of a multi-lingual web page

Added-value

The centre should ensure **to remain at the cutting edge of DRR concepts and practice**, that it is flexible in the management of its programme and that it is able to be innovative and relevant. Hence **the centre should, as soon as possible, be identifying technical specialities that give it its individuality**.

Governance and management

Executive Board that will consist of: (i) the ministers responsible for DRR from each of the participating countries; (ii) a representative of SADC; (iii) a representative of the AU; (iv) a representative of UN system; (v) a representatives of bi/multilateral donors; (vi) a representative of the civil society; (vii) a representative of the academic sector. The secretary of the Board will be the Executive Director of the centre. The Executive Board should meet on a yearly basis.

Technical Advisory Committee which should be large enough to represent all the key stakeholders dealing with DRR in the four participating countries, which meets formally on a yearly basis but can also interact regularly and meet more frequently using internet facilities.

International Advisory Group of interested parties whose responsibility will be to: (i) advise on the mobilisation of resources; (ii) provide technical advice based on international developments; (iii) establish linkages with international DRR networks and similar centres around the world.

The centre should initially be staffed by an Executive Director, two technical staff and support staff (an accountant, a secretary and a driver) to be based in Mozambique and a centre focal point for each of the four participating countries (based in respectively in Comoros, Madagascar, Malawi and Mozambique). The idea is to **start with a light structure**, to reduce to a minimum the core costs (such as the salaries of core staff, operational and running costs, etc.) of the centre, and to gradually expand according to the income generated, resources mobilised and increased geographical coverage. All stakeholders must have complete **confidence** in the centre's staff who should be recruited according to clearly defined rules and procedures to **ensure credibility**.

Need for a gradual expansion process

The process of establishing the centre for the four countries should be seen as a starting point for the eventual full engagement of the other countries of the region. It is clear **that the centre would gain much more credibility if the ownership was SADC-wide**. Therefore **an action plan should be developed covering the integration of additional countries into the centre in a phased way, over an 8-year period**. Importantly, the SADC DRR Unit should be provided free and priority access to the centre's capacities and briefs. To conclude, **the wider involvement of the region must be a priority although done through an incremental process**.

Sustainability

The centre can be sustained overtime under the following conditions:

- The process for establishing centre is conducted in a participatory manner, ensuring the full endorsement and ownership of the initiative from the concerned countries**, the active involvement of SADC, AU, UN agencies, civil society, the academic sector and bi/multilateral donors; it will be important to also ensure the participation of similar technical centres around the world which were successful like the ADPC

- b. **An advocacy strategy is carried out under the leadership of the countries themselves.** Advocacy and resource mobilisation should be permanent activities of the centre
- c. The centre would need to **establish its credibility as a viable income generator in order to sustain itself**; this can be achieved if the quality of the services delivered and results achieved by the centre is ensured; for this purpose, it will be necessary to set up a monitoring and evaluation system with clear indicators for measuring success and impacts of the centre's work; in addition, an in-depth market survey should be carried out as soon as the centre is established to assess the needs and gaps and better define the selection of services to be offered by the centre; the centre needs to make itself an indispensable part of the DRR fabric in the region
- d. **The centre should be established progressively through a multi-phased process**; the costs for maintaining and running the centre will be shared among: 1) the contribution from external donors (which should decrease over time); 2) the contribution from the countries (which should remain fixed over time, and can also be in-kind); and 3) the contribution from income generation activities (which should increase over time); strategically four successive phases are foreseen:
- **A pilot phase** (years 1 and 2): the market survey and a capacity assessment are conducted to identify the gaps and needs and define the type of services to be delivered by the centre; a limited number of services are delivered with the required quality through a light management structure, taking maximum advantage of the pool of expertise and human resources that exist across the region, in order to build the credibility of this newly established institution; the proposed governance model is tested; 4 additional SADC countries are targeted to integrate the geographical coverage of the centre; clear complementary roles with the SADC DRR unit are defined and strategic/mutually benefiting partnerships are established with existing regional academic institutions and NGOs working on DRR issues; in this phase the contribution from donors should cover 90% of the core costs of the centre and the fixed contribution from the countries should cover the remaining 10%
 - **A second phase** (years 3 and 4): the quality of the services delivered by the centre is maintained while the diversity of services offered by the centre increases, targeting innovation; the economic and financial assessment helps refining the modus operandi and finalising the strategic plan of the centre; the governance model is improved thanks to a clear assessment made during the initial phase; 4 additional SADC countries are targeted while consolidating the integration of the 4 countries identified during the previous phase; in this phase the contribution from the donors should cover approximately 60% of the costs while the difference is covered by a mixed of countries' contributions and income generation activities
 - **A third phase** (years 5 and 6) allows consolidating the achievements of the previous phase and prepare the centre to be a stand-alone service; thanks to the good results obtained, the centre has acquired credibility and is involved larger projects and programmes in the region, and becomes part of an international network of DRR centres and institutions around the world. In this phase the last 5 SADC countries will be targeted, and donors contribution to core costs is reduced to approximately 30% while the difference is covered by the fixed countries' contributions and predominantly from income generation activities
 - **A fourth phase** (years 7 and 8) in which the geographical coverage of the centre is now enlarged to the whole SADC, allowing the centre to take advantage of economies of scale, broadening its constituency and offer/demand of services, and thus sustaining its delivery; at this stage the centre will *de facto* work as the technical-operational arm of the SADC DRR Unit; the credibility of the centre as further increased and donors contribution to the core costs represents less than 10%
- e. While it is important to reduce as much as possible the financial dependency from donors to cover core costs, their contributions for implementing innovative projects, carry out critical studies, providing technical assistance to needed partners, among other activities, will be welcome

- f. The centre should aim to **develop synergies and build strong partnerships with other DRR capacity/resource providers in the sub-region** that can expand the earning potential of the centre
- g. The centre should create an **enabling environment to bring the DRR and CCA agendas together**

Legal Instruments

A constitution should be developed for the centre covering its legal responsibilities as well as the responsibilities of its different components – the Executive Board, the Technical Committee, the Advisory Group and its operational mechanisms. Memoranda of Understanding should be prepared covering the relationship between the four participating countries and the centre, as well as between the centre and regional institutions such as SADC and the AU.

10. Example of a success story: The Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre

Asia is one of the most disaster-prone continents with some prominent countries exposed to a wide-range of damaging events with natural origins on a regular basis. Thus, it is not surprising that the ADPC should not only have sustained itself for 25 years but also has increasingly been able to adjust and refine its programme to accommodate the needs of the countries its supports. Above anything else, the ADPC stresses that its priorities are the countries' priorities and it is a strong supporter of national programmes.

The ADPC was established in 1986 by three UN agencies (UNDP, WMO and the forerunner of UNOCHA) as an outreach centre of an academic institution (the Asian Institute of Technology - AIT). Between 1986 and 1990 it built a foundation of multi-disciplinary training and capacity development and it started its flagship disaster management course. This course is still delivered today and to date over 40 courses have been run with over 1,000 graduates. Between 1990 and 1995 it was the Regional Focal Point for UNIDNDR, the forerunner of the UNISDR and between 1995 and 1999 it initiated some key regional programmes and became an independent foundation in 1999. Between 2000 and 2010, the ADPC established the Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) on Disaster Management, involving 26 countries. It now has country project offices in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam and it is concluding its strategy 2020.

The ADPC's role in support of DRR in the Asia/Pacific Region emphasises: (i) enhancing skills and capacities; (ii) imparting knowledge, experiences and innovative practices; (iii) providing technical advisory services; (iv) implementing pioneering regional programmes; (v) participating in global and regional initiatives; (vi) establishing new regional forms of association, mechanisms and cooperation; (vii) supporting inter-agency coherence/coordination and sub-regional mechanisms/cooperation.

Its thematic strengths are governance and the development of disaster risk management systems, urban disaster risk management, climate risk management, community-based DRR, public health in emergencies, the development of emergency response and preparedness systems, geological hazard risk management, end-to-end multi-hazard early warning systems, mainstreaming DRR into development, disaster recovery planning/ implementation, risk assessment and technological hazard risk management.

The Structure of the ADPC

The ADPC is overseen by a Board of Trustees through an Executive Committee with a Steering Committee to monitor its work on an ongoing basis. The Executive Committee is supported by a 55-member International Advisory Council and the RCC previously mentioned. Day-to-day business of the ADPC is managed by the Office of the Executive Director who oversees staff in 6 thematic areas. The Training Services Unit cross-cuts these 6 thematic areas. Thus, the ADPC is independent of the countries it serves but has their support and active involvement. Cooperation and collaboration is key and the ADPC believes that its partnerships incorporate national and local governments, communities, UN agencies, development cooperation partners and regional organisations. It counts 15 regular development

cooperation partners and has partnerships with 22 agencies of the UN system. It has partnerships with the following regional bodies: (i) the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN); (ii) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SARC); (iii) the Mekong River Commission (MRC); (iv) the Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR; and (v) the ISDR Asia Partnership.

11. Conclusions and way forward

This study assessed the feasibility of **establishing a technical centre for disaster risk reduction in southern Africa** starting from four pilot countries. The results of this study conclude that the establishment of such a technical centre, if properly set up and supported by the concerned countries, **is feasible if the recommendations highlighted in Chapter 9 are fulfilled**. Therefore, under current and foreseeable conditions, **this centre is relevant** if it is able to:

- become a self-sustained and hence permanent institution within a reasonable period of time
- contribute to increase the level of understanding and awareness regarding DRR at the different levels
- support effectively the implementation of national/sub-regional DRR policies and strategies
- facilitate access to readily available capacities against a well-defined and credible DRR agenda
- build DRR institutional capacities and facilitate decision-making
- gradually expand to cover the whole SADC sub-region through an 8-year multi-phased process
- serve as coordination mechanism between on-going DRR practices, actions and knowledge
- contribute effectively to reduce the indirect cost of disasters by re-orienting resources from disaster preparedness and response to disaster prevention, adaptation, mitigation and sustainable recovery
- establish synergies between CCA and DRR agendas
- introduce innovation

As for the way forward, once the four participating countries have agreed on the mandate, model, governance, strategy, management and sustainability of the centre a Memorandum of Understanding will need to be ratified at the highest institutional level as a legally binding constitution. The countries will then need to apply for funding to physically establish the centre and launch its 2-year pilot phase.