



KENYA

Disaster Management and Preparedness

Disaster Context

Over the last two decades, Kenya has been experiencing serious sequences of rain failure in arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) that make up 70 percent of Kenya's land mass. Floods have not been as frequent. A complete or partial failure of long or short rains is likely to occur an average of every three or four years. During the last 20 years, rain failure in the ASAL has occurred five times: 1976-78, 1982-84, 1992-94, 1996-97 and 2000. Even though floods have become less frequent, the 1997 short rain season in Kenya saw some of the most intense rainfall in 40 years. The ASAL districts experienced floods in 1970, 1974, 1984, 1991 and 1992, plus more severe floods in 1997 and 1998. Four or five times in a decade drought and/or heavy rainfall are likely to cause increased morbidity and mortality rates among people and livestock in the ASAL.

Pastoralists, the largest land users in the ASAL, are often forced during droughts to migrate with camels and cattle to traditional grazing areas in other districts or neighbouring countries, leaving sheep and goats behind. This causes acute shortages of traditional food – milk, blood and meat – for family members left behind (mainly children and women), leading to widespread undernutrition and high rates of malnutrition. Additionally, there are increasing cases of health-related problems associated with lowered resistance to disease arising from the population's declining nutrition status, as well as problems related to the use of contaminated water from drying water pans.

The failure of the short rains in 1995 and long rains in 1996 not only inhibited regeneration of vegetation, it failed to replenish water pans and dams, diminishing levels of natural water sources and boreholes for humans and livestock. The latest drought severely affected about 4.1 million people.

The 1997-98 floods affected populations that had just begun the long process of recovery from the severe drought of 1995-96. ASAL inhabitants lost 80 percent of goats, sheep, cattle, and camels, and

the area suffered significant damage to roads, bridges, human settlements, and other infrastructure.

Project Titles

- Disaster Preparedness, Prevention, Mitigation and Management (KEN/01/001/01/99)
- Flood Emergency Response (KEN/02/003/07/99)

Sectors

- Disaster preparedness
- Disaster prevention
- Capacity-building through training and community-based disaster mitigation
- Risk zoning and vulnerability assessment of extreme weather conditions

Funding

- UNDP contributed \$350,000 from TRAC 1.1.1 funds for the Disaster Preparedness, Prevention, Mitigation and Management project between year 2002 and 2003
- UNDP contributed \$50,000 in TRAC 1.1.3 resources for Flood Emergency Response during 2002

Partners

- Government of Kenya
- FAO
- UNICEF
- WFP
- WHO
- World Bank

Programme Activities

The Disaster Preparedness, Prevention, Mitigation and Management project focuses on strengthening

national capacity to establish a proactive and comprehensive disaster management strategy targeting vulnerable people and communities. The project covers mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery, and is integrated into initiatives aimed at poverty reduction and growth. The expected outcomes of the project are:

- A reduction in losses from disasters, in terms of lives, property, economy and environment
- Greater and sustainable development achievements, including a reduction in vulnerability of communities and infrastructure
- Reduction in overall risk of disasters, both natural and man-made

One of the major outputs in 2002 was the development of a National Disaster Policy. Considering that disasters of all types may occur, UNDP, working in close collaboration with the government, is committed to reducing exposure to risk and vulnerability through a coherent and comprehensive policy on disaster management. In this regard, a preventive strategy that encompasses preparedness, institutional framework, appropriate legislation, and coordination mechanisms have been proposed and will be pursued vigorously. The government is therefore developing a sustainable disaster management policy whose implementation will be through the concerted effort of all stakeholders.

Separately, the Flood Emergency Response project aims to ensure a coordinated response to flood emergencies, particularly by providing assistance to government priority needs regarding humanitarian emergency operations to 175,000 affected Kenyans, including 65,000 displaced persons. This involves:

- Constructing water supply purification systems in response to community needs
- Strengthening post-flood recovery through seed and farm implement distribution
- Supporting food-for-work programmes for rehabilitation of damaged dykes and de-silting of dams
- Working in close collaboration with UNICEF and WHO on management of a malaria epidemic, ensuring continuous monitoring of the situation and subsequent evaluation of the performance of the emergency response