NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

2008 - 2011

[April, 2008]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.1 International and Global Context
1.2 National Context
1.3 Analytical review of Disaster Issues in the Gambia

2.1.   Disaster Management in The Gambia
2.2.   Justification of the Strategic Plan
2.3.   Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives

3.1 Vision and Goal of the Action Plan
3.2 Goal of the Strategic Plan
3.3 Guiding Principles for Strategic Programming
3.4 Key Stakeholders
3.5 Priority Areas for Action
3.6 Expected Outcomes
3.7 Priority Target Groups
3.8 Strategies

5.1   Implementation Framework
5.2   Implementation Structure

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

DFID - Department of Foreign International Development

DOSFEA - Department of State for Finance and Economic Affairs

DOSH - Department of State for Health

DPWM - Department of Parks and Wildlife Management

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

GAMTEL - Gambia Telecommunication Company

GEAP - Gambia Environmental Action Plan

MDFT - Multi- Disciplinary Facilitation Team.

MDGs - Millennium Development Goals

NAWEC - National Water and Electricity Company

NEA - National Environment Agency

NEPAD - Non Economic Partnership for African Development

NGOs - Non Governmental Organizations

PURA - Public Utility Regularity Authority

R/MDMC - Regional/Municipal Disaster Management Committee

UN - United Nations

UNDP - United Nations Development Program

Executive summary

The Gambia has been experiencing quite a significant number of disastrous events of both natural and anthropogenic origin. Recent information on the hazard profile of the Gambia and its vulnerability and capacity assessment shows that these disasters are related to drought, water and climate, locust invasion, environmental degradation, floods and epidemics. Disasters have caused great losses to live and property and have pushed several people into poverty. The economic impact of disasters usually consists of direct damage e.g. infrastructure, crops, housing, and indirect damage e.g. loss of revenues, unemployment and market destabilization. It is therefore increasingly becoming a major developmental issue of urgent concern for the government, development partners and local communities.

In view of this situation, the government had formulated a disaster management policy and promulgated a disaster management Bill aimed at building safe and resilient communities by enhancing the use of and access to knowledge and information in disaster prevention and management at all levels of society. This clearly testifies the national concern on this hindrance to sustainable development. The policy and bill clearly pave the way for ensuring that we work together for a safer world and country and in order for the country to attain its Vision 2020, poverty reduction and millennium development goals, disaster management is crucial and forms an integral part of the process.

The development of this strategic plan is undermined by a comprehensive disaster management approach that seeks to achieve the right balance of prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response. The strategy is based on the realization of the multi-dimensional nature of disaster which needs to be mainstreamed into the overall national development process and is a useful document that will serve as the main reference material by all stakeholders in disaster management during the four years implementation period.

The main objective of the strategy is to provide a pathway for the implementation of the national disaster bill and policy. It coherently provides the logical steps and actions required to bring about efficient and effective disaster management in the country. The strategy is in five chapters; chapter one provides the global and national situation on disasters, chapter two highlights the national policy to respond and militate against disasters, chapter three outlines the building blocks of the national disaster strategy. Chapter four provides the activity matrix in a logical manner with the required resources and measurable benchmarks, and lastly, chapter 5 presents the implementation framework and structure for the delivery of the identified activities within the timeframe. There is also a monitoring and evaluation framework provided in the annex.

CHAPTER 1

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

1.1 International and Global Context

Disasters are situations or events which overwhelm local capacity, necessitating a request to national or international level for assistance. These are classified into two main categories i.e. Natural disasters which are hydro-meteorological and Geophysical, and non-natural disasters which are man-made and can be industrial related; chemical spill, collapse of industrial structures, explosion, fire, gas leak poisoning, radiation; miscellaneous events such as collapse of domestic/non industrial structures, explosion, fire, and Transport related; air, rail, road and water-borne accidents (World Disasters Report, 2002).

Disasters and how they are managed, have become the subject of increasing research and debate in recent years. This heightened interest signifies that the world has become a more dangerous place for its inhabitants who are becoming more vulnerable to disasters. Data gathered worldwide over the last three decades suggest that, while the number of people killed by natural disasters has leveled out at around 80,000 per year, the number affected by disasters and associated economic losses have both soared. As during the 1990s, an annual average of around 200 million people was affected by natural disasters nearly three times higher than during the 1970s. Economic losses from such disasters in the 1990s averaged US$ 63 billion per year which is nearly five times higher in real terms than the figure for the 1970s (Brussels-based Centre for research on the Epidemiology of Disasters-CRED)

While the figures sound sobering, they disguise the devastating effects that disasters can have on poorer nations' development as disasters undermine development by contributing to persistent poverty. As Didier Cherpited says "disasters are first and foremost a major threat to development, and specifically to the development of poorest and most marginalized people in the world. Disasters seek out the poor and vulnerable, and ensure they stay poor." (World Disasters Report, 2002)

It has been evidently documented that, vulnerability to disaster is not simply by lack of wealth, but by a complex range of physical, economic, political and social factors. Flawed development is exacerbating these factors and exposing more people to disasters. Rapid population growth and unplanned urbanization force poorer communities to live in more hazardous areas. However, even the better-off are at risk as expansion of infrastructure over the past decades including bridges, railway lines and roads have created a barrier across the valley leading to limited access, and excessive rainfall

resulting in floods. Growth in infrastructure across the globe has increased both the level of assets at risk from disasters, and the people dependent on such lifelines as electricity, gas and water mains.

Economic growth may increase risks particularly in the poorest countries of the world as economic activities can result to environmental degradation, deforestation which disrupts watersheds leading to more severe droughts, as well as floods. People switch jobs or their mode of crop production in response to improved marketing opportunities, and in doing so, they may increase their vulnerability to disasters. Clearly, disasters are a major threat to the global economy and to society and therefore sustainable development is society's investment in the future or otherwise; investments will be squandered if not adequately protected against the risk of disaster.

Recognizing the fact that disasters are complex problems arising from the interaction between the environment and the development of human beings, disaster requires complex responses drawing on a wide range of skills and capacities. It requires the cooperation between multilateral development agencies, national and local governments, non-governmental organizations, businesses, natural and social scientists, technical specialists and the vulnerable communities. Central to the United Nations Conferences in Stockholm in 1972, Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, was global commitment to mainstreaming sustainable development in all aspects of national development.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) also provides the international community with a framework for sustainable development of dry lands. The objective of the convention is to secure the long-term commitment of its parties through a legally binding document. It provides an international framework for States affected by desertification to work jointly with industrialized countries to implement National Action Programmes. The Convention is a powerful instrument for sustainable natural resource management in affected regions and for ensuring long-term, mandatory external support for these efforts. Such declaration calls for the concerted efforts of all UN member states to reducing the occurrence and impact of natural disasters and therefore disaster mitigation and preparedness appear to be firmly on the aid agenda.

Further to the declaration of the international decade for disaster reduction (1990-1999) the UN General Assembly in 2000 founded the ISDR (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction), a coalition of governments, UN agencies, regional organizations and civil society organizations. In 2002, the UN published a document entitled Living with Risk: A Global review of disaster reduction initiatives. In 2005, a major reform within the UN system resulted in some UN agencies, in particular UNDP, becoming increasingly concerned about disaster risk issues by actively engaging in enhancing disaster risk programmes at country level. The road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (Secretary –General's report to the General Assembly) touches on areas which are closely linked to vulnerability to natural hazards such as ensuring environmental stability, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and promoting gender equality.

In furtherance of these UN's efforts, several governments and NGOs championed issues of disaster reduction. During the world conference on disaster reduction held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, world governments agreed on the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 which was formulated as a comprehensive action-oriented response to international concern about disaster impacts on communities and national development. For its part, the World Bank launched the Global Environment Facility in the mid 1990s and Pro Vention Consortium in 2000, which works towards a more effective public- private dialogue on disaster risk.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) declared by the international community to halve extreme poverty and hunger, combating infectious diseases, ensuring universal primary education and sustainable development, are critical to disaster management. Bearing in mind the importance of disaster management, the UN declared in 1990 the International Decade for Natural disaster Reduction (IDNDR). Thus the realization that environmental threats could result in serious socio-economic and human costs has refocused the disaster management agenda on some critical challenges relating to disaster reduction initiatives. Some of these challenges are in essence development challenges, especially when many of these threats that confront the international community emanate largely from failures of development.

1.2.1 National Context

The Gambia is situated on the west coast of Africa between the Equator and the Tropic of cancer and it forms a narrow strip of land on either side of the River Gambia. It is about 50 miles (80 kilometres) wide along the coast, narrowing to 15miles (24 Kilometers) at its eastern border. From sea level, interior elevations rise to 112 feet. The country covers an area of 11,000 square kilometers and has a population of 1.4 million inhabitants (128 per kilometer) making the Gambia one of the most densely populated countries in Africa.

The country is vulnerable to periodic drought because it is part of the arid Sahel Zone between the Sahara desert and the coastal rain forest and further experiences climate change and environmental degradation. The subtropical climate has a distinct hot and rainy season from June to October, and a cooler dry season from November to May. High temperatures and humidity mark the beginning and end of the rainy season. The dry season is noted for dry trade winds locally known as Harmattan.

The Gambia as part of the African Union together with NEPAD Secretariat has developed the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. This Strategy was endorsed by the 10th meeting of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and was favorably noted by the 2004 African Union Summit, which called for the formulation of the programme of action for the implementation of the Africa strategy (2005-2010).

At the sub-regional level, ECOWAS over the recent years has increasingly focused its attention on disaster issues leading to the establishment of disaster risk reduction as an operational theme. The ECOWAS Council of Ministers 51st session in December 2003 in Ghana established a technical committee on disaster management. A meeting of the committee in 2005 outlined the scope of the ECOWAS mechanism for disaster management, which has been developed into a policy.

At the national level, disaster management issues are gradually being given more attention in national planning processes but until recently was seen in sectoral lens and hardly have the effective structures, policy, legal framework and more so the proper understanding and capacities.

The recurrence of disaster events and the increasing concerns about disaster impacts have attracted a lot of attention from both governments and development partners not the least because the risk calculus for vulnerable groups within society and the infrastructure is enormous.

The DFID Policy Paper entitled 'Reducing the Risk of Disaster-Helping to Achieve Sustainable Poverty Reduction in a Vulnerable World' has ranked the Gambia 24th among the developing countries at high risk of disaster. The highest in ranking is Bangladesh followed by Nepal. The implications for The Gambia in this ranking are evident in that if no prevention and preparedness measures are taken now to mitigate this high risk, it may erode the significant development gains registered in The Gambia especially in the area of infrastructure and the well elaborated poverty reduction strategies among others.

The risk calculus for vulnerable groups within society and infrastructure will be enormous and hence the urgent need to design this strategy that would outline the development of standard instruments for disaster prevention and preparedness as well as the organizational mechanisms for plan implementation. The underlying assumption, as indicated in the Policy document, is that disaster prevention and preparedness are crucial entry points for disaster risk reduction.

Despite the potential high risk been posed by disaster, the old view of disasters as temporary interruptions on the path of social and economic progress and should be dealt with through humanitarian relief is deeply rooted in the country. Until recently, disaster issues were treated and handled through our various environmental management programmes and sectors as an added on activity. It is increasingly becoming evident that those notions are no longer credible and disaster issues are too big to be an added on to a sector or being perceived as a sectoral mandate. Disaster issues are multidimensional, multi-sectoral and need to be mainstreamed in all development concerns with a central coordination.

1.2.2 Analytical Review of Disaster issues in the Gambia

The World Watch Institute in Washington estimates that the earth's continents lose 24 billion tons of fertile topsoil every year and forest destruction put at 15 million hectares of forest worldwide with depletion worst in developing countries such as the Gambia. The expansion of the agricultural frontiers into fragile ecosystems, eliminating stabilized forest cover has increased the frequency of flash floods and lower agricultural productivity.

In 2003, about half of the Gambian population lived in towns and the city, of which six out of ten of them live in the unplanned peri-urban peripheries which are already stretched to breaking point. Uncontrolled urban sprawl and speculative land markets have pushed many marginal settlements into high-risk areas that are flood-prone areas. The confirmation of avian influenza cases in Nigeria and in some countries in West Africa causes a great threat to both animals and human population in the Gambia due to the close proximity and trade relationship. The country has very volatile environmental condition, which can lead to disaster at any time. The country's natural resources and the environment are seriously endangered as human lives are increasingly harmed by pollution, desertification, climate change, floods and unplanned urbanization.

Climate change will have repercussions as it can lead to desertification, rising sea levels, rapid shifts in vegetable zones, lower agricultural production and a greater shortage of fresh water. This affects the country in general particularly the poorest who will be worst hit.

In recent years, the Gambia experienced a significant number of disastrous events of both natural and human origins. The Hazards Profile of the Gambia and its Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment Report indicates that these disasters are related to drought, floods, locust invasions, environmental degradation and epidemics. For example, between 2002 and 2006 there were 65 flood related disasters, 45 incidents of fire in the western region only which mostly are highly populated and urbanized. The severe floods in 1999 and 2003 in Upper River and Central River Regions and in many parts of the country affected 13.1 per cent of the population.

Country-wide locust invasions during the 1980s, 90s, in 2003 and of recent affected most farmers in the country. The influx of refugees in Western Region and bush fires in Lower River Region also had negative consequences on economic development of the country. Other major cases were the Serrekunda market fire disasters, kanifing East Estate fire incident in 2006, the Ebo Town floods in 2002, 2005 and 2007 causing lost of lives, huge properties and contributed to food insecurity. The vulnerability of the country to disasters is quite evident by the existing manifstations.

All these incidents, a combination of man-made and natural disasters are causes for concern and thus call for concerted and coordinated efforts to plan to prevent, manage and mitigate the effects of disasters. This should not be done in isolation but integrated into the national development planning framework.

CHAPTER 2:
NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT POLICY:
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. Introduction: Disaster Management in The Gambia

Disaster issues had long been pronounced in normative and policy documents in various government policy documents and development agenda. These include The Gambia Vision 2020 Document, the National Environment Management Act (NEMA) in 1994, the first and second GEAP and desertification conventions, the National Disaster Emergency Relief and Resettlement Committee, the Capacity Building for Sustainable Development (CAP 2015) project, the MDG Reports 2003, 2004 and the PRSP.

The main limitations and major obstacles to effective disaster management policies in the past has been a dominant approach that justifies disaster response. The current debate is now moving from the idea of a basic diagnosis of relief operation to a more proactive strategy of disaster prevention Existing policy responses of both governments and the international community treat disaster as a series of unexpected events whose remedy lies in the provision of humanitarian relief which in essence is what is called 'crisis survival' as the aim is to minimize short-term suffering. The need to move away from the old technocratic, command-and control approach to risk reduction to more innovative approaches and partnerships opens the door for greater success in disaster management.

The paradigm shift in recent years from disaster response to disaster prevention and disaster risk reduction is largely motivated by the high toll of disasters both in terms of human sufferings and the loss of economic assets. What is needed, as clearly indicated in a recent DFID Policy Paper is 'a well-resourced and prepared response system with a focus on national and local capacity.'

Cognizant of the above, the Gambia government developed in 2008 a National Disaster Management Bill and Policy which emphasizes that any successful mechanism for disaster prevention must be multifaceted and designed for the long-term. The capacity to anticipate and analyze possible disaster threats is a prerequisite for prudent decision-making and effective action. Yet even practical early warning will not ensure successful preventive action unless there is a fundamental change of attitude towards disaster perceptions. An integrated approach that brings together the efforts of the government, UN agencies, NGOs, civil Society, Local authorities and local communities is the most viable, effective and sustainable disaster management strategy.

Currently the UNDP provide project support in the form of a National Disaster management programme aimed at developing a comprehensive disaster management framework in the country and to improve national capacities to anticipate, manage and respond to disasters. Through the project, a secretariat was fully operational and served as the nerve-centre for all disaster related issues in the country. The capacities and institutional memory developed during the project implementation were used to establish a National Disaster Management Agency charged with the implementation of the disaster

Policy and Act thus justifying the formulation of this strategy. The project also assisted in the development of a national hazard/disaster profile, restructured regional disaster committees and undertook training and capacity building country-wide in addition to the development of a comprehensive National Action Plan for Avian and Human Influenza.

2.2. Justification of the Strategic Plan

To operationalize the Disaster Management Bill and Policy, there is a need to develop a multi-dimensional strategy that provides for disaster mainstreaming in development, the strengthening of the institutionalization of disaster, the strengthening of disaster management analysis skills, research and the development of an information system, advocacy, partnership and policy dialogue.

The critical need for the disaster management agency to have a comprehensive plan that will guide its interventions towards effectively implementing its mandate gives the right to the formulation of the 2008-2011 Strategic Plan. The Plan is a critical instrument to establish, build capacity of the national disaster management office and creating the conditions to effectively execute its mandate.

The strategic plan will serve as the roadmap and building blocks for operationalising and reaching the disaster management goals and objectives in the Gambia.

It will further serve as an integrated document for all stakeholders' participation in this urgent and important national task.

2.3. Vision, Goals and Objectives

Vision

Assurance of safer and resilient communities in which the impact of hazards would not hamper development and the ecosystem and provision for a better quality of life will be achieved through effective emergency and disaster services.

Policy Goals;

The overall goal of the disaster management policy and strategy is to ensure a proper and effective mechanism for disaster mitigation and preparedness that will save lives and livelihoods in the country. The goals are:

1. Articulate the vision and goals for disaster management in the Gambia
2. Outline the strategic direction to guide the development of disaster management policies
3. Align the strategic direction for disaster risk reduction with international norms and framework conventions
4. Mainstream disaster mitigation into relevant areas of activity of Government, NGOs, Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations.

5. Strengthen the governance and accountability arrangements in place that support achievements of disaster management priorities.
6. Build adequate and sustainable capacity at the community level in order to enhance the culture of safety and resilience at the local level.

Policy Strategic Objectives
1. To integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning;
2. To develop and strengthen institutional mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards
3. To systematically incorporate all international, regional, national and local disaster risk reduction strategies and approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery.
4. To achieve a comprehensive, all hazard, all agencies approach by achieving the right balance of prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery;
5. Prepare communities to ensure that they are fully equipped to anticipate and respond to disaster events.
6. To promote a transparent, systematic and consistent approach to disaster risk assessment and management.
7. A multi-stakeholder participatory approach including community participation at all levels
8. Develop a database and information exchange system at national, regional and international levels.

CHAPTER 3

National Disaster Management Strategic Framework for Action

3.1 Vision and Goal of the Action Plan

The disaster management strategy seeks to outline the concrete steps required towards realizing the goal, vision and strategic objectives of the national disaster management policy.

VISION:

> "Transform The Gambia into a fair and secure society, in which the impact of hazards would not hamper development and the ecosystem and will further ensure the provision of a better quality of life through effective emergency and disaster services.

This vision, which establishes a strong link between sustainable human development, risk reduction and poverty, is in tandem with the National, Regional and International ones.

3.2 Goal of the Strategic Plan

The goal of the national disaster management strategic action plan is to contribute to the sustainable improvement of the well-being of Gambians by:
(I) creating a socio-economic, legal and institutional environment that is conducive to disaster management in the Gambia and;
(ii) Effectively mainstreaming disaster management issues into national policies as well as in sector-specific development programmes and projects.

3.3 Guiding Principles for Strategic Programming

All the activities in operationalizing the national disaster management policy must consider the following crosscutting core principles and mainstream them into national development
.

- Advocacy
- Service delivery
- Capacity Building
- Community/local empowerment
- Emergency Preparedness
- Integrated planning and programming
- Partnership and Alliance Building

For any disaster and risk reduction management programme, the following features are essential for any success;

- Social cohesion and solidarity (self-help and citizen-based social protection at the neighborhood level).
- Trust between the authorities and civil society
- Investment in economic development that explicitly takes potential consequences for risk reduction or increase into account.
- Investment in human development.
- Investment in social capital.
- Investment in institutional capital (e.g., capable, accountable and transparent government institutions for mitigating disasters.)
- Good coordination, information sharing and cooperation among institutions involved in risk reduction
- Attention to lifeline infrastructure.
- Attention to the most vulnerable.
- An effective risk communication system and institutionalized historical memory of disaster.
- Political commitment to disaster management.
- Laws, regulations and directives to support all of the above.

3.4 Key Stakeholders

The stakeholders involved in the implementation of this strategy are numerous and can be categorized as follows;
- Government including local authorities
- NGOs including civil society organizations
- Private sector
- International development partners
- Local communities
- Women and Youth groups
- Other vulnerable groups such as children and the physically challenged

3.5 Priority Areas for Action

The definition and identification of disaster management priority areas for intervention over the next four years is informed by its' policy, bill and the outcome of disaster analysis in the country. This strategic plan is thus an important framework for the establishment of an institutional framework for National Disaster Management which will position itself as an Office of excellence by responding to disaster and risk reduction matters in an efficient and prudent manner. The following priority areas will be the disaster management agency's building blocks to championing disaster management and risk reduction issues in the country.

Priority Area 1: Development of institutional framework and structures capable of preventing, preparing for and responding to disasters at National, Regional and Local levels.

Interventions in this area will aim at creating institutional environment for addressing disaster and risk reductions. This will involve the establishment of a National Office and related technical committees at national, regional and local levels, and the strengthening of capacities of all actors: government, civil society, organized private sector, decentralized agencies, state institutions and development partners.

Priority Area 2: Integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable policies and plans.

The interventions in this area will focus on mainstreaming disaster management and risk reduction into National policies and Plans through the development of national platform for disaster management, sensitization, and awareness creation on disaster management, capacity building and introduction of disaster risk reduction into the school system. Establishing the necessary linkages and capacity building will be among the key activities. Interventions in this area will aim at building capacity at all levels and develop and implement an effective resource mobilization mechanism and necessary follow ups. Mechanisms will be developed for mainstreaming disaster issues in overall development plans and policies.

Priority Area 3: creation of a body of knowledge that is useful to support government, humanitarian organizations and other partners; to anticipate, plan for and manage disasters effectively

Interventions in this area will aim at developing and improving on effective early warning systems, development of a comprehensive data-base, system development, conduct surveys and develop communication channels.

Priority Area 4: Create broad and effective partnership among government, humanitarian organizations and other partners, to engage in disaster risk reduction activities and addressing the underlying factors in disasters

The national disaster management Office's intervention will focus on ensuring that the necessary platform or structures and processes exist for genuine partnership and concerted efforts in disaster risk reduction. The interventions will focus on policy dialogue and establishment of effective linkage with the environmental impact assessment process.

Priority Area 5: Develop an efficient response mechanism to disaster management and make available the necessary resources

Interventions in this area will aim at building capacities at all levels; develop strategies for resource mobilization and for monitoring and evaluation.

Priority Area 6 To strengthen national capacity in the timely detection, prevention, control, investigation and reporting of Avian Influenza and other diseases within animal and human populations

Interventions in this area will focus on training livestock, wildlife and health personnel and other critical partners for early diagnosis and reporting. It also emphasizes the need to provide basic supplies and also strengthen laboratory diagnostic capabilities.

Priority Area 7: Introduction of regional and international best practices in disaster and risk reduction management.

The National Office will establish links with external institutions for best practices and sharing of experiences in disaster and risk reduction issues.

3.6 Expected Outcomes

- A well functioning National Disaster Management Office under the Office of the Vice –President
- Formation of well functioning participatory structures e.g., committees at all levels
- Strengthened National capacities in disaster management and risk reduction strategies
- Availability of sufficient, reliable and timely data for informed decision-making on disaster and risk reduction matters
- Disaster issues fully mainstreamed or realigned in all national policies, programmes and projects
- School system introduces disaster management and risk reduction in their teaching curriculum e.g., integration into social studies
- Resources available for disaster management and risk reduction activities. (Government should take the lead role by making adequate provision as a startup for counter funding.)
- The adoption of the national disaster management bill and policy providing legal and administrative authority for implementing the set actions.
- Existence of a National early warning system which is regularly updated.
- Existence of effective communication strategy and a well informed citizenry on disaster and risk reduction issues.

3.7 Priority target groups

This strategy will assist every body in the development sector of the country in particular all the Departments of state, State authorities and agencies, local governments, private sector, civil society, youth organizations, children, women, the physically challenged, reproductive health needs of vulnerable groups, Parliamentarians, opinion leaders the university, technical and financial partners to acquire knowledge, skills and right attitude for the attainment of an effective disaster and risk reduction system in the country.

Special attention will be paid to special interest groups like school (formal and non-formal) and people living in highly disaster prone areas.

3.8 Strategies

To achieve this, the National Disaster Agency will embark on the following:

1. Financing and Resource Mobilization Strategy

To mobilize funds for financing of the strategic plan, two funding sources are identified, namely:
- To take advantage of available resources by incorporating some of the activities of the plan into the regular annual budget of government
- To resort to the mobilization of additional resources from development partners and the private sector for activities that could not be incorporated in the government budget.

For resource mobilization, the government budget is very important for successful implementation of the strategic plan. It will illustrate government's strong commitment to disaster management and risk reduction.
The Disaster Secretariat will organize mini roundtable discussions with its development partners and other stakeholders with a view of informing them about the programmes of the strategic plan and identifying possibilities for partnership and financing.

2. Partnership Strategy

The Disaster Agency will establish strategic partnerships and network with key actors involved in disaster management and risk reduction in the country namely:

- Departments of State
- Disaster management focal points
- National Assembly
- UN Agencies
- National, regional and international NGOs
- Traditional institutions and leaders
- Private sector/business community
- Researchers
- Civil society organizations
- Faith-based organizations
- Security and Emergency Services

The Agency will also develop partnership with actors internationally to share knowledge, experience and good practices.

3. Communication Strategy

Communication strategy is instrumental not only in the implementation of the strategic plan but also in the area of profiling and positioning the newly created National disaster Management Office in the country and beyond.

Within the framework of information and communication technology (ICT) the National Disaster Office will:

- Establish a documentation and information centre responsible for collecting, managing and disseminating reliable information on disaster and risk reduction in the country.
- Develop a national platform that will organize on-line discussions on current and emerging disaster and risk reduction issues in the country.
- Create a bi-annual news letter that will keep all actors informed on national disaster and risk reduction issues
- Involve the private and public media in the activities of the National Office.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Strategy

Monitoring and evaluation is part and parcel of any planning process, as it is critical to the assessment of progress against benchmarks.

While monitoring and evaluation are closely linked, it is important to understand the distinction between them. Whereas monitoring is a routine on-going activity to assess programme implementation in terms of resources (inputs) invested in the programme and the outputs produced, evaluation is concerned with the assessment of the programmes' impacts on disaster and risk reduction management e.g. on the safety and welfare of citizens.

5. National Emergency Strategy

There is an urgent need to develop a national emergency strategy/plan since not all emergencies are classified as disaster but could be fatal and threaten national security and stability.

Risks

During the implementation of this strategic plan, the disaster management agency is likely to face a number of risks that can undermine and or slow down the effective implementation of the well-outlined strategic actions. Some of these risks are:

- Lack of adequate capacity to implement the strategic plan owing to the weak agency staffing (in quality and quantity)
- Lack of enough funding is also an important risk as, without enough resources, the agency will not be able to translate the strategy into concrete actions.

However, giving the high commitment of government and the donor community specially UNDP, these risks could be met.

Chapter 4
Activity Matrix of the Strategic Plan

Specific objectives	Operational strategies	Expected outcomes	Performance indicators	Priority actions	Period	Responsibility	Partners	Estimated cost US$
Objective 1.1 To establish national disaster management office	-Enactment of disaster bill -Make provision for staff and recruit qualified personnel -procure equipment and furniture for office	Enhanced partnership, networking and information sharing among actors in disaster management	A well functioning disaster coordination office exists.	-Enactment by national assembly -Budgeting allocation ,recruitment of staff and equipment Develop terms of reference for coordinating office.	2008	Office of the Vice President, donors	UN agencies, NGOs & private sector	195,000=00
1.2 To establish and restructure regional and municipal disaster committees, coordination committee and technical committees	Establishment and restructuring of regional and municipal disaster committees -Establishment of coordination and operational committees Training and capacity building of regional and municipal disaster committees. Creation of National and regional disaster funds. -Periodic monitoring and evaluation of activities	Enhanced coordination /integrated disaster management approach achieved Community participation and awareness levels rose as a foundation for sustainability. National ownership consolidated	5 regional and two urban municipal committees established and well capacitized Thirty disaster technical committees established. A national and 5 regional disaster funds operational	Review present status and form or restructure in line with attached composition and functions Mobilize resources for the national and regional funds, Training of committees Develop terms of reference for the coordinating committees. Establish a data-base of all key partners	2008	Office of the Vice President,	Local and regional governors, development partners	180,000=00
2. To integrate disaster risk reduction in sustainable policies and plans	-Make disaster risk management a development priority -To systematically incorporate all international, regional, national and local disaster risk reduction strategies and approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery.	National policies, programmes and budget sensitive to disaster/risk reduction. Well established structures and processes for mainstreaming disaster issues. Disaster/risk reduction fully	A platform disaster/risk reduction dialogue established Handbook for disaster/risk reduction sensitive planning developed. Training for key actors conducted Media application on awareness creation Introduction disaster risk	Availability of well qualified personnel and resources for mainstreaming process. Development of well coordinated mechanism for advocacy /lobbying. Training through workshops/seminars at all levels Enforcement of environmental laws	National disaster management office, National policies. Programmes and budget	National planning commission, DOSFEA, MDI and private specialists	2008-2013	135,000=00

Specific objectives	Operational strategies	Expected outcomes	Performance indicators	Priority actions	Period	Responsibility	Partners	Estimated cost US$
	-To achieve a comprehensive, all hazard, all agencies approach by achieving the right balance of prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery; -Awareness creation -Advocacy/lobbying with sectors and budget -Links with national development processes -Prepare guidelines for disaster/risk reduction sensitive policy, programming and budget. -Training of key actors in the guidelines.	integrated in national planning processes	reduction in schools. Incorporation of regional and international best practices in to national activities and planning.	including forestry, physical planning, water and sanitation Creation of a disaster and risk reduction fund. Development of an intensive sensitization programme targeting all levels of society. Disaster issues introduce in school curriculum including professional training schools.				
3. To create a body of knowledge that is useful to support government, humanitarian organizations and other partners; to anticipate, plan for and manage disaster effectively	-To develop and strengthen institutional mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards. -Developing and improving on effective early warning systems -Development of information data base. -development of systems for information management -Modalities for system implementation.	Resourceful information data bank exists on disaster and risk reduction for use by all stakeholders.	Improved early warning systems -proper planning of disaster management. Improved disaster preparedness and risk reduction in the country Enhanced Safety of lives and properties.	-conduct a baseline survey of existing early warning systems in various institutions and agencies. -Harmonization of various existing early warning systems -Establish a data base Establish and strengthened early warning systems. -Integration of the early warning systems into a comprehensive national early warning systems -Create early warning units in all institutions and agencies -carry out risk and hazard	2008-2011	National disaster Agency	Line departments of State, Donors, academic institutions, researchers PURA another authorities	160,000=00

Specific objectives	Operational strategies	Expected outcomes	Performance indicators	Priority actions	Period	Responsibility	Partners	Estimated cost US$
				mapping -Community sensitization on early warning -facilitate and conduct innovative research on scientific and indigenous early warning with academic institutions and research bodies. -Establish a national emergency communications control centre where all emergency calls are received and disseminated -Radio/television/phone communication. -Vulnerability and capacity assessment. -Develop a monitoring and evaluation strategy.				
4. To create broad and effective partnership among government, Humanitarian organizations and other partners; to engage in disaster risk reduction activities and addressing the underlying factors in disasters	-Effective collaboration and networking for partnership and alliance building among institutions and agencies. -Establish participatory structures and processes -Establish relationships based on respect and capacities. -Capacity building and awareness creation.	Broad-based partnership with all stakeholders exists.	Joint programming, resource management. Frequent consultations and networking. Sector-wide programming involving all stakeholders Support and joint use of same data and strategies.	-Establish mechanisms for coordination and transparent resource mobilization -Organize national partnership forums to establish national disaster management platforms and the development of memorandum of understandings with clear roles and responsibilities. Develop mechanisms for inclusive processes at all stages from planning to evaluation. -Development of a partnership strategy -Develop an IEC strategy	2008-2013	National disaster Office, Office of the V..President	Development partners, Departments of state, private sector, NGOs, Research institutions	175,000=00
5. To develop an efficient	-To enhance community's capacities; to prepare for and respond to disasters rapidly	Existence of Proper mechanism for disaster management	Disasters are effectively managed	-Identification of potential trainers for the required training	2008-2010	National disaster management Office,	NGOs and development partners, PURA	650,000=00

Specific objectives	Operational strategies	Expected outcomes	Performance indicators	Priority actions	Period	Responsibility	Partners	Estimated cost US$
response mechanism to disaster management and to make available the necessary resources.	and efficiently in a well coordinated manner -Prepare communities to ensure that they are fully equipped to anticipate and respond to disaster events. -Develop institutional framework -Capacity building and training -Mobilize resources in support of such coordinated action. -design monitoring and follow-up mechanisms.		Resources both human and material are available for disaster management.	-Development of training plans and manuals -Conduct training of trainers on community based disaster risk reduction. -Conduct step down training at district and village/ward levels. -Simulation exercises of information on various disaster scenarios -Dissemination of information on various disaster scenarios. -Conduct joint assessment and investigation on disasters. -Development of standard reporting format which should be user-friendly. -Develop codes of conduct/ethics for people involved in disaster management and response. -develop a resource mobilization strategy -Mainstreaming gender, poverty and environment in disaster issues -Preposition of emergency stocks -Establish personal survival parks		Department of state for justice, interior.	and other Authourities.	
6. To strengthen national capacity in timely detection,	-Mobilizing of resources -Capacity building -supervising surveillance activities and monitoring -Establishment of cooperation between partner	A well developed and coordinated National programme in response to Avian influenza exists.	-Well trained staff -organized and sensitized communities Partnerships and cooperation established	-Training of staff on disease recognition, sample collection and laboratory diagnosis techniques. -Conduct monthly field surveillance supervisory	2008-2009	National disaster Office and Department of livestock, Health and DPWM	Development partners, Local authorities and critical sectors	245,000=00

Specific objectives	Operational strategies	Expected outcomes	Performance indicators	Priority actions	Period	Responsibility	Partners	Estimated cost US$
prevention, control, investigation and reporting of Avian influenza and other diseases within animals and human population.	institutions and countries. -networking with national and international stakeholders.			visits -Provide sampling kits, laboratory equipment, consumables and protective gears. -purchase additional materials and equipments. -establish hotline reporting mechanism				

Chapter 5

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

6.1.   Implementation Framework

The strategy will adopt various approaches to ensure that risk reduction in particular and disaster management in general is a national and local priority with strong involvement of local actors, the victims of disaster and institutional basis for implementation. A rights-based approach would ensure that effective steps for disaster management no longer remain an optional discretionary initiative on an ad hoc basis. Rather, it becomes a collective mandatory responsibility. A legal framework that would create an enabling environment and empowers institutional structures and agencies, protect the rights of people who could be affected by disasters as well as the victims of disasters.

5.2 Implementing Structures

The government's strategy for the management of disasters in the country is not to create new or additional structures but to ensure the maximum utilization of existing resources. Furthermore, since disaster management is multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary it calls for the concerted efforts of people in different professional backgrounds and institutions with expertise in disaster management. Government will therefore establish a small Disaster Management Agency under the Office of the Vice President which will coordinate the work of institutions involved in disaster management both national and decentralized levels.

There will be a National Disaster Management Council chaired by Her Excellency the Vice President. The composition of the Council shall be Secretaries of State for Interior, Defense, Finance and Economic Affairs, health and social Welfare, Forestry and Environment, Local government and Lands, Attorney General, National Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator of the National Search and Rescue Council and the Executive Director of the National Disaster Management Agency. The council can co-opt other members when the need arises.

Disaster Management Agency

The Agency will carry-out the day to day administrative matters to ensure the implementation of the disaster management policy and strategy.

Technical Advisory Group

A technical advisory group made up of professionals shall be formed and will provide advice to council through the Agency and work with the Agency to prepare national disaster plans and review regional disaster management plans.

At the regional and municipal and district levels, there shall be established regional, municipal, city and district disaster management committees. The governor/mayor/district chief shall chair such committees and comprise of heads of institutions at various levels. Details on composition and functions of such committees can be seen as annex. At the village level, the village development committees shall perform the functions of disaster management in addition to their responsibilities.

Composition of Disaster Management Committees and Functions

Disaster management in the Gambia will be coordinated and supervised through series of consultative forums and committees. These committees enhance wider participation in disaster and risk reduction activities in the country.

The supreme body is the National Disaster Management Council which provides policy guidelines and has the powers to review and/or amend the policy to meet the emerging needs of the country in all disaster-related matters.

Under the leadership of H.E. the Vice-President the council includes the following:
Secretary of state for Interior
Secretary of State for Defense
Secretary of State for Finance and Economic affairs
Secretary of State for Health and Social Welfare
Secretary of State for Forestry and Environment
Secretary of State for Local Government and Lands
Secretary of State for Justice
National Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator
Executive Director - Disaster Management Agency as secretary.

The council can co-opt other members when the need arises but members from the civil service must not be below the rank of Permanent Secretary. The terms of reference of the National Disaster Management Council are outlined in the National Disaster Management Bill 2008.

Technical Advisory Group

A technical advisory group made up of professionals shall be formed and it shall, through the national disaster management agency, advise the National disaster management council and will also assist in the preparation of the National Disaster Management Plan and review Regional Disaster Management Plans.

Composition and Terms of Reference for Regional /Municipal Disaster Management Committees

The under listed terms of reference for the Regional/Municipal Disaster Management Committees are to serve as a guide to their operations.

The Regional/Municipal Disaster Management Committees shall be operating at the strategic level of disaster management.
- Prepare regional plans for the prevention of disasters and mitigation of the effects of any disasters.
- Coordinate ward plans on the prevention of disasters and their mitigation submitted by the ward disaster committee.
- Ensure the performance in the region/municipality of any function of the national disaster management committee that they may be directed to do.
- Disseminate information to educate the public on:
  - human activities most likely to cause environmental disasters
  - the hazards and natural disasters which are likely to affect the region
  - actions to be taken in the event of a disaster of whatever nature.
- Shall present quarterly and annual reports on disaster management activities in the region/municipality.
- Collect and preserve information/data on all disasters.
- Build partnership with all stakeholders in the disaster industry.
- Identify, receive, manage and supervise relief items for disaster victims in case of any occurrence.
- Ensure effective flow of information on disasters between the region/municipality and the national disaster management committee for effective coordination.
- In the event of any disaster asses the extent of damage and the needs for affected areas and report to the appropriate authorities (National disaster Management Committee where necessary)
- Take steps to ensure efficient training of organized personnel and other persons available for emergencies and disaster duties.

Proposed composition of R/MDMC
- The Regional Governor/Mayor as Chair
- The deputy Regional Governor/Mayor
- Chairman of area Council and CEO
- Regional Army Commander
- Regional Police Commander
- Regional Fire Officer
- Regional Public Health Officer
- Regional agriculture/Forestry Officers/veterinary services
- Regional meteorological Office
- Co-opted members….NGOs/Private sector/ Civil Society etc.

- Representatives of the traditional council of elders/religious organizations/area councils/Women's Groups
- Regional Immigration Officer
- Physical Planning
- National Environment Agency
- Regional Information Officer(the media)
- Regional Education Director

District /Ward Disaster Management Committees

The district/ward committees will manage and supervise disasters in their specific areas. They are responsible for preparing district level disaster plans and serve as main link with the regional committee.

Composition of district/ward disaster management committee
- The District Chief/Councilor for municipalities as Chair
- Representatives of institutions/agencies at district level
- Representative of Council of elders/religious leaders
- Youth and women representatives

Village Disaster Management Committees

The village development committees shall perform this function and will be responsible where feasible and appropriate for disaster management at village level, prepare disaster plans, and actively participate in disaster management when ever it occurs. The village committee also safeguard against disasters e.g. annual construction of fire belts around the village. Undertake several mitigation and preparedness activities.

Under the leadership of the Alkalo, the committee comprises of the following:
- Representatives of institutions/agencies at village level e.g. agricultural and extension workers, teachers, health workers, community development assistants.
- Representative of the youths and women
- Representations of local Kafos and organizations

The Disaster Technical Committees at Regional/Municipal levels

A. The Fire Disaster Technical Committee
- The Gambia fire service as lead agent
- Gambia Police Force
- NAWEC
- Physical Planning
- National Environment Agency
- Divisional Health Team
- GAMTEL
- Representative of the regional disaster management committee

- Information Dept
- Forestry Dept
- Local Media
- Area councils/Traditional Councils/ Religious organizations
- NGOs, Private sector, civil society

B. The Hydro-Meteorological (Floods) Disaster Technical Committee
- Water resources as lead agent
- Gambia police Service
- Gambia armed Forces
- Physical Planning Dept
- Lands and survey Dept
- DOS Agric.
- Local Media
- Representative of the regional disaster management committee
- Meteorological Dept.
- Information Dept.
- Area Councils/ traditional Councils/ Religious institutions.

C. Pest, Insects infestation and food disaster Technical committee
- DOS for Agriculture as lead agent
- Veterinary Dept.
- Public Health Officer
- Gambia Red Cross Society
- Representative of regional disaster management committee
- Area Councils/ Traditional councils/religious organizations
- NGOs/Private Sector, Civil Society etc.
- NEA

D. Epidemics Disaster Technical Committee

- Health Services as lead agent
- National Environment Agency
- Gambia Police Force
- Gambia Armed forces
- Area Councils/Traditional council of elders/Religious Organizations
- NGOs/Private Sector/Civil society
- Veterinary Services

E. Reponses, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Technical Committee

- Divisional Governor as lead agent
- Deputy regional governor
- Chairperson of disaster sub-committee

- Chairman Area council
- DOS-Health
- Physical planning
- Gambia Red Cross Society
- NGOs
- Social Welfare
- Area Councils/councils of Elders/Religious organizations

F. Technological/Environmental Technical Committee (, Pollution and Oil spillage etc.)

- National Environment Agency as lead
- Civil Aviation
- Gambia Ports Authority
- Gambia Police
- Gambia Fire Service
- The Gambia Red Cross Society
- The Gambia Navy
- NAWEC
- DOSH
- NGOs/Private Sector,
- Area Councils/ Council of Elders/Religious organizations

G. Technological/Environmental technical committee on marine, aviation, road accidents

- GPA as lead
- Civil Aviation
- Gambia police
- Gambia navy
- Disaster Management Agency
- Area councils/municipality
- NEA
- Private sector/NGOs

Functions of Technical Committees

The following shall be the functions of all technical committees:

- In the event of any disaster, assess the extent of damage and the needs of the affected victims and report to the regional/municipal disaster management committee for action and/or onward transmission to the National Disaster Management Committee where necessary.

- Identify, receive, manage and supervise relief items either donated or meant for distribution to disaster victims (only for committee on responses, rehabilitation, and reconstruction).

- Ensure operational readiness of the R/MDMC.

- Train organized personnel and other persons available for emergencies and disaster duties.

- Disseminate information to educate the public on disaster issues.

The composition of the technical committees is designed to enhance effective handling of disasters. This notwithstanding, members shall be called to duty depending on the type, scope and gravity of a particular disaster. Members shall be further enlightened on this during the proposed training and workshops to be conducted.

Annex: Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

Monitoring disaster management issues, particularly the operationalisation and constant monitoring of an early warning system is critical. The general frame wok for monitoring and evaluating the programme is as follows:

I. MONITORING THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME
- Setting up an early warning system for disasters of different nature (Avian Influenza, floods, fires, crop harvests)
  - Development of indicators (early warning signals
  - Periodic gathering, review and analysis of information
  - Documentation of status and implications
  - Regular feed back to stakeholders
  - Financial planning of responses

- Monitoring systems development and operationalisation

- Develop/review indicators for each priority area
- Set up data collection system for management (during disasters) and mitigation of effects (when, who and how)
- Develop analysis and reporting mechanisms (central, national and regional levels)
- Set up feedback systems (central, national and regional levels) and develop formats for monthly and quarterly reports
- Social auditing, investigations, enquiries into disaster events

II: EVALUATION OF THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

- **Review/Evaluation of the Early Warning System**
    - Six monthly review of the Early warning system for suitability in providing warning signals; should include review and analysis of global situation and potential implications for the Gambia
    - National and regional review of report and revision of strategies

- **Evaluation of the Disaster management programme**
    - Annual programme review national and regional levels and Annual Report preparation with critical review of issues in the year (revision of programme activities and strategies if needed)
    - Mid-Strategy Evaluation after 30-36 months of implementation
    - End of strategy implementation and policy evaluation (should form the basis for a new strategy)