Tanzania launches a National Digital Platform for Disaster Management

The Prime Minister's Office through the Department of Disaster Management (DMD) has officially launched a National Digital Platform for Disaster Management. The launching event was held on 30th June 2023 in Dodoma and graced by the Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (Policy, Parliament, and Coordination), Dr Jim Yonaz. The platform was developed as part of the project entitled *"Strengthening Capacity for Tanzania National One Health Early Detection of and Response to Infectious Disease Epidemics (OneHealthDetect-TZ)"* implemented collaboratively by Prime Ministers' Office and Sokoine University of Agriculture through SACIDS Foundation for One Health. The project was funded by the Ending Pandemics. Other key implementing partners include the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR), the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI) and the President's Office-Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG).

"*We have learned that in order to manage disasters, we have to strengthen early warning systems and coordination including timely detection of early signals* of disasters" Dr Yonaz said.

During the event, the Permanent Secretary, Dr Jim Yonaz said that Tanzania has gone through the history of facing disasters related to environment and outbreaks of human and infectious diseases, suggesting a need to have a well-coordinated national plan to enable identifying indicators and share information timely to reduce risk and impact associated with potential disasters. He also noted that monitoring of events that may affect human-, animal- and environmental health should be done effectively based on the concept of *One Health* by implementing the National Strategic Plan for *One Health 2022 - 2023*. Dr Yonaz appealed to the Higher Learning and research institutions to continue investing in science and technology to address societal problems.

The launching event was also attended by the Vice-Chancellor of Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Professor Raphael Chibunda who highlighted on the conception of this novel idea way back in December 2019 and thanked Ending Pandemics for the financial support to make the idea real. Professor Chibunda said "It is through this project that various activities have been implemented, to ensure that the Emergency Operation and Communication Center becomes operational. The project, through the implementing entities, has provided technical support and various Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment with a value of Tanzanian Shillings 42.3 million".

The ICT Officer from the Prime Minister's Office, Policy, Parliament and Coordination, Mr. Alex Ndimbo described the architecture of the digital platform and functionalities to to enhance community participation in the detection and reporting of signals of potential disasters to the relevant authorities.

This platform serves as a forum to bring together experts who manage the sectors related to animals, humans and the environment. It provides opportunity for any person including community members to share information related to disasters through a dedicated toll-free number **190** granted by the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA).