

BEST PRACTICES FOR INCORPORATING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION INTO  
PREPAREDNESS  
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## INTRODUCTION

Kenya has over the years and in recent times been exposed to a variety of disasters such as Drought , Floods and Emerging disasters including HIV/AIDS and Terrorism among others. In recognition of its responsibilities to minimize the impact of Disasters, the Government of Kenya embarked on Disaster Management practices aimed at risk reduction in a framework whose sole objective is sustainable development. This short presentation highlights the best practices employed towards Disaster Risk Reduction in the country and challenges faced.

## National Disaster Management Policy

Kenya has prepared a draft National Disaster Management Policy. The overall goal of the Policy is to establish and maintain an efficient, effective and coordinated system for managing disasters, in order to minimize loss of life, resulting disruptions on population, economy and environment. The draft policy has therefore, adopted a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approach to disaster management where all the relevant Government ministries and Departments, Agencies, non- Governmental Organizations, Civil Society organizations and International partners are incorporated. The draft policy recommends innovative strategic options including National Disaster Strategic Plans, Strategic stockpiles of food items to add to the Strategic Grain Reserves, Disaster Trust Funds and District Contingency, the Government of Kenya Fund and insurance initiatives.

## **Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction Preparedness**

Kenya has adopted a community based process in Disaster risk and vulnerability reduction. This 'Bottom-top' process has been found most effective means of reducing disaster through community sensitization, education and involvement right from risk assessment and mapping.

### **National Resource Database**

The National Disaster Operation Centre under the support of Disaster Management in Kenya has formulated a 'one stop-shop data centre' of national inventory on resources and capacities available in all National, Private, NGOs, CBOs and individual institutions. This process has assured faster resource mobilization. Resources and capacities are not wasted or duplicated in DRR processes.

## **Mainstreaming DRR in Ministerial Planning Process**

Mainstreaming DRR into Ministerial planning as recommended in 2004 by the National Platform for DRR. Many Government of Kenya Ministries and departments have adopted this process which has been found to be very effective in DRR.

### **Legal Framework**

As a best practice, a Legal framework is necessary as a means to provide the right environment for co-ordination and implementation of preparedness issues. The legal framework will therefore assign roles to the players and ascribe rules and regulations for Disaster preparedness.

## **Arid Lands Resource Management Project (ALRMP)**

Where countries find that there are areas which are vulnerable to disasters, plans can be put in place to provide early warning signals for preparedness.

ALRMP was created specifically to reduce impacts of droughts in the 28 Arid Districts. The natural resource component of the project which deals with dams and rehabilitation programmes as well as active participation of the people. ALRMP addresses all the four stages of drought i.e.; normal, alert, alarm and emergency. The information empowers communities in arid and semi arid areas to mitigate against drought.

## **Kenya Food Security Structure**

The Kenya Food Security Structure include Kenya Food Security steering Meeting and Kenya Food Security Steering Group. Under this Structure, the Government and other institutions e.g. Kenya Red Cross Society, Drought Monitoring Centre, The Kenya Meteorological Department, AMREF, UN Agencies among others, are involved both in decision-making and response to Disasters.

## Educational Programmes Related to Disaster Risk Reduction in Public Schools

Attempts have been made to incorporate elements on disasters into schools curriculum. At the lower primary schools, children are inculcated with a sense of preserving environment; children are taught about the risks of environment degradation and the importance of planting trees and grass to avoid soil erosion. At the secondary school level, the environmental education components are integrated into the syllabus and covered in a variety of subjects. At the tertiary and university level the students take on the subjects of their interest and those who end up in subjects covering risk reduction end up as professionals in that field.

## **Traditional Indigenous Knowledge Used in Risk Reduction**

Kenya is a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic nation, with a diverse cultural heritage. Kenya has been utilizing such ethnic diversity, in order to encourage and enhance symbiotic relationships and exchange of ideas and information between different communities. It is evident that communities have some knowledge on how to cope with disasters, how to mitigate and even a set-up for Early Warning Systems. This body of knowledge and experiences is now being documented for application by stakeholders in the disaster realm.

## **Public Awareness programmes**

Public awareness campaigns are done by the Government in conjunction with the media, non-governmental organizations working in the area of risk reduction or simply raising an alarm about an issue and international organizations like the United Nations agencies, Action Aid, World Vision etc.



## **Sectoral Ministries**

Line ministries are directly involved in Disaster Risk Reduction at all levels. The key ones include Ministries of Health, Water, Agriculture, Local Authorities and Office of the President/Special Programmes. These have mainstreamed DRR in their planning and budgeting processes. They have also appointed representatives to the local, district, and provincial disaster management Committees. The new Disaster Management Policy requires all ministries to appoint DRR Focal Persons.

## **Local Authorities**

Local Authorities are key partners in DRR and play an active role in Disaster management through enforcement of the by-laws related to disaster risk management activities and initiatives under their jurisdictions.

## **Provincial and District Disaster Risk Reduction Committees**

These Committees have been established at the two administrative levels and play a vital role in DRR coordination and management at those levels. All the key ministries are represented. These Committees have been sensitized on DRR issues although further training is required.

## **National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**

The National Platform which was established in 2004 as a stakeholder forum for consultation, negotiation, mediation and consensus - building on Disaster Risk Reduction. The Platform also coordinates integration of DRR in development and implementation of Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015 which was adopted by member States at the World Conference on DRR.

## **Private sector, Civil Society, NGOs, Academia in the Participation in DRR.**

The academia plays a major role in research work leading to incorporation of results in various policies. The media is important in publicizing the disaster thereby, creating awareness, while NGOs and the civil Society organizations enhance awareness, provision of relief supplies, recovery and rehabilitation of victims. The Private Sector is making significant headway in the management of specific hazards such as fires.

# LESSONS LEARNT

1. **Political Commitment and Institutional Aspects:** In order to be fully prepared, the political process has commenced to entrench the Disaster Management Policy and other related DRR policies, e.g. Fire and ASAL Management Bills, and eventually pass them into law.
2. **Research :**It is evident that without research and information, effective response operations will be impeded. Kenya will therefore, articulate her research agenda for risk reduction, risk identification, targeting, mainstreaming disaster concepts and management. The National Council for Science and Technology is mandated to link Research communities to National and local institutions in Disaster management.
3. **Resource mobilization and Fundraising:** The budgetary allocation of DRR activities are inadequate. Therefore, there is need to address this situation by bringing together all Stakeholders for resource mobilization and prudent allocation, as a matter of priority.
4. **Capacity Building:** There is need to address the training needs of professional and the community. Capacity building will ensure that both professionals and the community members in general are included in disaster management structures.

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION.***

**THE END**