



DiMSUR Strategic Plan 2016-2026

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DiMSUR
Disaster Risk Management,
Sustainability and Urban Resilience



DiMSUR

Technical Centre for Disaster Risk
Management, Urban Resilience
and Sustainability

Strategic Plan 2016-2026

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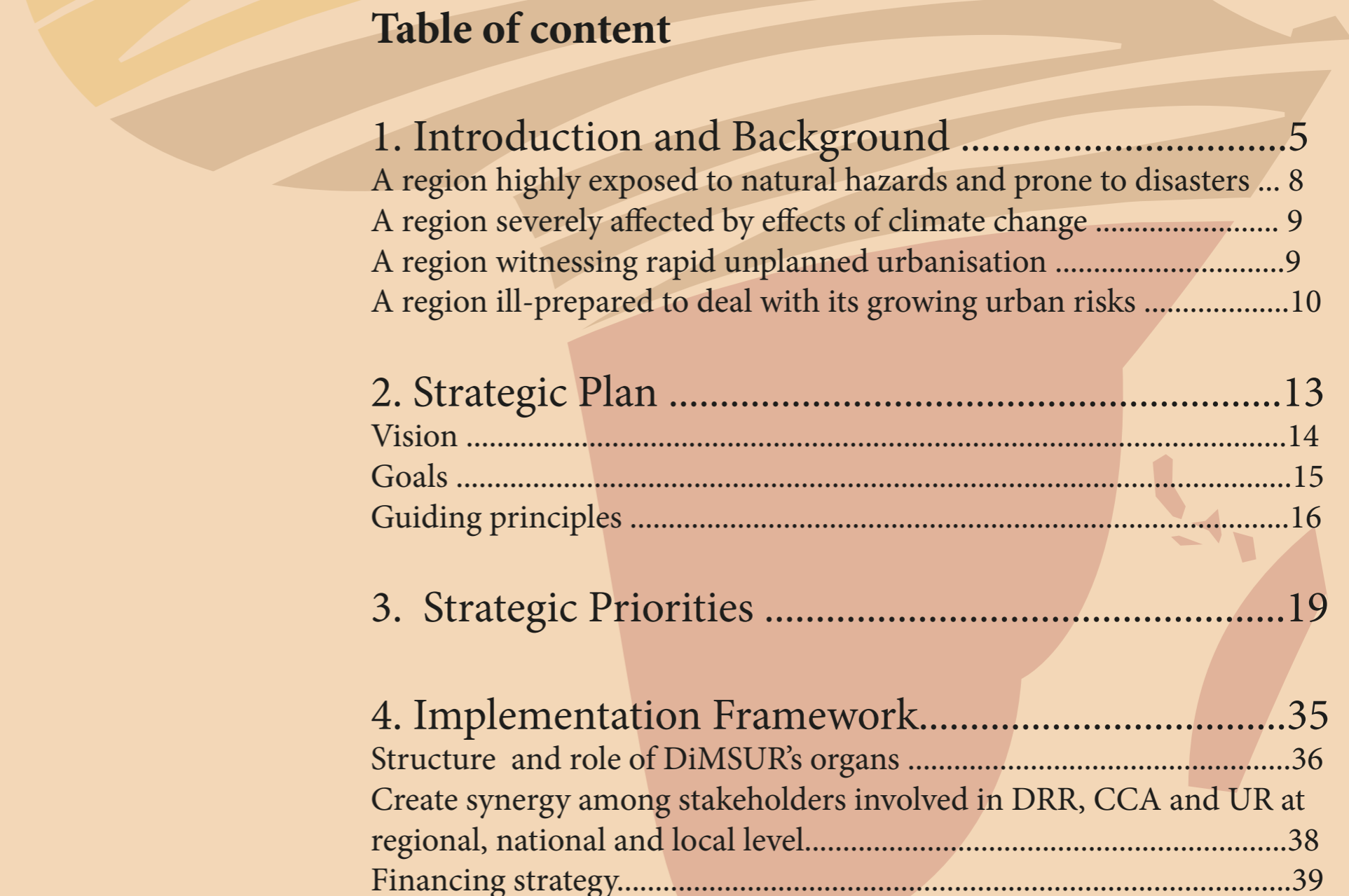
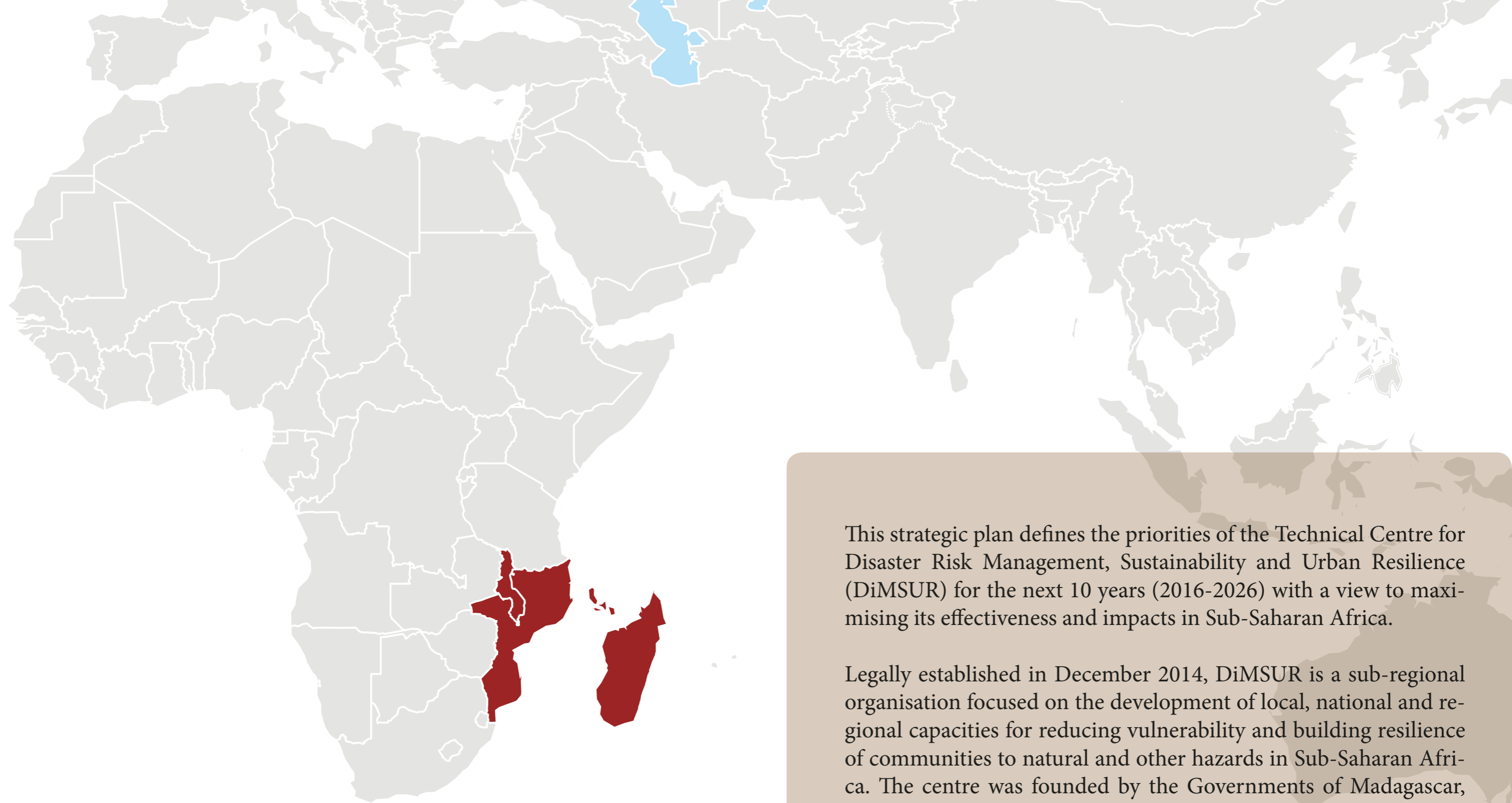


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1.

Introduction & Background



This strategic plan defines the priorities of the Technical Centre for Disaster Risk Management, Sustainability and Urban Resilience (DiMSUR) for the next 10 years (2016-2026) with a view to maximising its effectiveness and impacts in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Legally established in December 2014, DiMSUR is a sub-regional organisation focused on the development of local, national and regional capacities for reducing vulnerability and building resilience of communities to natural and other hazards in Sub-Saharan Africa. The centre was founded by the Governments of Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and the Union of Comoros. Its Headquarter lies in Maputo, Mozambique, and antennas exist in all other member states. DIMSUR operates as a non-profit, autonomous, regional organisation, international in status and non-political in management, staffing and operations.

Introduction

Background

The establishment of DiMSUR and the elaboration of its 10-year strategic plan correspond to the current challenges, gaps and needs of Sub-Saharan Africa regarding disaster risk management, climate change adaptation and resilience building.

A region highly exposed to natural hazards and prone to disasters.

Disasters triggered by natural hazards are becoming an increasing global problem, affecting more than 200 million people annually and severely disrupting lives, livelihoods and economies. Even though the absolute monetary cost of disasters affecting developed economies may be greater, the wider social and local economic costs of disasters affecting developing countries often have a more damaging impact. It is estimated that more than 95% of all disaster-related deaths occur in developing countries. Moreover, in case of disasters, the latter countries suffer economic losses that are twenty times greater, as a percentage of their global internal product, when compared to industrialized nations. As a result

these economies often take years to recover from a single event.

Sub-Saharan Africa in general and Southern Africa in particular are among the regions in the world most exposed to extreme events. Most countries in the region are prone to a wide range of natural hazards such as cyclones, floods, drought but also earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The impacts of those disasters on the population are compounded by natural and anthropogenic threats including climate change, environmental degradation, rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation as well as the lack of capacities and financial resources.

A region severely affected by effects of climate change

Direct and indirect effects of climate change are already being felt across the region and will severely worsen over the next decades. In Sub-Saharan Africa drastic increases in average surface temperature of inland areas, unpredictable and variable rainfalls, changing seasonal patterns as well as sharp rises in average sea levels are projected.

It is also increasingly recognised that climate change contributes to increased intensity and frequency of natural disasters such as bushfires, floods, drought and cyclones. As a result of this phenomenon, hazard probability and disaster risk will be higher in the region leading to sharp increases in losses and damages for societies.

A region witnessing rapid unplanned urbanisation

Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the fastest urbanising regions of the world. Urban population growth is estimated at 1 billion people between 2000 and 2050; adding about 60 times the urban population of 1950. Small and intermediate sized cities host the largest share of the urban population (54%), and will continue to do so in the decades to come. In Southern Africa, the current urbanisation pace will result in an increase of 224% of the urban population in the next 35 years, equalling to approximately 350

million people by 2050 compared to 108 million at present.¹

Due to a weak urban governance capacity to manage this rapid urban growth, much of expansion in the cities and towns of sub-Saharan Africa is taking place spontaneously, outside or in absence of official planning frameworks. As a result, large numbers of urban residents live in informal settlements that are often situated in high-risk areas particularly vulnerable to natural and man-made hazards.



A region ill-prepared to deal with its ever-growing urban risks

Given Sub-Saharan Africa's highly exposed and vulnerable disaster risk profile, a growing number of stakeholders is involved in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and management. However, practitioners often lack technical capacity. As a result, DRR activities in the region remain limited in scope, frequency and scale. The approach is too often sectorial and short-term. The majority of municipal governments in Sub-Saharan Africa does not have the appropriate institutional settings to efficiently reduce risks, build resilience and manage disasters. As a result, most cities and towns in the region are poor-

ly prepared to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change and increased natural hazards. This lack of capacity is one of the main challenges for incorporating disaster risk reduction (DRR) into urban management and building resilience. DiMSUR was established with a view to meeting the needs of the region in terms of disaster risk management (DRM), climate change adaptation (CCA) and urban resilience (UR). The Strategic Plan outlines this vision and defines objectives and key principles to guide its actions.

2.

Strategic Plan

Vision

Be an effective catalyst and major partner for disaster risk management and climate change adaptation in Sub-Saharan Africa contributing to build a more resilient region based on safe and prosperous cities and towns.



Serve as a **Technical Centre** that provides knowledge and expertise in disaster risk management (DRM), climate change adaptation (CCA) and urban resilience (UR) across the region through identification, compilation, preparation, sharing and dissemination of tools, best practices, adequate adaptation/mitigation models and solutions as well as plans and strategies.

01



Function as a major **Service Provider** which delivers tailored qualified technical assistance as well as high-quality and interactive activities trainings with the aim to increasing capacities that reduce climate and disaster risks at different levels with a special focus on cities and towns.

02



Perform as a **Partnership Hub** that promotes exchange of experience in DRM and CCA and advocates for safer cities and a more resilient region.

03

Guiding principles:

Six key principles are guiding DiMSUR work, reflecting its approach and underpinning its actions.

1 Empowerment and Capacity Building

Building capacity and empowering decision makers, practitioners and communities is at the heart of DiMSUR's strategy to improve resilience and reduce risks. DiMSUR intends to position itself as a key service provider delivering tailored capacity-building, training and demonstration activities in DRM, CCA and UR across the continent. DiMSUR aims to support, facilitate, complement and further the development processes underway and existing knowledge in order to ensure capacity retention and use.

2 Solution-oriented Expertise

DiMSUR is committed to deliver expertise to strengthen efforts in reducing Disaster Risk and building Urban Resilience across the region. Demand-led, DiMSUR's technical assistance is available in multiple formats to best align with local needs and time-frames. DiMSUR's pool of experts focuses on ways to identify innovative solutions to complex and challenging issues in order to facilitate purposeful positive change. The goal is to help a wide range of stakeholders at local, regional and national level to move closer towards their goals in relation to the creation of prosperous and safe cities. DiMSUR strongly believes that its solution-oriented expertise goes a long way towards developing more effective institutions, legal frameworks and policies to promote Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change Adaptation and Urban Resilience.

3 Inclusion of the most vulnerable

DiMSUR recognises that disasters, climate change as well as other risks do not affect a country, city or community uniformly but that some groups are more vulnerable than others – such as children, elderly, women, ethnic minorities and low-income households. Committed to paying particular attention to these groups most in need, it focuses on understanding the dynamics at play, identifying the best ways to involve them and ensuring they benefit from its interventions.

4 Partnerships and networks

The challenges of climate change and associated rise in natural hazards and other risks require collective actions. Consequently, DiMSUR prioritises the promotion of strong and long-lasting partnerships between stakeholders, cities, towns, centres, institutions and organisations within and across countries. It involves local authorities, municipal associations, governmental and academic institutions, professional groups, technical centres and think tanks at different

5 Innovation

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6 Mainstream local knowledge through participation

In Sub-Saharan Africa, local knowledge is embedded in culture, social interactions and oral transmissions and is often inaccessible for outsiders. At the same time, it entails crucial information on DRM and CCA. Communities detect changing environmental conditions, have place-based memory of vulnerable areas and possess know-how for effectively responding to recurrent hazards. The documentation, the comprehension and the integration of indigenous knowledge foster alternative perspectives and approaches that often can effectively contribute to reduce risks and build resilience. DiMSUR is committed to support, promote and disseminate traditional good practices across communities, cities and countries to improve resilience of the region as a whole through a bottom-up participatory approach.

3.

DiMSUR Strategic Priorities

Six strategic priorities for the next **10 years** will fulfil DiMSUR's vision on contributing to a safer and more resilient region. These areas of intervention have been carefully selected based on the needs and demands of the four member states and various rounds of consultations with the network partners. DiMSUR will **capitalize existing capacities and promote innovation in each of these strategic priorities by working together and sharing knowledge.**





City Risk Mapping in Zomba, Malawi

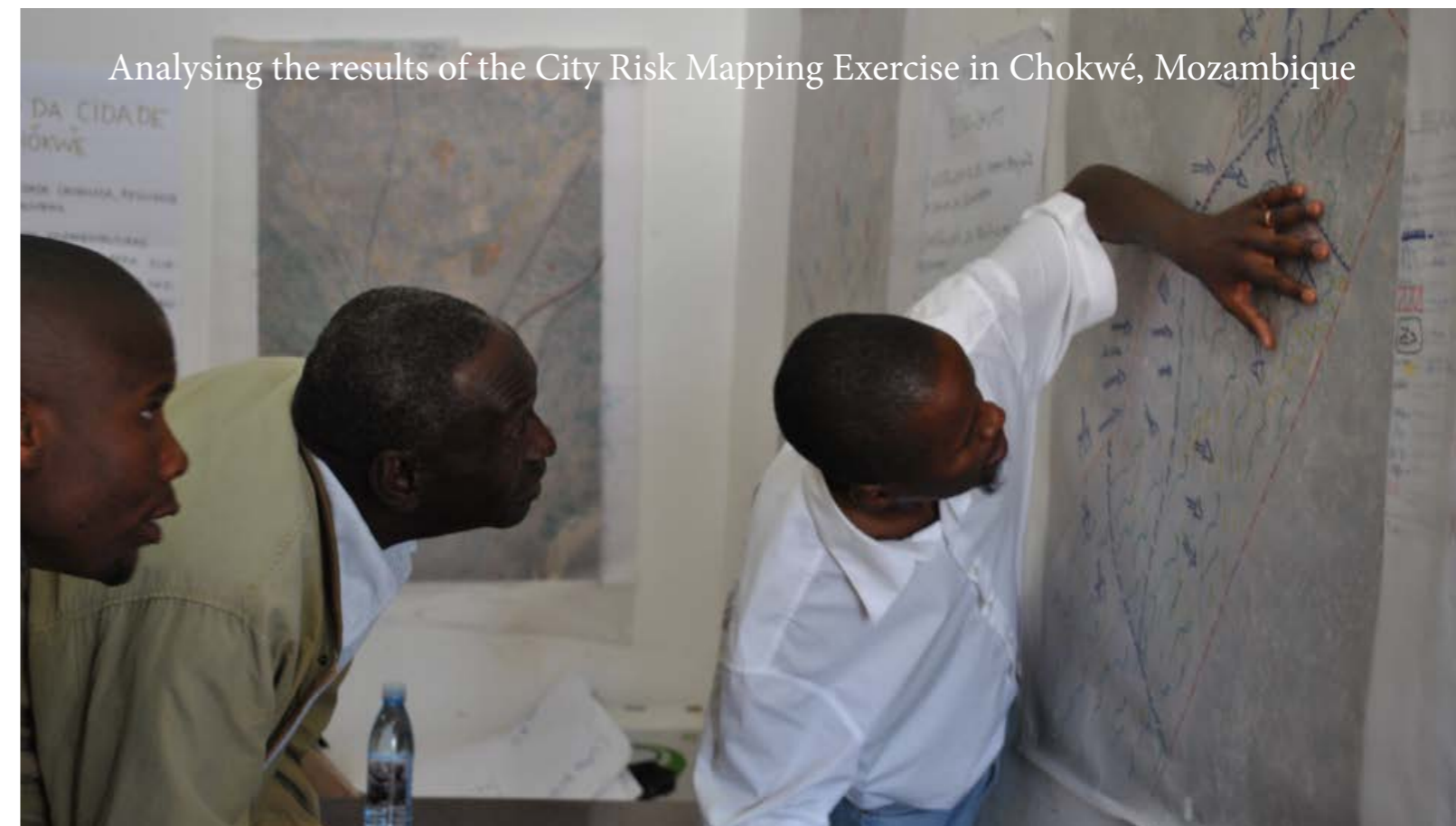
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: Enhancing the identification and understanding of risks at local level

Getting to know the risks of a territory and analysing possible impacts is the first step for identifying effective solutions for reducing risks and building resilience. DiMSUR will work closely with its partners at the local level for undertaking comprehensive risk assessments, coupling methodologies that leverage local knowledge with cutting-edge analysis based on sound scientific grounds.

Methods of achievement:

1. Develop innovative approaches to understand and assess hazard probability and vulnerability, leveraging local knowledge through community consultations and participatory risk mapping; collect valid and reliable data to assess the vulnerability of different social groups in sectors at risk;

2. Strengthen the capacity of countries to collect information to understand and manage the risks of disasters and climate change;
3. Promote assessments and studies that analyse and estimate climate change impacts at local level; contribute to the development of climate change profiles and adaptation plans;
4. Inform and educate policy makers and the population about risks posed by climate change and raise awareness on roles and responsibilities for climate change adaptation ;
5. Promote the understanding of the possible economic impact of disasters and the benefits of investments in resilience building and climate change adaptation;
6. Foster state of the art research on UR and CCA in partnership with universities.



Analysing the results of the City Risk Mapping Exercise in Chokwé, Mozambique

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: Strengthening national and local capacities to manage disaster risks and build resilience

Lack of capacity has been widely highlighted as one of the key challenges to build urban resilience in previous consultations and assessments carried out by DiMSUR. Municipalities, NGOs, community leaders and other stakeholders face the increasing impacts of disasters compounded by unplanned urbanisation and climate change without the required technical skills and tools that will allow for effective disaster risk reduction. DiMSUR aims at empowering key stakeholders to foster capacity building and retention. Regional academic institutions as partners in this process will guarantee that local knowledge will be built upon.



Methods of achievement

1. Enhance local capacities through innovative empowering tools and tailored material to reduce disaster risks, adapt to climate change and build urban resilience;
2. Support governments by providing technical assistance to develop and implement national programs for DRR in risk-prone areas;
3. Develop and institutionalise training activities at national and local levels to strengthen capacities of DRM staff and departments;
4. Support setting up ad-hoc training modules to be integrated in academic and research curricula dedicated to DRM and UR;
5. Promote trainings to reinforce preparedness and sustainable recovery capacities through approaches such as Building Back Better;
6. Provide technical assistance to member states to improve their capacity for evaluating vulnerability and impacts of extreme events.



The City Resilience Action Planning Tool Training in Morondava, Madagascar

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: Building safer and more resilient cities through the provision of qualified technical assistance

Africa will have the worldwide fastest urbanisation rates in the next 10 years. The member countries established DiMSUR as a response to the increasing capacity gap of local governments to respond to a rise in urban risks. The centre is therefore tasked with providing high quality technical assistance to communities, governments and partners in building safer and more resilient cities according to their demands.

Methods of achievement:

- 1.** Develop innovative tools for building urban resilience that allow for the identification of problems and technical solutions, while fostering capacity retention and empowering local actors;
- 2.** Provide technical advice, guidance and services to national and local governments, bilateral and multilateral cooperation institutions and other stakeholders for reducing UR and CCA
- 3.** Support the mainstreaming of risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into planning and practices at urban level by working at the local level;
- 4.** Assist in the development of tailor-made strategies and plans to facilitate financing and resource mobilization for risk reduction and resilience activities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: Establishing networks and partnerships towards better knowledge management and dissemination for urban resilience

Cities and towns in the region face similar challenges to build resilience and reduce risks. A variety of stakeholders is producing, testing and perfecting knowledge and practices that can serve as inspiration for others and benefit from different perspectives. DiMSUR believes that the establishment of an active and inclusive network for dissemination and exchange of knowledge will contribute to building resilience in urban areas.

A group of expert panellists invited to discuss urban resilience challenges during the DiMSUR's session at the 7th Africities Conference in Johannesburg



Methods of achievement:

1. Establish and consolidate an active regional network of partners for collection and dissemination of information, good practices and knowledge;
2. Promote cooperation and formalisation of partnerships between cities to facilitate exchange of experience in DRM, CCA and UR within the region;
3. Strengthen the dialogue and institutional links between national and local levels in DRR and CCA, with particular attention to enhanced coordination for more efficient early warning systems;
4. Promote dialogue and partnerships with national and local authorities, civil society and the private sector for better data collection and knowledge dissemination;
5. Establish partnerships with universities and academic institutions to develop trainings, promote research and foster links between cities and academic institutions;
6. Become an active partner in the global network of similar centres of excellence that are working in the field of DRM, CCA and UR.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: Promoting a culture of safety and resilience by raising awareness and encouraging disaster preparedness and building back better approaches

Sustainable development depends on the society at large, from community members to political leaders. DiMSUR will hence create awareness at all levels on the importance of identifying the risks that threaten us, understanding how we can adapt and planning for future resilient cities and towns.

Resilience Action Planning workshop with young professionals in Comoros



Methods of achievement:

1. Undertake awareness campaigns targeted to different audiences on how to build urban resilience.
2. Promote the integration of key messages on DRR and resilience building into different levels of education curricula;
3. Conduct awareness raising workshops and activities for fostering a culture of urban resilience and inclusive and effective governance for disaster management and climate risk. This takes into account different groups including women, youth and vulnerable groups;
4. Promote participatory and inclusive tools and approaches - such as participatory risk mapping - for building awareness and strengthening the voice of the most vulnerable;
5. Advocate for the Building Back Better approach during post disaster recovery efforts;
6. Design and support the implementation of pilot projects to demonstrate the feasibility of identified solutions to contribute to resilience building and awareness raising at the political level, by mainstreaming local knowledge, innovative and cost-effective technologies, and following the logic of building back better.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6: Reinforcing the institutional, managerial and technical capacity of DiMSUR

DiMSUR has established a solid ground for positioning itself as a key service provider in Sub-Saharan Africa. The centre was created with strong political support through an inclusive process and it will continue developing its organisational capacity by consolidating the managerial and technical structures. This process will reaffirm DiMSUR's role as a well-positioned facilitator for governments and development partners in the field of DRR, CCA and UR.

Methods of achievement:

1. Position DiMSUR as a major service provider for governments and development partners in the fields of DRR, CCA and UR by providing high quality services and building upon its credibility.
2. Ensure financial sustainability of DiMSUR by gradually increasing its capacity to deliver remunerated services and by implementing an effective resource mobilisation strategy.
3. Settle DiMSUR as an independent and well-known institution by strengthening the capacity of its secretariat and enabling the national focal points to efficiently conduct activities in each member state.
4. Promote the DiMSUR DRR, CA and UR initiatives and success stories across Sub-Saharan Africa and globally through regular communication, advocacy and outreach activities.

DiMSUR launched in Maputo, Mozambique (June 2013)



DiMSUR Executive Director's speech during the III Executive Board meeting



4.

Implementation Framework

Structure and role of DiMSUR's organs

Efficient cooperation of the different organs composing DiMSUR (Figure 1) will ensure the success of the 10 Years Strategic Plan. Each organ has a fundamental role to play along the cycle of decision making, planning and implementation of activities, to monitoring and evaluation of results.

Organs composing DiMSUR are as follow:

- **The Conference of Ministers**, formed by Ministers of the member states with national responsibility for DRR and CCA.
- **The Executive Board** composed of National Directors responsible for DRR and CCA from each member State, a representative from the SADC DRR Unit, a representative from UN-Habitat as main facilitator of the DIMSUR initiative, and representatives from civil society and academia.
- **The Consultative Group** consisting of representatives of relevant DRR, CCA and urban resilience stakeholders from member states and the southern Africa region as well as internationally recognised DRR, CCA and urban resilience experts and representatives of international organisations, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors, NGOs and others.
- **The Secretariat** which consists of the Executive Director of the DIMSUR and one National Focal Point per member state.



Regular assessment of DiMSUR's activities is essential to achieve the strategic goals. To this end, monitoring will be undertaken on an annual basis. Each strategic priority refers to indicators to assess the actions carried out by DiMSUR based on annual plans approved by the Executive Board. The Secretariat will collect data on each indicator and present a yearly monitoring report to the Executive Board with a view to inform members about achievements and challenges faced during the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

The evaluation of the Strategic Plan will take place twice: a first time after five years and a second time once the 10-year implementation period is finished. It will compare and measure the achievements with the goals of the Strategic Plan. This will give an opportunity for the Executive Board to review lessons learned and redefine strategic priorities to expand the impact of DiMSUR activities.

Create synergy among stakeholders involved in DRR, CCA and UR at regional, national and local level

Cooperation and coordination will be key elements to create synergies among stakeholders involved in DRR, CCA and UR at regional, national and local level. DiMSUR will facilitate a dynamic network and collect knowledge and experiences to catalyse progresses and innovations in DRR, CCA and UR and allowing for possible joint projects and reciprocal agreements that can expand the earning potential of the centre.

Establishing partnerships with governmental and non-governmental actors will be essential to set up joint activities and work efficiently (i) to strengthen legal frameworks and regulations, (ii) to develop a sustainable strategy for funding DRR, CCA and UR and (iii) to disseminate local experiences and good practices tailored to the region's specific issues through a bottom-up approach.

Financing strategy

UN-Habitat, GFDRR and ACP-EU provided financial support for the launch of the initiative DiMSUR. One of the overall goals of the 10 Years Strategic Plan is to elaborate a financial strategy to ensure DiMSUR's financial sustainability with a view to independently implementing activities to achieve its vision.

Sustainability holds the first place of concern for the 10 Years Strategic Plan. DiMSUR has the ambition to operate independently and become a sustainable institution over time. To this end, DiMSUR will establish its credibility as a viable income generator in order to sustain itself. It will also be important to reduce as much as possible the financial dependency from donors to cover core costs, their contribution for implementing innovative projects, carry out critical studies, providing technical assistance to needed partners, among other activities, while keeping a close contact with bi/multilateral donor organisations.

The Secretariat will be responsible for designing a resource mobilisation strategy including contributions from its members states, partnerships with national, regional and international agencies and NGOs, as well as income generating activities with the aim of decreasing dependence on contributions from external donors over time.



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