

Karamoja region concept note on disaster preparedness

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Back ground

Karamoja is susceptible to consequence of both natural and man-made disasters. The compounding effects of drought and the repeated exposure to floods, epidemics and animal diseases often leave the region in a vicious cycle of need and or perceived need of humanitarian assistance. Consequently the emphasis on disaster response and humanitarian assistance has led to significant amounts of resources being absorbed in the region. Karamoja is now on the transition from humanitarian assistance to recovery and development however the sudden shocks from the above hazards and the likely effects of climate change are bound to increase on community vulnerability. The need for timely, proper targeting of the stricken areas and coordinated approach to crisis management led to the emphasis on contingency planning. To have a holistic approach this must be complimented by preparedness planning. The completion of the district contingency plans and development of preparedness plans are strategically critical for the region for timely mobilization of resources and appropriate interventions that will enhance community resilience and reduce societal vulnerability to risk.

Since August 2008 three regional workshops to support the region in disaster preparedness have been held. In their first regional workshop held in 2008 the following hazards were identified; drought, insecurity from cattle rustling, epidemics, epizootics and water logging/ floods in the low lying areas. The second was a capacity building workshop held in October 2010 that kick started the district contingency planning process. The most recent held on 9-10 March 2011 aimed at validating the district contingency drafts. To develop the contingency plans each district prioritized two hazards and drought was ranked as the main hazard across all districts.

The link between the Contingency Plans and the Disaster Preparedness plans

Contingency and Preparedness planning are part of the disaster management cycle that includes prevention, preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery. Contingency planning is a vital aspect of disaster preparedness and is a crisis management tool. On the other hand preparedness planning is a risk management tool.

Disaster preparedness refers to a state of being prepared /ready for unpredictable events. In this case the anticipated disaster situation that would result from the identified and prioritized hazards for Karamoja region. In order to be prepared Karamoja will focus on defining its readiness to face the impending hazards of drought, epizootics, epidemics, and water logging/ floods. The strategic preparedness actions will include:

- a) Securing community livelihoods
- b) Enhancement of community coping mechanism
- c) Planning to improve operational capabilities
- d) Prepositioning of required materials/ assistance for timely and effective response to the anticipated shocks.

Taking the above into account it is important therefore that stakeholders district local governments and Agency leads conduct comprehensive vulnerability of the community according to sector. This risk analysis will be integrated to provide districts and regional contexts. The contingency plans are a valuable resource for the development of the preparedness plans. The risk analysis information provide in the CPs will be expanded inform the detailed vulnerability analysis, the sector response plans will be translated into preparedness perspective and consequently into sector preparedness plans.

A guide to the preparedness planning process

- A detailed analysis of risk associated to the respective hazards in the district Contingency Plans is to be done as a link to the preparedness planning process. This provides a guide to evaluating and prioritizing impacts
- The planning assumptions will be developed to focus on risk reduction
- The Sector response plans will be used to identify preparedness actions, indicators and tools that can be used to reduce impacts of hazards and future episodes.
- Preparedness planning must be viewed as an on-going process, continuously evaluating our changing vulnerabilities and how governments and stakeholders can work in partnership to lessen risk.

The check list on the stages of preparedness planning process

No.	Aspect	Application
1	Establish a Regional/ District Hazard Working Group and District Focal Points to oversee the development of the preparedness plan	Integrate the Karamoja Regional CP WG & partners in CMDRR & incorporate members of the Resettlement WG
2	State the Objectives of the respective Hazard Preparedness Plan	Per district
3	Seek Stakeholders participation and resolve role conflict	UNKT, Inter Agency, DDMC, SWG (Regional and District)
4	Establish and write the Preparedness plan	Translate the CP Sector Response plans into Preparedness Sector plans Provide
5	Identify assessment/ research needs and fill institutional gaps	Lead Agencies, Sector Heads
6	Integrate Science and policy	Link the district Preparedness plans to existing policies and government funded programme/ interventions
7	Publicize the Hazard Preparedness plan build public awareness and consensus	Community Education through radio, community meetings, council sessions,
8	Develop education/ sensitization programme	Partner interventions including development of IEC materials
9	Evaluate and revise the plan according to the changing circumstances	SWG/ DDMC quarterly reviews and updates