

**World Conference on Disaster Reduction
National Reporting and Information on Disaster Reduction for
the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe-Hyogo,
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**Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator,
Disaster Unit**

Component 1: Political Commitment and Institutional Aspects

1. Political Commitment and Institutional Aspects

1.1 Are there national policy, strategy and legislation addressing disaster risk reduction?

Yes. In 1999, the Deputy Prime Minister's (DPM) office drafted the National Disaster Management Policy; Cabinet since approved this policy. In 2000, a Disaster Management Bill and National Disaster Management Plan were developed. The Bill mandates the office of the DPM to handle all issues pertaining to disasters. The Bill was presented and discussed in Cabinet in February 2004; however, it has not been ratified. It is expected that Parliament will ratify the Bill before the end of 2004.

1.2. Is there a national body for multi-sectorial coordination and collaboration in disaster risk reduction, which includes ministries in charge of water resource management, agriculture/land use and planning, health, environment, education, development planning and finance?

Yes. The National Disaster Task Force (NDTF) was created in 1992 in order to respond to disasters in Swaziland. The Regional Administrator, a political position that oversees the political functions of each region in the country, chairs the Task Force. The current NDTF Chairman, Dr. Ben Nsibandze, reports directly to the Deputy Prime Minister. The NDTF is composed of representatives from the following organizations, Early Warning Unit, Crop Assessment Unit, Livestock department, Swaziland Meteorology Unit, Water Resources department, UNDP (The office of the Resident Coordinator), Disaster Coordinators, UNDP focal person on poverty and environment, FAO, UNICEF, WFP, and the food security consortium of Non-Governmental Organizations involved in food distribution activities. However, the NDTF is an ad hoc body. Once the Disaster Management Bill is ratified, a permanent inter-governmental structure at national and regional levels will be established, linking government ministries with the administrations of the four regions: northern Hhohho, central Manzini, eastern Lubombo and southern Shiselweni. This institution, the National Sustainable Disaster Management Council (NSDMC) will coordinate disaster risk reduction activities. The Disaster Management Bill also proposes the creation of a Secretariat to serve the Council. The Council will be chaired by the Minister and includes the following proposed members, the Principal Secretaries of Natural Resources, Tourism, Environment and Communications, Health and Social Welfare, Public Works and Transport, Finance, Agriculture and Cooperatives and the Deputy Prime Minister's office, the Commander of the Army, the Commissioner of Police, the Chief Fire Officer, Regional Secretaries, the Director of the National Sustainable Disaster Council Secretariat, and representatives from the following stakeholders, organized labour, organized business, religious and welfare organizations, medical and Para-medical organizations, non-governmental

organizations, community based organizations, and The Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society. The proposed functions of the Secretariat are to:

- Coordinate, facilitate and monitor the implementation of disaster management policies, plans, programmes and procedures;
- Develop effective performance standards for disaster management;
- Analyse data and disseminate information in order to support and facilitate the implementation of disaster management policy, programmes and procedures;
- Promote and implement public awareness programmes especially in respect of known hazards;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of disaster management planning and coordination in any post disaster situation; and,
- Develop guidelines for capacity building programmes aimed at decreasing vulnerability and increasing preparedness and mitigation capacity.

The Secretariat will be aided by a variety of working groups made up of individuals with expertise and experience in the various fields of disaster risk reduction and recovery. The Secretariat will further decentralise its disaster management activities to the regions and the communities through the establishment of regional disaster management committees.

In the event of an emergency, the Bill specifies that an emergency management structure will be created to respond to the immediate needs of the adversely affected population.

It is expected that Parliament will approve the Disaster Management Bill before the end of this year (2004). The enactment of the Bill will permit the creation of a permanent institution to address disaster recovery and disaster risk reduction

1.3 Are there sectoral plans or initiatives that incorporate risk reduction concept into each respective development area (such as water resource management, poverty alleviation, climate change adaptation, education and development planning)?

Yes. Various sectors have developed action plans and strategies to address a number of development challenges. In the area of environmental protection, the Swaziland Environmental Authority has developed an environment action plan and an environmental education strategy. The Ministry of Economic Planning and Development has created the Poverty Monitoring Unit and a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper is due for completion in June 2004. A climatic change strategy is currently under preparation. In the area of disaster management, a disaster management plan has been developed. The aim of this plan is to define the actions to deal with disasters in Swaziland within the overall goal of the national disaster management policy. The objectives of the plan are:

- a) To outline measures to reduce the vulnerability to disasters and build the capacity and resilience at national, regional and community levels to withstand the impact of disasters and specifically:
- b) To outline disaster management structures and their responsibilities.
- c) To outline structures for dealing with disaster emergency
- d) To outline the requirements for the various elements of disaster management, namely mitigation, response, rehabilitation and reconstruction
- e) To outline preparedness measures for saving lives and livelihoods through effective and timely assistance to disaster victims
- f) To outline the framework for early warning system and information management
- g) To outline the requirements for education, training and public awareness and other capacity programmes
- h) To outline requirements for effective response to disasters, including disaster assessment.

The biggest challenge for the country is to translate these action plans and strategies in to programmes that will be implemented. At this time period, disaster mitigation in Swaziland is reactive, not proactive.

- 1.4 Is disaster risk incorporated into your national plan for the implementation of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), National Adaptation Plans of Action, National Environmental Action Plans and World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Johannesburg Plan of Implementation?**

No.

- 1.5 Does your country have building codes of practice and standards in place, which takes into account seismic risk?**

No.

- 1.6 Do you have an annual budget for disaster risk reduction?**

No. To date, budget allocations for responding to disasters have been made on an ad hoc basis with very nominal budget allocations.

- 1.7 Are the private sector, civil society, NGOs, academia and media participating in disaster risk reduction efforts?**

No.

Component 2: Risk Identification

- 2.1 Has your country carried out hazard mapping/assessment?**

No; however, the Swaziland meteorological service conducts research with the aim to, first, advance meteorological science and to, second, develop a comprehensive description and scientific understanding of Swaziland's weather and climate; this information has been used to assess the severity of drought hazards.

2.2 Has your country carried out vulnerability and capacity assessments?

Yes. The Swaziland Vulnerability Assessment Committee (Swazi VAC) collects and analyses vulnerability data using a livelihood-based vulnerability approach (LBVA), incorporating the household economy approach (HEA). The Swazi VAC has also performed a national survey to analyse the impact of HIV/AIDS on the demography and livelihoods of rural populations in Swaziland. Mr. George Ndlangamandla is the current Chairman of the Swazi VAC. Ms. Lungile Mndzebele is the Swazi VAC Coordinator; they can be contacted at swazivac@realnet.co.sz.

2.3 Does your country have any mechanisms for risk monitoring and risk mapping?

Yes. The National Early Warning Unit (NEWU) provides advanced information on food security prospects in Swaziland at both national and household level, through assessments of expected production, food supplied and food requirements. The Regional Early Warning Unit (REWU), which coordinates the activities of NEWU of SADC member states, provides technical assistance to the NEWU in the form of backstopping missions and consultancies in the agro-meteorology, agro-economics and agro-statistics to facilitate assessments of food security.

2.4 Is there a systematic socio-economic and environmental impact and loss analysis in your country after each major disaster?

No.

2.5 Are there early warning systems in place?

Yes. The Government of Swaziland subscribes to the SADC Regional Early Warning System (REWS), which is composed of a Regional Early Warning Unit (REWU), based in Harare, and autonomous National Early Warning Units (NEWU), based in each of the ten original SADC member country states. The (NEWU) activities are coordinated by the REWU, which acts as the secretariat of the REWS.

Component 3: Knowledge Management

3.1 Does your country have disaster risk information management systems

(governmental and/or non-governmental)?

No.

- 3.2 Are the academic and research communities in the country linked to national or local institutions dealing with disaster reduction?**

No.

- 3.3 Are there educational programmes related to disaster risk reduction in your public school systems?**

No; however, there are in school educational programmes that incorporate aspects of environmental pollution.

- 3.4 Are there any training programmes available?**

No.

- 3.5 What kind of traditional indigenous knowledge and wisdom is used in disaster-related practices or training programmes on disaster risk reduction in your country?**

None.

- 3.6 Do you have any national awareness programmes or campaigns on disaster risk reduction?**

No.

Component 4: Risk Management Applications/Instruments

- 4.1 Are there any good examples of linking environmental management and risk reduction practices in your country?**

The Maguga Dam is a good example of environmental management and risk reduction in Swaziland. The 11,000-km² Komati drainage basin, which straddles South Africa and Swaziland, meets expected increases in primary water demand, stabilizes river flows and supports agriculture development. The dam benefits water resource users in Swaziland, South Africa and Mozambique; as such, it is a valuable asset for three countries.

- 4.2 Are financial instruments utilized in your country as a measure to reduce the impact of disasters?**

No. There is no public-private insurance partnership. The government does not even insure its vehicles.

4.3 Please identify specific examples of technical measures or programmes on disaster risk reduction that have been carried out in your country

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Component 5: Preparedness and Contingency Planning

5.1 Do you have disaster contingency plans in place? Are they prepared for both national and community levels?

There are no disaster contingency plans at any level.

5.2 Has your government established emergency funds for disaster response and are there national and community storage facilities for emergency relief items?

Until recently, funding for emergencies was provided in an ad hoc fashion. In the 2004 fiscal year a Special Fund was created to respond to the food insecurity emergency caused by drought and HIV/AIDS. This funding will be used for the procurement of food aid and is only sufficient for the duration of approximately two months. It is expected that this allocation sets the trend for future years and that the Special Fund will eventually focus on recovery from disasters and risk reduction.

Storage facilities for food items are available at regional and community levels for drought relief. These facilities are owned by non-governmental organizations involved in food distribution in Swaziland. These storage facilities are not permanent and have only been established to provide relief for the for the current food emergency.

The Swaziland Baphalali Red Cross Society stocks blankets, tents and tarpaulins (i.e. 4x6 meter flexible braided plastic sheets). In May 2004, the Swaziland Baphalali Red Cross Society had warehouse stocks of approximately 2,000 blankets, 10 tents, and 1,000 tarpaulins. However, it should be noted that the Swaziland Baphalali Red Cross Society has not established procurement systems whereby arrangements are made with private industry to supply emergency relief supplies during times of increased needs. As such, prices of relief items are not fixed and it may take two to three weeks to acquire relief items outside the Red Cross' maintained stock.

5.3 Who is responsible for the coordination of disaster response preparedness and is the coordination body equipped with enough human and financial resources for the job?

The NDTF is responsible for the coordination of emergency responses. They are understaffed, under-funded and act re-actively rather than pro-actively. Currently only two officers who have been seconded from the ministry of Agriculture are available for the coordination of emergency food relief. The distribution is carried out by the non-governmental organizations who are contracted by government and the World Food Programme. The coordination function has not been very effective because of the shortage of staff, knowledge and skills to carry out this function.

Component 6: Call for Good Practice in Disaster Risk Management

Whereas there is no practical example of good practice, the Disaster Management Council creates an inclusive representation of all sectors of the community and also decentralizes the structures that address disaster management issues to the regional level.

Component 7: Priorities you Want Addressed at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

The following are issues which are considered very important and key not only to Swaziland but to other countries in the region:

- **Food Insecurity:** Food insecurity is at the core of factors that increase risk and vulnerability in Southern Africa. It is important to highlight that food insecurity is a complex multi-sectoral interaction of livelihood factors such as employment, access to markets, agricultural production, pricing factors etc.
- **Reduced Capacity to Govern:** The impact of HIV/AIDS has reduced the capacity to govern at all levels of the governing structures including the ability to provide basic social services such as health care, education and social welfare.
- **Poverty:** Less developed countries are less able to mitigate and respond to disasters due to the fact that resources are not adequately dedicated to prevention programmes. Response plans tend to be reactive rather than proactive. Poverty levels are very high, which in turn influence populations towards risky behaviors and practices.
- **Emergency Relief and Development:** There is an urgent need to examine the linkages between relief and development when addressing issues of emergencies and disasters. There is a need to appreciate that disasters are usually symptoms of development failures/challenges. As such, medium- and long-term response processes are equally if not more important than

the initial response process. Unfortunately, media and public attention to reconstruction is limited, this adversely impacts on the ability to the government to maintain public support and provide adequate assistance and training.