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STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN AND PACIFIC STATES, H.E. MR. GEORGES REBELO PINTO CHIKOTI ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Brussels, 13 October 2021/OACPS: Secretary-General, H.E. George Rebelo Pinto Chikoti, in solidarity with Member States of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), reaffirms the global commitment of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) to commemorate 13 October 2021 as *the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction*, and to celebrate the 2021 theme to, 'Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the present Framework by 2030'.

The 79 members and six regions of the OACPS uphold international efforts to support policies and programmes to facilitate action to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular, SDG 13, 'to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact'. The OACPS is mindful that 2021 marks the sixth global acknowledgement of the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction*, adopted by the UNGA in March 2015, at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan.

Secretary-General Chikoti recalls that on this historic occasion, members of the OACPS, in solidarity with United Nations (UN) Member States, resolved to: (i) reduce disaster mortality; (ii) reduce the number of people affected by disasters; (iii) reduce direct economic losses; (iv) reduce damage to critical infrastructure; (v) increase the number of national and local strategies for disaster risk reduction; (vi) enhance international cooperation to developing countries; and (vii) boost the availability of, and access to multi-hazard Early Warning Systems.

Secretary-General Chikoti recognises that the celebration of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2021 takes place on the eve of the 26th Session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26). He therefore takes this opportunity to applaud, encourage and acknowledge the ongoing efforts of Member States of the OACPS to establish national disaster risk reduction strategies, as part of the wider effort to manage vulnerable and fragile economies and to consolidate and achieve OACPS objectives for sustainable development, mindful of the increasing threats caused by climate change and disaster risks.

In this regard it is imperative that Members of the OACPS, particularly those with middle- or high-income status, receive concessional funding and technical resources, to boost the implementation of their national sustainable development strategies and achieve the SDGs. Such international attention and support is urgently needed if we are to reduce the impacts and costs of disasters, whether from climate change or other hazard risks, to our property, peoples and place, now and in the future.

Emphasising that the Members of the OACPS are among the most likely to be affected and hazard-prone countries in the world, the OACPS Secretary-General signals the actions taken to promote climate change mitigation. Among these, he cites several partnerships with the European Union (EU), which has invested in climate action and resilience, under the 11th EDF Intra-ACP. These include initiatives such as the Intra-ACP EU Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Programme (GCCA+), launched in 2012; the Intra-ACP Climate Services and Related Applications Programme (ClimSA), launched in 2021; and the

11th EDF Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Programme - to be launched in 2022.

Secretary-General Chikoti underscores that such investments have highlighted the connectivity between climate change and disaster risks, the need to ensure that risk management considerations are integrated in all policy, planning and practice decisions and actions – at all levels and on all scales, as well as the need to embrace inclusive inter and -intra-regional, whole-of-country and whole-of government approaches.

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