

# **National Policy on Disaster Management**

## Definitions of Disaster Management Terms

**A Hazard:** A hazard is a dangerous phenomenon, substance, human activity or condition that may cause the loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

**A Natural Hazard:** Natural processes or phenomenon that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

**A Geological Hazard:** Geological process or phenomenon that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage

**A Technological Hazard:** A hazard originating from technological or industrial conditions, including accidents, dangerous procedures, infrastructure failures or specific human activities, that may cause loss of life, injury, illness or other health impacts, property damage, loss of livelihoods and services, social and economic disruption, or environmental damage.

**A Disaster:** A disaster is a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community/society to cope using its own resources.

**A Disaster Risk:** The potential disaster losses, in lives, health status, livelihoods, assets and services, which could occur to a particular community or a society over some specified future time period.

**Disaster Risk Management:** The systematic process of using administrative directives, organisations, and operational skills and capacities to implement strategies, policies and improved coping capacities in order to lessen the adverse impacts of hazards and the possibility of disaster.

**Disaster Risk Reduction:** The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyze and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property,

wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

**Risk Assessment:** A methodology to determine the nature and extent of risk by analysing potential hazards and evaluating existing conditions of vulnerability that together could potentially harm exposed people, property, services, livelihoods and the environment on which they depend.

**Climate Change:** A change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g. by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variabilities of its properties and that persist for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate Change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or land use.

**Adaptation to Climate Change:** The adjustment in natural or human activities in responses to actual or expected climate stimuli or their effects which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

**Vulnerability:** The characteristics and circumstances of a community, system or asset that makes it susceptible to the damaging effects of a hazard.

Kenya's disaster profile is dominated by droughts, fire, floods, terrorism, technological accidents, diseases and epidemics that disrupt people's livelihoods, destroy the infrastructure, divert planned use of resources, interrupt economic activities and retard development. In the pursuit of reducing vulnerabilities to risks, the Government has formulated a National Policy on Disaster Management to institutionalise mechanisms for addressing disasters. This lecture discusses this briefly as it is important to be aware of the policies set by the government to avert disasters and to manage the ones that are inevitable or the ones that have occurred already. The policy emphasizes preparedness on the part of the Government, communities and other stakeholders in Disaster Risk Reduction activities. In this regard, the policy aims at the establishment and strengthening of Disaster Management institutions, partnerships, networking and mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in the development process so as to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable groups to cope with potential disasters. Ministry of State for Special Programmes in the Office of President does coordinate Disaster Risk Reduction initiatives within a unified policy

framework in a proactive manner at all levels. Disaster Risk Management encompasses a full continuum from preparedness, relief and rehabilitation, mitigation and prevention. The Policy aims to increase and sustain resilience of vulnerable communities to hazards through diversification of their livelihoods and coping mechanisms. This entails a shift from the short term relief responses to development. The Policy will go a long way in preserving life and minimising suffering by providing sufficient and timely early warning information on potential hazards that may result to disasters. It will also aim at alleviating suffering by providing timely and appropriate response mechanisms for disaster victims. The preparation of this Policy Paper has benefited from invaluable contribution from experts in various Ministries and organizations and it is hoped that the full implementation of this Policy will contribute immensely to disaster risk reduction, effective disaster preparedness, response, recovery and reconstruction as well as contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development in the country, particularly among those communities that have been identified as highly vulnerable to disaster risk, loss of life and livelihoods.

Kenya has continued to face a rising degree of vulnerability to disaster risk due to increased diversity, frequency of occurrence and intensity of impacts over time and space. This risk is the probability of a hazard turning into a disaster, with households or communities being affected in such a manner that their lives and livelihoods are seriously disrupted beyond their capacity to cope or withstand using their own resources. As a result affected populations suffer serious widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses. Communities in Kenya are predisposed to disasters by a combination of factors such as poverty, aridity, settlement in areas prone to perennial flooding or areas with poor infrastructure and services such as the informal urban settlements or even living in poorly constructed buildings. These factors, coupled with naturally occurring hazards such as droughts, floods, HIV and AIDS, landslides and epidemic outbreaks are currently exacerbated by Climate Change phenomena, pose extremely high and increasing disaster risks to the Kenyan society. In addition, there is a wide range of emerging disasters. High population growth rate and poverty increase vulnerability to disasters. According to the Ministry of Planning and National Development, Kenya's population rose to 50 million towards the end of 2020 and is estimated to hit the upwards of 55 million mark by 2025. This population, growing at the rate of 2.7% and largely youthful (60% of the population is aged under 25 years), is bound to be adversely affected, particularly

with the high poverty rates (46% of Kenyans live below the poverty line), unemployment, the HIV and AIDS scourge and an economy largely dependent on rain-fed agriculture. As such this population may be classified as highly vulnerable to disaster since any small predisposing factor may result in an emergency of high proportion, often culminating in a national disaster that requires external assistance. Despite economic, social and political vulnerability of this country, Kenya, so far does not have a comprehensive disaster management framework and strategy, which could guide appropriate policy and legislative provisions. While the country has so far managed to respond to the disasters as they occur, the cost implications cannot be ignored anymore.

Some of the disaster occurrences in Kenya include: Fatal road accidents, fire outbreaks, drought and famine, post-election violence, skirmishes, cholera outbreak, plane crashes, conflicts, floods, drowning, mudslides, oils spills, etc.

Classification of disasters.

Disasters are generally classified into 2 major categories:

1. Natural disasters
2. Human made as follows:
  - I. Natural: Bush fires, epidemics on human beings and animals, pests on crops, forests and livestock; geologic and climatic disasters (e.g droughts, floods, landslides, cyclones, storm surges, coastal erosions earthquakes, invasive plants.
  - II. Human-made: Terrorism, Industrial accidents, fires, transport accidents, civil, resource-based and political conflicts, collapsed infrastructure, food poisoning, invasive plants, drug and substance abuse, human trafficking, industrial sabotage, environmental degradation and other emerging disasters.

**COLLABORATION OF STAKEHOLDERS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT** As per the policy, the government will play a lead role in the strategic planning and management of disasters in participatory collaboration with development partners, international agencies and other bodies. Government shall also play a key role to ensure availability of the various resources for DM at all levels from Government sources and partners.

**CURRENT DISASTER MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES IN KENYA**

The existence of a Ministry of State for Special Programmes dedicated to disasters with a budgetary allocation and the various consultative forums provide for coordination of all Disaster Management activities. The broad objectives of the existing Disaster Management system can be summarised as follows:

- To assess and identify disaster sub-regions, evolve strategies for the sub-regions, integrate a national strategic plan, harmonise Disaster Management for all disasters and provides for co-ordination of all Disaster Management-related activities;
- To promote continuous stakeholder consultations with relevant line Ministries, to enhance co-ordination of interventions;
- To promote partnership with stakeholders for improved action; • To promote and facilitate co-ordination and access to research based information for Disaster Management.
- To promote mass education and functional literacy in environment, Disaster Management and Climate Change, in collaboration with the Ministry in charge of formal education;
- To promote mass sensitisation and awareness creation on Disaster Management and Climate Change for the general public;
- To promote and stress the urgent need for sustainable mainstreaming of Disaster Management and Climate Change into Development Planning and Management, to promote poverty alleviation, on the way to sustainable development;
- To encourage promotion, domestication and implementation of Kenya's ratified international, regional and sub-regional Agreements, Conventions and Treaties, which relate to Disaster Management

#### CHALLENGES OF THE CURRENT DISASTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- i. Inadequate policy, legal and institutional frameworks
- ii. Inadequate finances, human resources and equipment
- iii. Inadequate information and data
- iv. Weak disaster management capabilities within communities and institutions
- v. Inadequate integration and co-ordination

- vi. Inadequate Regional and International linkages
- vii. Poor Governance and Lack of Political Will

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

Goal: The overall Goal of Disaster Management is to build a safe, resilient and sustainable society.

Objectives:

- (i) To establish a policy/legal and institutional framework for management of disasters, including promotion of a culture of disaster awareness and for building the capacity for disaster risk reduction, at all levels;
- (ii) To ensure that institutions and activities for disaster risk management are co-ordinated, focused to foster participatory partnerships between the Government (including mainstreamed and emergency disaster-related activities by sectoral Ministries) and other stakeholders, at all levels, including international, regional, sub-regional Eastern African, national and sub-national bodies;
- (iii) To promote linkages between disaster risk management and sustainable development for reduction of vulnerability to hazards and disasters;
- (iv) To ensure proactive management of National Conflict Resolution and Peace Building efforts, which are enhanced continuously throughout the country, within every conflict disaster cycle; and that their consequences and impacts are systematically addressed, monitored, and evaluated to prevent conflict occurrence/recurrence and hasten effective and sustainable recovery of the victims;
- (v) To mobilise resources, including establishment of specific funds for disaster risk reduction strategies and programmes in DM;
- (vi) To make institutional provisions to ensure productive networking and sharing of information; and
- (vii) To make institutional provisions to ensure appropriate and structured DM, Education training and Capacity Building; complementarily, mainstream DM education and functional literacy in all educational institutions (including Primary, Secondary schools, Post-secondary colleges and universities, the NYS, and training colleges for uniformed forces).

(viii) To make available sensitization, awareness creation and functional literacy to the public for disaster management.’

(ix) To provide for standardization of effective structural components, to facilitate effective creativity, research, and evolution of criteria for identification and sustenance of quality, both in the process of research and in the dissemination and application of the information there from.

Major key elements in the policy include

- i. Disaster management monitoring
- ii. Disaster prevention
- iii. Disaster mitigation
- iv. Disaster preparedness
- v. Disaster response
- vi. Process to recovery

Source: Government website: <https://cabinetoffice.go.ke/>