



Terms of Reference

Post Title: **Disaster Risk Management Expert**
Duty Station: Gaborone, Botswana
Duration: 12 months, with possibility of extension (November 2026 – October 2027)
Advertisement Period: Applications close on 30 October 2026 11:59 Nairobi time

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT, is the United Nations agency for Human Settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. In October 2016, at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development – Habitat III – member states signed the New Urban Agenda. This is an action-oriented document which sets global standards of achievement in sustainable urban development, rethinking the way we build, manage, and live in cities. Through drawing together cooperation with committed partners, relevant stakeholders, and urban actors, including at all levels of government as well as the private sector, UN-Habitat is applying its technical expertise, normative work and capacity development to implement the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)11.

The UN-Habitat Regional Office for Africa (ROAf) established a structure of four sub-regional offices (East/West/Central/South) to strengthen UN-Habitat presence in sub-regional/country level by engaging sub-regional/country level coordination and activities including the UNCTs, the UN AFPs initiatives, governments, donors, development partners, sub-regional entities and any other relevant dialogues.

UN-Habitat Sub-Regional Office for Southern Africa covers 13 countries including South Africa, Lesotho, Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Madagascar, Comoros, Seychelles, and Mauritius; and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) secretariat based in Botswana; and providing substantive assistance to the country level as well as sub-regional level.

Southern Africa experiences interconnected and cascading disasters that demonstrate the complexity of disaster risk. The most recent continental assessments, including the Africa Regional Assessment on Disaster Risk Reduction and UNDRR's Global Assessment Report 2025, point to a clear trend: disaster risk in Southern Africa is becoming more systemic, interconnected, and costly, driven by the interaction of climate change, exposure, vulnerability, and governance challenges. Rather than isolated disasters, the region is increasingly experiencing compound and cascading risks that overwhelm existing preparedness and response capacities. For example, Cyclone Freddy (2023), Tropical Storm Filipo (2024), Cyclone Chido (2024), Cyclone Dikeledi (2025), and Cyclone Jude (2025) caused widespread flooding, loss of lives, displacement, destruction of critical infrastructure, and significant economic losses across multiple Member States. These events occurred alongside the severe 2023–2025 El Niño-induced drought, which affected much of the region, leading to crop failures, food insecurity, water shortages, reduced



hydropower generation, and increased humanitarian needs. The simultaneous occurrence of droughts, floods, cyclones, disease outbreaks, and population displacement are clear evidence of the increasingly multi-hazard and transboundary nature of disaster risk in Southern Africa. Beyond humanitarian impacts, these disasters are generating significant economic and non-economic losses and damages across the region, including damage to critical infrastructure, livelihoods, ecosystems, cultural heritage, and social systems. As global attention increasingly focuses on Loss and Damage under the UNFCCC framework, Southern Africa requires stronger capacities to assess, quantify, monitor, and address disaster-related losses and damages to support risk-informed investment, resilience planning, climate adaptation, and access to emerging climate finance mechanisms.

Background to the position

The SADC Secretariat and UN-Habitat Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Joint Action Plan 2025–2027 provide a strategic framework for strengthening regional cooperation on sustainable urbanization, resilience, and inclusive development across the SADC region. The partnership focuses on five key thematic areas: Disaster Risk Reduction, aimed at enhancing resilience and preparedness to natural and climate-related hazards; Human Settlements, promoting sustainable, inclusive, and resilient cities and communities; Economic Corridor Development, supporting spatial planning and infrastructure development to unlock regional trade and economic opportunities; Eco-City and Circular Economy, advancing green growth, resource efficiency, and environmentally sustainable urban development; and SADC–UN-Habitat Joint Events, which will serve as platforms to showcase best practices, facilitate knowledge exchange, and promote SADC interventions and achievements. Through this collaboration, the two institutions seek to strengthen regional integration, improve urban governance, and accelerate the implementation of sustainable development priorities in Member States.

UN-Habitat is closely collaborate SADC Secretariat on priorities on climate resilience, digital transformation, regional connectivity, and sustainable infrastructure by strengthening risk intelligence systems, early warning capabilities, anticipatory action mechanisms, humanitarian logistics networks, and disaster risk financing solutions.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The DRR Expert from UN-Habitat will provide technical expertise on urban resilience and development for the Southern African Development Community. The following work will include technical support on urban resilience, preparedness, recovery support, knowledge management, communication and capacity building. Under the supervision of Head of Sub Regional Hub in South Africa in close coordination with the Head of Sub-Regional Hub for Southern Africa, the DRR Expert will be responsible for the following:

Policy Development and Substantive Support

- Provide technical assistance and policy recommendations to SADC, and the Member States on matters related to urban resilience, disaster risk reduction, and climate mitigation/adaptation.



- Support cities, especially Intermediate City Municipalities (ICMs), in development, updating and implementation of urban resilience and disaster risk reduction tools (plans, policies, strategies, and laws and regulations), aligned with the New Urban Agenda, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and SDG 11
- Support the integration of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures into national urban development policies and local development plans
- Conduct desk review for the existing legislation, policies, strategies and guidelines related to urban resilience, disaster risk reduction, climate mitigation/adaptation, and transition to green energy/low carbon development.
- Provide technical expertise for carrying out vulnerability assessment, risk mapping and resilience diagnostics.
- Coordinate with relevant ministries, departments, and other stakeholders and facilitate policy dialogue and consultations on urban resilience.

Programme and Project Development

- Develop programmes and projects on urban resilience, disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and mitigation
- Provide technical assistance to SADC Secretariat and the Member States in the development of bankable project proposals on urban resilience, including assessment, drafting proposals, stakeholder consultations and preparation of funding applications for donor agencies and international financing mechanisms
- Facilitate developing partnerships and collaboration with SADC Secretariat and the Member States, development partners, and private sector actors for resource mobilization for implementation

Capacity Building and Knowledge Management

- Support knowledge generation, development of knowledge-sharing mechanisms and capacity-building initiatives for national and local governments on urban resilience, disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and mitigation and gender and poverty responsive resilience planning.
- Build capacity of SADC Secretariat and the Member States and civil society actors on participatory resilience planning approaches.
- Support the development of contextualized tools, guidelines, and methodologies adapted to national and local conditions.
- Document lessons learned and best practices of urban resilience interventions in SADC region

Operational Support

- Support cities in developing and implementing climate adaptation and mitigation strategies integrated with resilience planning
- Provide technical assistance to municipalities and implementing priority resilience interventions identified through action planning processes, including infrastructure upgrading, and nature-based solutions



- Support cities in developing monitoring and evaluation systems for the impact of resilience interventions.

Others

- Support the overall implementation and coordination of UN-Habitat's programmes in Southern Africa, ensuring alignment with national urban development priorities.
- Assist partnership development, and stakeholder engagement for UN-Habitat Southern Africa in close consultation with the Head of Southern Africa Sub Regional Hub.
- Contribute to research, publications, and policy papers related to climate-resilient urban development and other thematic areas under the UN-Habitat mandate.
- Contribute to the development concept notes and project proposals
- Coordinate with other thematic experts (urban planning, housing and human settlements, GIS) in work planning to ensure coherent support.
- Perform any other related duties as assigned by the Head of Southern Africa Sub Regional Hub.

COMPETENCIES

Professionalism: Demonstrates understanding of UN-Habitat's strategic priorities and approaches to partnerships and programme management; applies knowledge and expertise in resource mobilization, project formulation, and stakeholder engagement; shows pride in work and achieves high-quality results; maintains focus and perseverance even in challenging situations; promotes gender equality and social inclusion in all areas of work.

Communication: Communicates clearly, confidently, and effectively both orally and in writing; adapts language and style to different audiences; listens actively and responds appropriately; facilitates dialogue and collaboration among diverse stakeholders; shares information openly to keep colleagues and partners informed and engaged.

Planning and Organizing: Develops clear plans that are aligned with organizational goals; sets priorities and manages competing demands effectively; anticipates risks and develops contingency plans; uses time and resources efficiently; ensures proper follow-up on activities and maintains organized records for accountability and learning.

Teamwork: Works collaboratively with colleagues across units, UN agencies, governments, and partners to achieve common goals; values diverse contributions and fosters an environment of respect and inclusion; willingly shares expertise and supports others to succeed.

QUALIFICATIONS

Education

Advanced University degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in urban planning, urban resilience, disaster risk reduction, climate mitigation/adaptation or related field is required. A first-level



university degree in combination with four (4) years of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.

Professional Experience

- A minimum of eight (8) years of progressively responsible experience in urban resilience, disaster risk reduction, climate mitigation/adaptation and related areas is required.
- Experience in implementing development programmes/projects, particularly in Africa, is desirable.
- Experience working with the United Nations system or an international organization is an asset.

Language

Fluency in oral and written English and French is required.

Application Instructions

- Applicants are required to submit a concise cover letter or motivation statement highlighting their relevant experience and qualifications in urban resilience, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and related fields.
- Complete and sign the Personal History Profile (P11) using the standard template available [here](#).
- Attach copies of relevant supporting documents, including academic qualifications and evidence of relevant professional experience. Ensure all documents are clearly labelled and submitted in PDF or clear image format.
- Submit the complete application, comprising the cover letter/motivation statement, completed and signed P11 form, and supporting documents, by email only to agnes.mashonganyika@un.org, copyin joel.balagizi@un.org . Use the subject line: APPLICATION_DRR_EXPERT_ [First Name].
- Applications must be received by **30 October 2026**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.