

BOTSWANA COUNTRY REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE AFRICAN REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS ON DISASTER REDUCTION WORKSHOP, JUNE 2-3, 2004 MIDRAND, SOUTH AFRICA.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION IN BOTSWANA

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Botswana is vulnerable to a range of disasters, both natural and human induced. These occur with varying degrees of regularity and intensity. Major disasters include drought, floods, veld fires, accidents, animal diseases and HIV/AIDS.
- 1.2 Drought is a frequent phenomena countrywide and major droughts have occurred in the 1980s. Floods occur during the rainy season, which runs from October to March. The 1999/2000 floods were the worst in living memory. They affected twenty-three administrative districts/cities town/villages, that is the entire country. These floods caused loss of life and extensive damage to infrastructure, public and private assets, environment and disrupted normal family life. Thirteen lives were lost, over seventeen thousand structures were damaged leading to displacement of thousands of people, crops were damaged as well as infrastructure comprising major roads, bridges and railway lines. Livestock was also not spared.
- 1.3 Veld fires both natural and human induced are a regular occurrence during the dry months of April to November, with a peak in July. They occur mainly in National Parks and forest reserves in some districts such as Chobe, Central, Kgalagadi and Kweneng Districts. They have adverse effects on agriculture, wildlife, forestry and other natural resources. They also destroy life and both public and private property.
- 1.4 Animal diseases like Foot and Mouth and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) are some of the diseases known in the country. The CBPP outbreak in 1995 saw Government eradicating over 300,00 cattle at a cost of over P270 million.
- 1.5 Accidents, mainly motor accidents occur throughout the country. They are classified as second to HIV/AIDS in terms of deaths. The number of accidents increased from 6 299 in 1989 to 18 329 in 2003. In the same year 19 people died in one accident and in May 2004, 10 people died in one accident. The year 2003 recorded 557 deaths, the highest since 1989. The number of serious casualties

rose from 1 050 in 1989 to 1 855 in 2003. These statistics are considered high given the size of population, which is 1.7 million.

- 1.6 HIV/AIDS is common in the country and Botswana has been classified as having the highest rate of infection in the world. It is the number one cause of death in the country. Since 1992, Botswana has been monitoring the HIV/AIDS epidemic through annual sentinel surveillance of expectant women attending antenatal clinics. The overall objective being to obtain relevant, sufficient and accurate information on the status of the epidemic in order to guide policy interventions. According to the 2003 survey, the overall HIV prevalence in the country was 37.4 %.

2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 Following the United Nations International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the Government established a National Committee on Disaster Preparedness (NCDP) in 1993. Its mandate was:

- (i) to increase coordination and improve effectiveness in the management of disasters.
- (ii) to ensure cost effectiveness in the utilisation of resources in the management of disasters.

- 2.2 In addition, multi-sectoral preparedness committees were formed in Districts. Some structures also exist within Ministries to deal with sectoral disasters. For example, the Department of Animal Health and Production in the Ministry of Agriculture has sectoral responsibility for animal diseases.

- 2.3 However, in 1996, the Government formulated the National Policy on Disaster Management in recognition that:

- (i) Botswana was vulnerable to other disasters other than drought.
- (ii) A cost effective disaster management programme should as far as possible use existing resources and capacity.
- (iii) The disaster management programme should be consistent with development objectives of Government.
- (iv) The programme should deal with disaster management comprehensively by giving equal focus to all disaster

management elements (prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery) and ensuring that such activities are implemented within local and national development context.

2.4 The objectives of the Policy are to:

- (i) Establish and maintain systems for dealing with all actual or potential disasters that may occur in Botswana.
- (ii) Integrate these systems into normal development activities at local and national levels.
- (iii) Create a framework that facilitates preparation of plans and legislation for effective implementation and legitimacy of disaster management programme.
- (iv) Outline disaster management responsibilities.
- (v) Establish a set of working definitions.
- (vi) Ensure consistency of the Policy with objectives of the National Development Plans.

2.5 The Policy relates to the following elements of disaster management: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery and development. Development relates to overall objectives of poverty alleviation, economic growth, establishment of social justice and economic independence and sustainability of these over time.

2.6 The Policy identifies disaster management as a development activity, aiming to protect the development process itself and ensuring that vulnerability reduction is central to the process.

2.7 The Policy advocates for integration of disaster management into development. This requires giving equal focus to all elements of disaster management, assessing development projects for disaster impact and developing strategies for reducing vulnerability to disasters.

3.0 DISASTER MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

3.1 National Disaster Management Office

The overall responsibility for disaster management rests with the Office of the President. In 1998, the National Disaster

Management Office (NDMO), responsible for overall coordination of disaster management in the country established. Its major responsibility is to ensure a high state of disaster preparedness and capacity to deal with any eventuality. It also has to facilitate integration of disaster management into sectoral policies and programmes.

3.2 National Committee on Disaster Management

This is an interministerial Committee of Deputy Permanent Secretaries from Ministries and representatives of Botswana Police Service, Botswana Defence Force, Botswana Red Cross Society, United Nations and Non Governmental Organisations. The committee is a policy formulation body responsible for developing a disaster management strategy for the country.

3.3 National Disaster Management Technical Committee

The NDMTC is a multi-sectoral technical advisory body composed of professionals from all stakeholders represented in the NCDM. The Committee advises the NDMO and NCDM on all disaster management issues.

3.4 District Disaster Management Committees

The DDMCs are formed by each city/town and District to oversee the implementation of disaster management in districts. They comprise all Government Departments and organisations operating in the District. The primary responsibility of the DDMCs is to protect life, property and environment in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

3.5 Village level

The overall responsibility rests with traditional leaders and organised groups identified by each DDMC.

4.0 BOTSWANA CONSTITUTION

4.1 Section 17 of the Constitution grants the President at any time to declare a state of public emergency. The Constitution places some limitations such as the period and requirement for approval by Parliament for a state of emergency. This provision may be used for disasters as well as other political sensitive situations like war.

4.2 Section 17 is complemented by the Emergency Powers Act 22:04 which empowers the President to make regulations whenever a state of emergency has been declared. The emergency regulations provide for a range of measures as the President may determine to meet the emergency, including the securing of public safety, the maintenance of public order and for a maintaining supplies and services essential to the life of the community. Parliamentary scrutiny of the emergency regulations is guaranteed by the requirement of approval by Parliament.

5.0 MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The Policy recognises that Disaster Management is a responsibility of everyone and the entire structure of Government at both national and local levels is involved.

5.2 All Ministries/Departments have responsibility to ensure that adequate prevention, mitigation preparedness and response measures are in place to protect assets that fall under their portfolio responsibilities. They have to ensure that all development projects formulated and implemented are protected from disaster impacts by taking actions:

- (i) to prevent disasters from occurring and preventing those that occur from having adverse effects on their projects.
- (ii) by putting measures in place to reduce damage should a disaster strike.

5.3 The implementation of disaster management projects and programmes rests briefly with live ministries at national and district levels because the necessary sectoral skills and expertise are housed within these ministries.

5.4 Ministries have sectoral responsibilities for handling specific disasters which are governed by other provisions in various pieces of legislation. For example:

- Herbage Preservation Act Cap 38:02 which deals generally with protection of vegetation against fire.
- Factories Act, Cap 44:01, which deals with aspects of safety in design and construction of factories and the handling of explosive and inflammable substances.
- Fire Services Act, Cap 40:04 which deals with control and

management of fire.

- Waste Management Act 1998 which provides for the planning, facilitation and implementation of systems for regulating the management of controlled waste.
- Diseases of Animals Act, 1977, which provides for the prevention and control of diseases of animals.

Each of these Acts, administered by a relevant Ministry, establishes a separate machinery for monitoring compliance.

6.0 NATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF FUND

- 6.1 The NDRF was established in 1996 and is administered by the NDMO. Its purpose is to provide assistance to natural disaster victims to meet their life sustaining needs such as shelter, food and provision of sanitary facilities.
- 6.2 Following a disaster strike, the DDMC in the affected district will make some preliminary assessments to establish the extent of damage and needs. A request is then submitted to NDMO for funds to purchase the required relief items.
- 6.3 Other relief measures to mitigate the effects of disasters depend on the type of disaster being addressed. For example, for animal diseases measures include cash payment and cattle restocking for affected farmers. For drought, measures include supplementary feeding of the vulnerable groups (under fives, pregnant women and lactating mothers); labour intensive public works programme; provision of a second meal for remote area dwellers' children; free botulism vaccinations and 25% price subsidy for selected stock feeds. For HIV/AIDS, programmes include prevention of mother to child transmission, provision of antiretroviral therapy, community home based care programmes and support for orphans and vulnerable children.

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Though the Policy and the above structures exist, the country does not have other instruments in place. Some of these are a National Disaster Management Plan and a Legislation. The NDMO is in the process of developing these. A hazard assessment and vulnerability analysis for the country has also not been undertaken.

7.2 Furthermore, it has been realised that some projects are undertaken without due regard to disaster considerations. This has tended to exacerbate disaster impacts. The Government therefore faces the challenge of ensuring that disaster management is integrated into development planning processes by government, private sector, non-governmental organisations, communities and households.

8.0 SUGGESTION ON HOW TO ADVANCE DISASTER RISK REDUCTION IN AFRICA

8.1 Disaster risk reduction needs to be advanced. Considering the adverse impacts of disasters, all structures and policy initiatives developed at national and regional levels should take aboard issues of disaster risk reduction.

9.0 PRIORITIES THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION

9.1 Among priorities areas that need to be addressed are:

- Disaster Management integration and processes involved.
- Formulation of Disaster Management Legislation to give legitimacy to disaster management programmes.
- A Hazard Assessment and Vulnerability Analysis to determine disasters likely to occur and the areas likely to be affected so that measures could be undertaken in advance to reduce vulnerability, risks and impacts.