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AND

PATRICIA MARY REID'S MEMORIAL LECTURE

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El Niño-induced drought disaster: a critical juncture for a paradigm shift in disaster risk reduction approaches in Southern Africa?

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1. Introduction

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development, Ambassador Dr. Machivenyika Mapuranga, Pro-Vice Chancellor of National University of Science and Technology, Dr. Hlatshwayo, His Worship, the Mayor of Victoria Falls, Mr. Sifiso Mpfofu, the Dean of Commerce, Mr. Web Ndlovu, the Director of the Institute of Development Studies at NUST, Dr. Peter Nkala, Prof. Dewald van Niekerk, the Director of the African Centre for Disaster Studies, North-West University, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends, I am honoured to join you today in this Third Biennial Conference of the Southern Africa Society for Disaster Risk Reduction (SASDiR).

This conference is important for at least two things. First, it provides a lecture that celebrates the commitment of Pat Reid, one of the distinguished professionals in the field of disaster risk reduction (DRR). Pat's work reminds us to go an extra mile to move the DRR agenda forward as an academic subject, as a profession and most importantly to ensure community resilience to disasters. I should commend Prof. Dewald Niekerk for keeping Pat's dreams alive through the work he has pioneered not only in Southern Africa but the world over.

Secondly, we are all aware that this Thursday 13th October is this year's International Disaster Day. This year's theme is 'Live to Tell'. This conference is living to tell by sharing disaster knowledge and experiences, particularly in the face of disasters that are exacerbated by climate change. We therefore join the world to acknowledge the importance of this day.

When I saw the theme of this conference, it reminded me of the current regional disaster which has been induced by the El Niño phenomenon. I thought about this disaster, partly because, to some extent, I have been involved in regional events such as post-season meetings, conferences, research and consultancy. As I was reflecting on this I was struck by several similarities between the past events of the same magnitude such as the 1992 drought, which is still fresh in people's minds. But I also reflected on the impact of mega disasters across the world in initiating paradigm shifts in the DRR. I asked myself a question: *Will this El Niño-induced disaster be one of the critical junctures that will initiate a paradigm shift in disaster risk reduction approaches in the SADC region?*

But what is SADC? The Southern African Development Community comprises 15 countries – Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Namibia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. I will not focus on member States that make up SADC but will focus on SADC as a regional body. Before the signing of the SADC Treaty in 1992, the organisation was known as Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). SADCC, formed in 1980, was a group of Frontline States that fought for independence from colonial rule. The main aim of SADCC was to reduce economic dependence from South Africa, protest against apartheid and coordinate aid (Hwang, 2007). With the reduction of security threats following the end of the Cold War, SADCC was transformed to Southern African Development Community (SADC) through the Windhoek Treaty of 1992. Two years later, South Africa joined SADC following the end of 'apartheid'.

SADC's main objectives are economic development, poverty reduction, regional integration, maintaining security and stability in the region, and the promotion of common political values and institutions (SADC, 1990). However to achieve these objectives, SADC has to contend with disasters which may derail the development gains. Of the multitude of hazards, the SADC region mainly experiences hydro-meteorological hazards, particularly drought and floods, which trigger food insecurity and health-related disasters.

This year, 2016, the SADC region has experienced a historic El Niño-induced drought, which has triggered a disaster that has been described as the worst in 35 years. Approximately 40 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, with 23 million of this population requiring immediate humanitarian assistance. Nearly 2.7 million children are currently suffering from malnutrition in the region. There is a cereal shortfall of approximately 9.3 million tonnes in production. Only Zambia was projected to have a surplus of 835,000 tonnes of cereal. At least 643,000 livestock deaths have been reported in Botswana, Swaziland, South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe due to lack of pasture, lack of water and disease outbreaks. Of the 15 SADC countries, 10 are severely affected by the disaster. As a result, SADC has declared a state of a regional disaster in June 2016 and appealed for USD2.4 billion for the support of the humanitarian needs of the affected population in seven countries Angola, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. This cost is above the SADC's annual humanitarian costs of US$1 billion / year.

Given this is an unprecedented disaster; many observers will ask whether this disaster is a critical juncture, where SADC will significantly change from the current 'business-as-usual' disaster management practices to disaster resilience capacity development. This seems like a reasonable question, given that we know climate change will most prominently make itself felt through extreme weather and by affecting the hydrological cycle. And the evidence would seem to support the notion that climate change did play some role in exacerbating the El Niño condition that caused the drought, and it will most likely do the same to the anticipated La Niña condition in 2016/17 season.

2. The critical juncture

The negative impact of disasters can create awareness of risks people face and the root causes of their vulnerability or lack of resilience. The physical and social disruption that are accompanied by disaster events often open up the weaknesses of entrenched status quo, with the economic, social, and political systems coming under scrutiny for putting people at risk. In other words, disasters can provide a 'critical juncture' (Collier & Collier, 1991) to catalyse and trigger change in socio-ecological systems (Pelling & Dill, 2009). Drawing on the study of eight Latin American countries, Collier and Collier define a critical juncture is "a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries, or units of analysis, which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies" (Collier & Collier, 1991:29). On the basis of a comparative study of the political development of Central America, Mahoney (2002: 4) defines a critical juncture as "choice point when a particular option is adopted among two or more alternatives," defined by antecedent historical conditions. Of particular significance is Mahoney's emphasis on the connection between critical junctures and path-dependent processes. The critical point here is that "once a particular option is selected, it becomes progressively more difficult to return to the initial

point when multiple alternatives were still available. Put differently, a critical juncture is a watershed or a turning point, which changes the course of history.

However the critical juncture is not without critics. Capoccia and Kelemen (2007) notes that the concept of critical juncture lacks conceptual consistency and fails to provide adequate methodological guidance to those who would invoke the critical junctures framework. Four crucial areas stand out. First, some arguments invoking critical junctures fail to specify the unit of analysis with respect to which the juncture is argued to be critical. Second, the literature provides very little guidance on how to deal with time horizons in historical institutionalist arguments that involve critical junctures. The duration of the critical juncture must be brief relative to the duration of the path-dependent process that it initiates. However, treating an entire decade as a critical juncture with respect to an outcome observed a century later might be sensible. But it would clearly not be sensible to consider a decade-long period a critical juncture with respect to an outcome observed only one year later. The duration of a critical juncture has an impact on actors to act more freely and for the consequences of their actions to have a larger impact than in normal times: the longer the juncture, the higher the probability that political decisions will be constrained by some re-emerging structural constraints. Third, critical junctures are too often equated with moments of change. However, as counterintuitive as it may seem, change is not a necessary element of a critical juncture. Finally, much of the existing literature draws on analogies from institutional economics that obscure the role of power asymmetries during critical junctures.

3. Disasters as critical junctures

If the political impacts of "natural" disasters can be observed, in acts of suppression as well as change, then it be might also possible to identify the critical junctures, tipping points, critical historical moments or broader influences on disaster risk reduction systems that determine the direction and significance of change. Pelling and Dill (2006) identify some examples where disasters created legacies:

(a) Following the government of Morocco's poor response to the earthquake of February 2004, people capitalised on this disaster event to express their long history of resistance to a succession of colonial and national rulers. More importantly, the earthquake symbolized perceived inequality and partiality in the dominant regime.

(b) The 2005 Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, United States, provides another example where a disaster became a critical juncture. The impact of the 2005 Hurricane Katrina was higher among the poor and elderly African-American sparked the eruption of a national socio-political crisis. Not only did the selective impact of Hurricane Katrina manifest in race and class discrimination in the United States. It also revealed that cronyism within the Bush administration pre-disaster.

(c) Similarly, civil societies' response to Hurricane Mitch of 1998 created a new political space and strengthened new political alliances at the regional level. Such influences may last temporarily over the reconstruction or relief period, but they could also have long-term political influences on the developments that take place, therefore, allowing access to a political power.

(d) The aftermath of the Mexico City Earthquake in 1985 provides an outstanding example of the power of disasters in creating a lasting legacy. Following this earthquake, various famous activists were involved in reconstruction, and they joined the city and national politics enabling to a reformed governmental structure of the city, where the ruling party had to step down after a 70-year ruling.

But, how will determine whether the El Niño disaster is a critical juncture? The priorities of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (understanding risk, governance, resilience and response and recovery) can be used as a benchmark. This requires baseline data on the status of DRR prior to and post-El Niño-induced disaster activities using the SFDRR priorities. However, 'before and after' Eli Niño disasters assessments may be misleading particularly considering that the there is a strong 'push' for countries and regions to implement SFDRR – there might be a problem of attribution. Using 'with and without' El Niño disaster assessments may reveal the net contribution of this disaster to the paradigm shift in DRR in Southern Africa.

4. Discursive framing of disaster risk reduction

There has been limited attention, however, to consider the discursive framing of the disaster terms, to unpack the cultural values that underpin the term, where some world regions are imagined as disastrous. We are reminded here by Naomi Chomsky and Ferdinand de Saussure, who in their very different ways, opened up new avenues for linguistic analysis. Following their linguistic analysis, 'discourse as power' has indeed become commonplace. But, Friedrich Nietzsche's is credited for being one of the early scholars of discourse analysis to vest the speaker, rather than the hearer, with the power to determine meaning:

> The right of masters to confer names extends so far that one should allow oneself to grasp the origin of language itself as the expression of the power of the rulers.

> (Delueze, 1983, cited by Middleton & O'Keefe, 2001)

Discourse analysis has found currency in extreme post-structuralist relativism, with Michel Foucault and Jacques Derida being amongst the most cited philosophers. Discourses are thought of as collections of interrelated texts and practices "that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1979:49). Not only is discourse a way of "representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (Fairclough, 1992:64). Instead, it is a way of using texts and practices to represent people, events, ideas, and things. But post-structuralism should not be accepted uncritically. If we accept it uncritically, Middleton and O'Keefe (2001:19) argue, "then it leads to a deterministic account of the world in which exchanges between differing cultures and classes cannot be of understanding, but only of dominance. Because extreme forms of post-structuralism is not susceptible to categories imposed by capital's social conditioning, it does not reject otherness so much as it renders it irrelevant. Along this line of reasoning, categories such as gender, class and ethnicity cannot be understood analytically for the same reason (Middleton & O'Keefe, 2001). Whatever arguments here, interpretation of cognition is a function of language through which a dominant discourse is mediated. The dominant discourse provides a clear language for talking about a topic, the constitutive knowledge of a topic, and the normative standard for institutionalizing practices and

reproducing behaviour (Hardy & Maguire, 2010). Thus, the texts and practices around disaster, risk, hazard, vulnerability and resilience, draw on one another in well-established ways to construct convergent and widely shared descriptions and explanations (Phillips *et al.*, 2004) of disaster risk reduction.

The UNISDR reports show that SADC countries have generally embraced the DRR language. The study by UNECA on DRR mainstreaming shows that most countries in the region have enacted legal and institutional frameworks that clearly embody the global DRR discourse contained in the HFA and the SDRR. In most countries the disaster management frameworks legal frameworks have been repealed and have now assumed titles such as Disaster Management Act (e.g. South Africa, 2002; Swaziland, 2006; Zambia, 2010, Tanzania, 2014), Disaster Risk Management Act (Namibia, 2012). Disappointingly Zimbabwe appears to be lagging behind as it still has the 1989 Civil Protection Act of the Cold War period. While these documents are local products and take into account local contexts, the framing is not local; it has a western framing. Are these not colonial documents authored by us? Is the world not still grappling to understand what risk, hazard, vulnerability and resilience mean? Some countries in the region are developing resilience initiatives such as Malawi, Lesotho and Zimbabwe, with the aim of mainstreaming resilience approaches and in developing national resilience strategies (SADC, 2016:29). For example, Zimbabwe's Resilience Strategic Framework developed in March 2015 focused on improving food and nutrition security, sustainable livelihoods and capacities to manage risks, increasing access to basic social services, social protection, mainstreaming resilience in sector policies and risk financing. In some local languages these terms mean one and the same thing. How can we initiate an "accelerated" critical juncture when we do not understand the basic terminology?

Going by SADC's description, the El Niño-induced drought fits with the UNISDR (2009) definition of a disaster, which is:

> "A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources".

Indeed, the El Niño drought has triggered a disaster that has seriously disrupted the functioning of the Southern African community. Although it is unknown whether there are any human losses, it is clear there is widespread material, economic and environmental losses and impacts, which exceed the ability of the Southern African community to cope using its own resources. While the UNISDR (2009) definition has currency in the disaster theory and practice, it does not lead us to the problematisation of disaster causation; its focus is on the effects or impact of a disaster. Carr (1932:211) reminds us that human beings define a disaster not by nature.

> Not every windstorm, earth tremor, or rush of water is a catastrophe. A catastrophe is known by its works; that is to say, by the occurrence of a disaster. So long as the ship rides out of the storm, so long as the city resists the earth-shocks, so long as the levees hold, there is no disaster. It is the collapse of the cultural protection that constitutes the disaster proper.

UNISDR's (2009) definition can be contrasted with Carr's (1932) definition. The UNISDR focuses on the symptoms of a disaster and therefore does not allocate responsibility of who causes the disaster. In contrast, Carr (1932) understands disasters are a result of the collapse of cultural protection; they are neither Acts of God nor Acts of Nature or other supernatural forces, which has led to the rejection environmental determinism as an explanation of disaster causation. Thus, if the cultural protection does not collapse when a shock or stress occurs, then the cultural protection mechanisms are functionally adequate or resilient. Carr's notion of a disaster has been picked by several scholars and there has been no shortage of the debate on the (dis)connections between risk, hazard, vulnerability and resilience. The question for Southern Africa is that did they declare a drought as a disaster, drought disaster or food insecurity as a disaster? They declared it a regional drought disaster (SADC, 2016:2). But is the drought a disaster in itself? This distinction is extremely important. Declaring drought as a disaster means that we have not shifted from viewing as hazards per se, and therefore the disaster is an Act of God or Nature.

In his reflection on the international policy experience since the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) in 1989, Briceno (2015) reminds why scholars over the past 2.5 decades increasingly avoid speaking about "natural disasters" and rather refer only to "disasters" or "natural hazards". More specifically, preferred expressions are "disasters triggered by "natural hazards" or "disasters due to vulnerability to natural hazards". In 1994, Blaikie and his colleagues, provide a graphic representation, through their Pressure and Release model of how a hazard and vulnerability intersect in space to cause a disaster. Disasters are a combination of three factors – the hazard (e.g. extreme drought) our physical and economic exposure to that hazard (e.g. living in a floodplain), and our social vulnerability to that hazard (e.g. poverty). In this regard, a hazard can only become a disaster if we fail to address our underlying vulnerabilities (Blaikie *et al.*, 1994). Disasters are socially constructed; they are political.

Indeed, the insights on vulnerability remind us that failing to politicise disaster events would be irresponsible for the responsible authorities to account for its causes and consequences. However, further examination of the concept of vulnerability has exposed it as a deficit, a supply-driven rather than a demand-driven model, where people affected by disasters are viewed as helpless and should be foisted with Western goods and services. This has given rise to the concept of resilience, which provides a distinction from the traditional reactive, top-down approaches to disaster risk reduction associated with the vulnerability model. Resilience has been widely contested term. While the elusiveness of resilience has become nosier and louder over the past decade, there appears to be some convergence on its essence. The generally understanding of resilience tends to be associated with "bounce-back" ability to express the capacity of an individual, community, country, region, or system to cope positively with rapid-onset shocks or significant and protracted sources of stress arising from natural and anthropogenic hazards (Manyena, 2006; Alexander, 2013; Matyas & Pelling, 2015). This trend is associated with the proactive approach of harnessing human agency, so that affected communities exercise some sort of power (Giddens, 1984) to reconstruct the structures that cause disasters in the first place. Nonetheless, there is need for caution. Viewing resilience and vulnerability as diametrically opposed risks forming blind spots for comprehensive view of disaster risk reduction. The two concepts have some overlaps between them. Thus, although the debate on resilience may not be entirely novel given that community continuity over generations is partly premised on their resilience

(Alexander, 2013) in many ways, it helps us to obtain a complete understanding of the connections between risk, hazard, vulnerability and resilience (Manyena, 2006).

But there is strong reason why vulnerability and resilience continue to occupy space in the disaster risk reduction debate. These two concepts help us unpack the disaster and development connections. Disaster and development are two sides of the same coin in that today's disasters are yesterday's unaddressed development problems and today's development problems are unaddressed disaster risk reduction problems. Manyena (2016) states that the integration of the disaster narrative with that of development is not new. Since the 1970s, disasters have been recognized as indicators of unsolved development problems or failed development, which increase people's vulnerability to natural hazards, including climate-related hazards (O'Keefe *et al.*, 1976; Cuny, 1983; McEntire, 2004; Collins, 2009; Middleton & O'Keefe, 1998). Similarly, flawed development processes can increase vulnerability to disasters through the creation and exposure of communities to new risks generated by investment decisions both public and private (O'Keefe *et al.*, 1976; Cuny, 1983). Emerging from this narrative is a related argument about integrating DRR and CCA, whose commonalities—both deal with risk reduction resulting from hazards, exposure, and vulnerability—have been recognized by many publications and conferences (Schipper & Pelling, 2006; Conway & Schipper, 2011; Kelman, 2015). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2014), however, while clearly recognizing the relationship between DRR and CCA, tends to view DRR actions as complementary or add-on, rather than as integral, along with CCA, in an overarching framework.

The global disaster policy, which has been translated to national levels, recognises the role of vulnerability in the disaster causation. The priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action (policy, early warning systems, knowledge, underlying risk and response) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (understanding risk, governance, resilience and response and recovery) to a larger extent capture the element of vulnerability. However, these policies do not include conflict, climate change and HIV and AIDS, yet these are some of the underlying elements of vulnerability to disasters. Fragmentation of the UN system is translated at the regional and national levels.

The term disaster is defined from a Western cultural standpoint, which provides justification of Western interference and intrusion into their affairs because a disaster has been declared and therefore opens the country to the world through the appeal. The term disaster is (mis)appropriated by the Western countries (Europe and North America) but increasingly the Chinese to ensure their control of the developing world. Thus, the term disaster is disastrous as it functions to legitimise and give meaning to the main ideologies and present a singular story to the exclusion of other stories. So is the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Disaster Response Law initiative. The proposed Disaster Response Laws so "governments can avoid needless delays in the dissemination of humanitarian relief while at the same time ensuring better coordination and quality of the assistance provided"[1] have already been adopted by some governments. Given the delays that are encountered in the transit of humanitarian goods and services between and within countries when a disaster strikes, there is demand for this IFRC initiative. What may not be apparent from this IFRC initiative is that it plays into the

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[1] See http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/idrl/idrl-guidelines

hands of the Western imperialism as it will mean the West will walk into the countries unimpeded and intrude into the affairs of a sovereign nation state.

While the debate on the holes and fractures in the discursive framing of the term disaster is by no means less important, there is merit in rejecting the notion of disasters as being Acts of God or Acts of Nature, which has some resonate with environmental determinism as an explanation of disaster causation. From Blaikie *et al.* (1994) Pressure and Release model, and the like-minded scholars, the root causes of disasters lie in the social arena – disasters are political. They are structural. There is a political economy of disaster causation. There are several examples of this. The 1976 Guatemala earthquake loss of lives and property damage was skewed towards the poor (Blaikie *et al.*, 1994). Hurricane Katrina demonstrates that even in the developed world disaster causation lie in the structure where those disadvantaged by race, class and ethnicity, mainly the African-Americans suffered disproportionate hardships (Hartman & Squires, 2006). Thus, if we fail to politicize disasters it simply means we are reaffirming the status quo that facilitated the disaster in the first place.

Central to the disaster framing of disaster causation is the concept of risk, which is generally thought of as the combination of the probability of an event and its negative consequences (UNISDR, 2009). First used in seventeenth century Europe, risk is an abstract and endemically contested concept; it is a calculation, a commodity, capital, a government technique, a problem, a thrill, a source of profit and freedom, an objective and subjective construct, a worry, a means of colonising, controlling and governing the present and the future, and so on (Garland, 2003). The *At Risk Equation*, [Disaster] Risk = Hazard x Vulnerability / Capacity or Resilience, has become the cornerstone of disaster logic. The Sendai Framework 2015-2030 for example, uses risk generically, implicitly assuming that stakeholders both global and local have a shared meaning of the term. Yet, the term risk may not exist in other languages, and maybe used interchangeably with disaster, danger and vulnerability. Clearly, a systematic comparison of local and global disaster discourses might both broaden and challenge the epistemological assumptions underpinning disaster research and scholarship. Thus, risk has become an instrument for discursively framing public meaning of threats and uncertainty, mainly legitimized through science, technology, and innovation (Manyena, 2016).

5. Lessons learned from history

The SADC Member States have some experience in drought mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. This drought-induced disaster is not the first of its kind. Fresh in the minds of people is the 1992 drought, which cost US$4 billion. It was the most extreme drought of the 20th Century (Manatsa *et al.*, 2008). They have systems in place. Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe, for example have declared a state of national disaster, which has been triggered by the drought. It is reported that on the basis of rapid and in-depth assessments, most Member States have scaled up their social safety-net programmes, re-allocation of national resources to the meet the needs of affected populations. Sector platforms or cluster coordination mechanisms have been activated.

Similarly, at the regional level, response mechanisms have been initiated. However, this is not an easy task. While a regional appeal has been launched by SADC, it is worrying to

note that this drought to receive attention, it was a result of advocacy work mainly from UN agencies (RIASCO), NGOs and donors. This advocacy work culminated into the watershed meeting held on 26-27 February in Johannesburg. Attended by Member States, RIASCO, NGOs and Civil Society Organisation representatives, the meeting drew up a road-map, which culminated, into the Regional Appeal. Following this, the SADC El Niño Logistics and Coordination Team was set up at the Secretariat to coordinate regional response in close collaboration with Member States supported by international cooperating partners. Given SADC is developing the Regional Preparedness and Response Strategy, one would imagine this structure comes at the critical moment and transition to SADC Operation Centre. In this way, this disaster would have initiated a legacy. This might be reinforced by the predicted La Niña events, where floods are expected this rainy season, which may put more pressure on SADC to organise its preparedness and response mechanisms.

The test whether this disaster is a critical juncture will also be measured by the attention it will receive at the impending African DRR Platform to be held at the end of November this year. While it might not be comparable to the 2004 Boxing Day Southeast Asia Tsunami, we are reminded how this disaster hijacked the agenda of World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005. As result, several decisions were made which have made significant improvements to disaster risk reduction in Southeast Asia. It remains to be seen whether the Mauritius conference will come up with concrete steps to deal with food insecurity and other secondary disasters triggered by El Niño and La Niña events.

6. Institutionalisation of Disaster Risk Reduction

Why focus on institutions when examining whether a disaster will create a critical juncture? Institutions referred here are those that are linked with the evolution of rules and norms closely linked to disaster risk reduction. These institutions can either enable or disenable action. They can provide opportunities or barriers to various implementation actions to reduce drought risks and environmental hazards more widely. Institutions also help frame and conceptualize knowledge and provide the vehicles, though, for example, regulatory, policy, and legal frameworks through which interventions, responses, and feedbacks of management and action occur (Vogel *et al.*, 2009). Vogel *et al.* (2009) further claim that the business-as-usual approach is often adopted to manage droughts, often making the same recourse to official structures, for example, and departments of agriculture and water affairs.

The institutionalisation of cooperation on DRR in SADC is comparatively low. It is apparent that SADC has little obligation and few procedures for implementation of DRR. After the floods which have affected the SADC region, especially the Cyclone Eline-induced floods of 2000, which had a devastating impact on Mozambique, it became clear that there was need to prepare for a wide range of threats, and particularly those caused the sudden-onset (rapid onset) threats. It was in recognition of these threats, that SADC Council of Ministers established a Disaster Management Technical Committee in August 2000. Subsequent to the establishment of the Disaster Management Technical Committee, a SADC Disaster Management Strategy was developed and approved in 2001, the first of its kind in the African Region. This ushered an integrated regional approach to disaster management in SADC. However, there was general lack of cooperation by Member States

to implement the framework, mainly because SADC is does not have a Parliament nor is it an authority and therefore does not have mechanisms to make Member States account.

> SADC still experiences lack of compliance to, domestication and implementation of the agreed set of rules policies and principles. Agreeing to a regional Treaty implies that the sovereign states submit themselves to norms, which are adopted at that higher level of governance. So far, the SADC Secretariat does not have the powers or the clout to enforce compliance and implementation of the Treaty to the member states. Consequently, member states continue to pursue their specific national interests without much consideration to their obligations and commitments at regional level.

> … the Secretariat should have been in a position to draw member states to account; yet it does not have such mandate. Therefore, civil society is calling for transformation of the SADC Secretariat to a SADC Regional Authority with full competences to develop policies and direct program implementation, staffed with highly competent and skilled people, accountable to the Regional Parliament. Such a Regional Authority would be an added advantage important pillar for regional governance with sound democratic tenets and system of checks and balances. The competences, functions and the structures of the Authority are issues that must be solemnly discussed with all the stakeholders in SADC as it has implications for the future of the region and its people.

> SADC We want Campaign (2016)

The lack of motivation to cooperate on the implementation of the 2001 framework is also reflected in the outsourcing the implementation of the framework to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) instead of the SADC Secretariat (Hollis, 2015:43).

The lack of implementation of the 2001 Disaster Management Framework motivated a second revision in 2006 and was translated into the SADC Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Strategic Plan 2006-2010. The review of the SADC Disaster Management Strategy was sanctioned by the SADC Disaster Management Technical Committee at its meeting held in Windhoek, Namibia, in September 2005. Among others, the review was meant to align the SADC DRR Strategy with SADC's overall strategic development goals that were outlined in the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), the Strategic Indicative Plan of the Organ (SIPO), the priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015) and the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.

To ensure the effective implementation and coordination of Disaster Risk Reduction, the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Programme was established in 2008, with the Directorate of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs charged with its implementation. In line with this development, in 2009 SADC established a SADC Disaster Risk Reduction Unit (DRRU) with support from the UNISDR and the World Bank Global Fund Facility. Despite the establishment DRRU, it has remained project-based, with resources being mobilised with the project gestation period, with its operations remaining unsustainable.

Besides, the DRRU is almost hidden in the SADC bureaucratic system; it is located in Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Affairs (Organ). However, locating DRRU in the Organ might be a plausible idea for at least two reasons. Firstly, Regional Early Warning Centre (REWC), which monitors political, security and socio-economic threats in the region, is located in the Organ. If the role of REWC is broadened to DRR, it could make a significant contribution to coordination of emergency preparedness, responses and information exchange. The downside of locating the DRRU in the Organ reinforces the civil defence approaches where disaster management was dominated by militarised command and control structures, which were ideologically linked to the Cold War. For sure, the disaster paradigm, which is clearly expressed by the Sendai Framework, has shifted from a securitised hazard and defence focus to disaster risk reduction. The multi-hazard, multi-vulnerability, multisector and multi-resilience focus has broadened the agenda to encompass many aspects that fall outside the mandate of the Organ. Indeed, other key players on the DRR agenda within the SADC Secretariat are placed outside the Organ. These include Climate Services Centre, Water Division, Transport, Environment and Sustainable Development, Health, Education, Agriculture and Food Security. Placing the DRRU in a higher office such as the Executive Secretary's office might not only make the DRRU more visible but also make the DRR coordination more effective than locating it in the Organ. Such a move would be consistent with best practice as noted by UNISDR (2010) study which found that most Member States where Disaster Management were placed in highest offices such as Office of the President, Vice President or Office of the Prime Minister to facilitate cooperation which is essential for effective coordination.

7. Role of research

Science has a crucial role not only in initiating the critical juncture in disaster risk reduction but also to support policy and practice. The role of science and technology is critical in the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. In January 2016, UNISDR hosted the first ever Science and Technology conference on the implementation of the SFDRR. I am intrigued by the width and depth of the research papers that have been lined up for this conference.

What I am excited about is that some of these research papers focus on the proactive response to disaster risk management. A reactive response, which characterises disaster risk management, including drought management in Southern Africa could be partly rooted in the perception and conceptualisation of drought hazards and their impacts. The Early Warning Systems are very strongly coupled to and shaped by hydrological and meteorological criteria and indicators that describe droughts with few attempts to include socioeconomic indicators such as those coupled to wider vulnerability assessment. Drought policy and management has also traditionally been very strongly influenced by the soil sciences, meteorology, and the agricultural sciences (e.g., crop production), with less attention given to devising social and economic indicators of drought.

8. Conclusion

It is clear that for the 2016 El Niño-induced disaster, despite its magnitude, might not be a game-changer in disaster risk reduction policy and practice in the SADC region. If we agree that disasters offer opportunities to expose the root causes of disasters, then the people of

the SADC region should draw the attention of the leadership to deal with these issues. We cannot in this age allow governments or regional bodies off the hook when they create structures that increased people's vulnerability to disasters. Why populations are made more vulnerable to hazards by poor government policies and misguided development projects? Why should we blame disaster as an "Act of God?" when their policies entrench poverty? Civil society organisations should initiate massive awareness campaigns to ensure disaster risk reduction is becomes one of the central elements of the social contract. In this way, political parties will be held accountable for exposing their citizens to disasters should these occur during their tenure in government.

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