

CONCEPT NOTE

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE SERIES ON DISASTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Co-hosted by the South African Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME); the South African National Disaster Management Center (NDMC); and the United Nations – South Africa (UN-SA).

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1. CONTEXT: STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

South Africa is recognized as one of the countries on the Continent that has a solid legal framework on disaster risk reduction. The effectiveness of the disaster regulatory system was evident during the advent of the global coronavirus disease pandemic that inflicted large scale damage across vital systems upon which human societies and economies depend. Despite the effectiveness of the legislation during the pandemic, the country's response to the 2021/22 floods in Kwa Zulu Natal, Eastern Cape and North West was once again tested. In the face of intensifying climate change impacts and increasing system threats, South Africa's risk reduction efforts seem too little and too late. Evidence indicated that the three provinces had disaster-related losses, with significant economic, social, health, cultural and environmental impact, especially at the local and community levels. The Auditor General also noted in the First Special Report on flood relief funds dated August 31, 2022 that, although government provided social relief, the rehousing and rebuilding phases were too slow. Not all delivery in critical areas took place at the required speed and quality. The responses also revealed weaknesses in intergovernmental processes and coordination.

It is thus urgent and critical for the country to anticipate, further plan for, and reduce disaster risk in order to more effectively protect persons, communities, livelihoods, health, socio-economic assets, and thus strengthen the resilience to flood-related disasters.

During the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 in Japan, countries reiterated their commitment to address disaster risk reduction, and to build resilience to disasters; and integrate both disaster risk reduction and building of resilience into policies, plans, programmes and budgets at all levels, and to consider both within relevant frameworks. The result of the Conference was the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030¹ whose outcome is

'The substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries'

The Sendai framework acknowledges that 'the realization of this outcome requires the strong commitment and involvement of political leadership ... at all levels in the implementation and follow-up of the framework'.

To this end, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) working together with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA) through the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), is responding to the request by Cabinet to review the systems for disaster management in South Africa. To support this process, the United Nations-South Africa (UN-SA) has offered to work with DPME and NDMC in facilitating the exchange of lessons and practices on disaster management. All three collaborating partners will convene dialogue series to benchmark how different countries successfully prepare for and respond to disasters. Such an exchange of international practices will contribute to the review of the system of disaster management in South Africa which is meant to better prepare the country's response to major risks. The importance of preparing for major risks was highlighted by the United Nations Secretary-General that 'all too often after a major crisis, we tend to go back to business as

usual, leaving vulnerabilities in our societies unaddressed'².

The series will thus review existing disaster-related challenges faced by South Africa; and what works under various conditions, and come up with strategies to prepare for future ones by focusing on monitoring, assessing and understanding disaster risk, and sharing expertise information on how they are mitigated. The series will also deliberate on efforts to strengthen disaster risk governance and coordination across all relevant institutions and sectors; the full and meaningful participation of relevant stakeholders at appropriate levels; and enhancing multi-hazard early warning systems, preparedness, response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

The knowledge-sharing sessions will draw from the four Priorities³ contained in the Sendai Framework of Action, and in the Hyogo Framework for Action; and guided by the principles of the Sendai Framework, while considering South Africa's circumstances, and consistent with the country's domestic laws as well as international obligations and commitments.

It should be noted that the approach to the disaster risk reduction dialogue series will complement existing national action and capacity by learning from international experiences of countries that have been exposed to various forms of disasters.



¹ Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held from 14 – 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Miyagi, Japan

² The United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction: Global Risk Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction; 2022 The United Nations Office of Disaster Risk Reduction: Global Risk Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction; 2022

³ Priority 1: understanding disaster risk; Priority 2: strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk; Priority 3: investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience; Priority 4: enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response and to 'Build Back Better' in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

2. AIM OF THE KNOWLEDGE-SHARING SERIES

The dialogue series seek to leverage the experiences of global countries that have been affected by disasters by benchmarking how they prepare for, and respond to such. The series also seeks to enhance the knowledge of South Africa on mainstreaming disaster management into the country's planning systems, guided by the National Development Plan (NDP), as well as into implementation

frameworks such as the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), to ensure the involvement of the whole of government. Insights from the knowledge-sharing series will contribute to the review and strengthening of the system of disaster management in South Africa.

3. KEY OUTCOMES OF THE KNOWLEDGE-SHARING SERIES

The key outcomes of the knowledge-sharing series are aligned to the Key Performance Areas and Enablers of the National Disaster

Management Policy Framework⁴ which are drawn from the four Priorities of Action of the Sendai Framework:

- a) *Strengthened integrated institutional capacity for disaster management, including strengthened capacity of the public sector to enable the effective implementation of disaster risk management and legislation.*
- b) *Enhanced disaster risk assessment and monitoring that will inform disaster risk management planning and disaster risk reduction undertaken by organs of state and other role players.*
- c) *Strengthened and integrated coordination mechanisms within and across sectors and with relevant stakeholders at all levels. This requires a clear articulation of responsibilities across all stakeholders to ensure mutual outreach, complementarity in roles, accountability and follow-up.*
- d) *Enhanced disaster risk reduction approaches to ensure that all disaster management stakeholders develop and implement integrated disaster risk management plans and risk reduction programs in accordance to approved frameworks.*
- e) *Improved empowerment strategies of local authorities and local communities to reduce disaster risk through effective decision-making responsibilities.*
- f) *Enhanced disaster preparedness for effective response, and to 'Build Back Better' during post-disaster recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts that is meant to increase public education and awareness of disaster risk.*

4. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

Sharing global expertise and knowledge on disaster risk reduction in response to the recent floods in South Africa; exposure to innovative disaster monitoring systems, processes and tools.

5. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

The knowledge-sharing series on disaster risk reduction which DPME and NDMC will convene in collaboration with UN-SA aims to share experiences and expertise on the creation of a system of stability in response to the climatic catastrophes which the country has experienced, as well as further reduce disaster losses. The United Nations (UN) shall identify, and invite countries that have experienced various forms of climatic disasters to share lessons, given its analytical and global comparative advantage of having the (i) United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction Office (UNDRR) which

specializes in making communities safer and resilient to disasters; (ii) Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action; (iii) Hyogo Framework for Action; and (iv) Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

The identified countries will be requested to indicate why they are successful in managing disasters, i.e. they should share their critical success factors.

⁴ https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/275340.pdf

5.1 KEY EFFECTS FROM THE RECENT FLOODS IN SA:

Some of the key challenges experienced by South Africa during the recent floods shall guide the UN-SA to identify the countries that will participate in the dialogue series. These include:

- a) *Climate change resilient infrastructure, especially amongst communities that are prone to floods;*
- b) *Early warning systems and early action which have the potential to significantly make a difference in reducing the destruction caused by disasters;*
- c) *Communication strategies with every segment of society affected by disasters in order to achieve the required results;*
- d) *Implementing a whole-of-society approach which contributes to the effective management of disasters, and assists in recovery efforts;*
- e) *Harnessing the scientific and technological capability in support of disaster management;*
- f) *Mainstreaming of disasters in the National Development Plans, thus becoming an instrument that holds all responsible accountable;*
- g) *Disaster monitoring systems;*
- h) *Disaster risk reduction strategies; and*
- i) *Mechanism to transfer risk.*

UN-SA will also be guided by the lessons learnt from the recent floods that were identified by the National Joint Flood Coordinating Committee. These include, amongst others, the following:

- a) *Review disaster management function placement and strengthen capacity and capability across spheres of government and sectors to achieve better and faster outcomes;*
- b) *Mainstream disaster management in all organs of state;*
- c) *Identify risks early through multi-hazard sector and community-based risk assessments. Improve risk informed planning by conducting risk assessments and integration into ONE PLAN process.;*
- d) *Improve intergovernmental collaboration and coordination through integrated disaster reduction strategies and disaster management plans;*
- e) *Capacitate the disaster operation centers with adequate human resources and suitable ICT support systems;*
- f) *Implement a centralized disaster management information management system, and improve early warning systems to activate localized early action initiatives;*
- g) *Educate communities to increase resilience and decrease vulnerability; and*
- h) *Implement a disaster grant fund information management system.*



5.2 RISK PROFILE MAPS

The countries with good risk reduction practices are referenced in both the Hyogo Framework and Sendai Framework on disaster risk reduction:

#	Country	Risk reduction Area
1	Switzerland	Early warning systems that predict potential threats like landslides, avalanches and floods. They enable the movement of thousand of people from danger to safer zones
2	Brazil	Strict regulation on construction activities in the flood plains of the Amazon River basin and its tributaries (refer to the construction of shacks in flood plains in South Africa)
3	Mexico	Identified standards for buildings which emphasize minimum reinforcement of buildings
4	Japan	Developed best system of warning for tsunami and earthquakes ⁵
5	Cuba	National media is well prepared to warn public about impending disasters. Civil protection committees are well trained to execute evacuation plans.
6	Germany	Forests are considered as a natural barrier that acts as a shield against storm winds.
7	India	Have adopted community-based approaches in building multi-purpose shelters to be inhabited by citizens. The country blows sirens in coastlines as an early warning system to move citizens in times of disasters.
8	Jakarta in Indonesia	Have early warning hazard maps that move citizens out of danger zones
9	Accra in Ghana	Use water and sanitation initiatives for communities that are vulnerable to natural disasters
10	Mozambique	Turned shorelines to forests. The initiative was started in response to Cyclone Idai

BRICS and SADC countries will also be considered in sharing their experiences of managing disasters.

The knowledge-sharing series will sequence the topics to be deliberated during the dialogue sessions. The topics will address the disaster risk reduction challenges faced by the country, some of which are mentioned in section 5.1 above. More than one country

with similar expertise, tools, and ideas of how to address systemic risks will be invited to share their experiences with the audience listed below in section 6. One of the outcomes of the dialogue series is to potentially enhance the knowledge-sharing platform for building of partnerships and networks at the national, regional and international levels.



⁵ Hyogo Framework for Action mentions that during the tsunami of 2011, the most trained category were Japanese children. Once the warning siren sounded in coastal schools, the children have been taught to leave the building knowing well how to act by going to the highest point in their neighborhood in time to reach safety while roaring waters destroyed the school. Hyogo Framework for Action

6. TARGET AUDIENCE

The dialogue series are primarily knowledge exchange sessions supported by the DPME; NDMC and the United Nations South Africa who acknowledge the presence of disaster management institutions/ organizations and Forums in the public, private sectors; as well as the existence of civil society organizations. Participants in the sessions will represent the broader Community of Practitioners, and will include, amongst others:

a) Government Administrative Leadership;

- Directors General/Permanent Secretaries/Principal Secretaries.
- Heads of Disaster Management Centers.
- National Planning Commission Secretariat.

b) National Disaster Management Advisory Forum;

c) National, provincial, and local Disaster Management Centers;

d) Technical Officers;

- Disaster managers at central government level; provincial and local levels.
- M & E Programme Managers at national; provincial; and local levels.
- Planners, including spatial planners at national; provincial and local levels.
- Evaluators at national; provincial and local levels.

e) Multilateral bodies and other development partners active in disaster management;

f) Civil society organizations; academia and private sector;

g) Research Institutes and relevant Chapter 9 institutions; and

h) Other African countries that are directly affected by natural disasters.



7. ABRIDGED PLAN

The abridged plan for knowledge-sharing sessions is outlined below:

Item	Timeframe	Responsibility
a) Consultative planning meeting between DPME and UN-SA on the approach to UN support to DPME	October	DPME/NDMC/UN-SA
b) Development of 1st version of Concept Note	October	DPME
c) Review of Concept Note	November	DPME/NDMC/UN-SA
d) Approval of Concept Note to give direction to the knowledge-sharing series on disaster risk reduction	November	DPME/NDMC/UN-SA
e) Consensus on sequencing of dialogue series	November	DPME/NDMC/UN-SA
f) Identify best countries at reducing disaster risks, including BRICS and SADC countries.	November	UN-SA
g) Develop a comprehensive knowledge-sharing program that reflects the following themes that are aligned to the National Disaster Management Framework, and to the Priorities of Action of the Sendai Framework: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrated institutional capacity for disaster management (including strengthening the capacity of the public sector to manage disasters; disaster risk assessment; 2. Disaster risk reduction (mainstreaming disaster management into National Development Plans and implementation frameworks); 3. Disaster preparedness, response and recovery (including early warning systems and access to such -early warning, early action); 4. Information management and communication (including communication strategies used during disasters and disaster monitoring systems); 5. Public awareness, research, and capacity building; 6. Funding arrangements for disaster management; and 7. Integrated approaches used to coordinate the whole of society. 	November	DPME/NDMC/UN-SA
h) Invitations to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Countries to share best practices 2. Target audience 3. Other UN Offices on the Continent 	March	DPME
i) Convene 1 st knowledge-sharing session	April 2023	DPME/NDMC/UN-SA
j) Convene additional knowledge-sharing sessions on agreed themes	April 2023	DPME/NDMC/UN-SA
k) Produce a comprehensive report on the dialogue series.	End April 2023	DPME; UN-SA