

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA AT THE FOURTH
SESSION OF THE GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK
REDUCTION, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND 19TH TO 23RD MAY, 2013 BY
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR THE INTERIOR,
HON. JAMES AGALGA**

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation have been of serious concern to the Government of Ghana. Pragmatic efforts are being made to mainstream these concerns into our national programmes in an attempt to prevent some of them from happening or reduce their impact.

These notwithstanding, the country suffered some forms of disasters.

Disasters

Hydro meteorological disasters are among the major disasters we encounter in Ghana. These are mostly floods and rainstorms or windstorms. In 2011, 243,988 people were affected throughout Ghana. In the process 16,801 houses were seriously affected. The total cost of loss was \$6,533,463.00. In the same year 6316 different fire incidents were recorded costing \$1,291,347.00

Refugees/Returnees Situation

The past two years saw political crises in neighbouring Libya and La Cote D'ivoire. The crises became so intense in Libya that Ghanaians residing in that country were compelled to evacuate the country. In all 18,445 were evacuated successfully and were received in Ghana. Just as the nation was adjusting to the new demands this evacuation was placing on the economy, the crises in La Cote D'ivoire escalated. Ghana received 12,231 returnees and 10,338 asylum seekers.

A number of initiatives have been undertaken with the aim of building resilience to disasters. They include the following:

National DRR Action Plan

In the year 2015, the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action will come to an end. Ghana, in its bid to implement the HFA more fully has developed a national action plan on DRR 2011-2015. This document is founded on the Hyogo Framework for Action. It also emphasizes the multi-sectoral approach to disaster risk reduction and the need for all DRR stakeholders to invest in disaster reduction programmes. Mayors and main line ministers have been trained and sensitized on the implementation of the action plan.

New Disaster Management Law

The Government of Ghana has decided to strengthen the National Disaster Management Organization, NADMO, the institution charged to manage disasters and similar emergencies in Ghana. A draft bill has been prepared, which seeks to make the organization more proactive in disaster management, and is receiving attention.

Widening Drainage in the Capital City

As part of efforts to curb the recurring flood situation in the capital city, Government, in honoring its Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) obligations has embarked on a drain widening project to reduce the impacts of floods in the capital. In pursuance of this agenda the following interventions are underway:

- Widening and improvement of drainage and waterways
- Preventing the inflow of sand and gravel of roads into drains
- Improving solid waste management
- National Pre-flood public education campaign
- Enforcement of by-laws to prevent the construction of real estates in water courses without appropriate engineering consideration.

National Building Code/Guide

To move a step further in our bid to ensure the safety of our built environment, a simplified version of the building code/guide has been prepared with the support of UNDP. Last year, 4,000 copies were printed and disseminated in the Northern

Region of Ghana – a highly disaster prone region. Cross sections of the players in the building industry including artisans were trained to use the guide.

DRR in School Curricula

In an attempt to reduce vulnerability in basic schools, steps have been taken to incorporate DRR in school curricula. A manual has been prepared with selected teachers trained in the use of the manual.

Establishment of a National Peace Council

Tension and Conflict characterize many African Countries. Ghana also has conflict situations to deal with. These range from chieftaincy disputes and land disputes which could escalate into major conflicts. We also have political disputes and sometimes religious disputes. In order that these disputes do not escalate into disastrous conflicts the government has established the National Peace Council to deal with such disputes before they get out of hand. The committee is made up of eminent religious leaders and citizens. The Council played a very critical role in the successful national elections conducted in December, 2012.

Building the Disaster Management Capacity of Local Government

Bringing disaster risk reduction to the doorstep of the Ghanaian meant strengthening the capacity of the District Assemblies to enable them own the concept and implement it at the zonal and unit levels. In this direction, District Assembly representatives were trained in the preparation of Disaster Management Plans.

Platform for DRR and CCA

Ghana has translated the national platform idea into a local government concept with the establishment of platforms at the local government level to supplement the efforts of the National and Sub-national Platforms.

Capacity Building for Stakeholders

Ghana continues to ensure that DRR and Disaster Management players operate in a well coordinated manner. In this respect joint training programmes with

stakeholders and simulation exercises are held periodically. Simulation exercise on pandemic flu was held under the support of US AFRICOM.

Other joint training programmes are conducted to strengthen institutional and national capacities.

National Emergency Operation Centre

A National Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) is being established at the NADMO Headquarters in Accra. Ghana has adopted the use of a Web EOC which is being installed with the assistance of UNDP and the American Government. Staff are being trained to man the web EOC.

Practical Climate Change Adaptation Initiatives

To mitigate the impact of climate change and also to decrease the vulnerability of the populace, it became crucial to develop and implement consistent, comprehensive and targeted interventions using sustained awareness creation and measures that would increase resilience through adaptation.

Ghana and Japan have started a joint project to research into an integrated approach to enhancing resilience to climate and ecosystem changes in Northern Ghana. This project will develop a Ghana model to enable target groups to overcome their vulnerability through adaptive resource management.

Various other measures are ongoing towards climate change adaptation.

Mr. Chairman, Ghana is committed to the global disaster risk reduction drive, and will commit in insuring a safer world for all.

