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THE CRYSTAL

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

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FOR ZIMBABWE



We hope that you enjoy reading this issue of The Crystal which will be focusing on Disaster Management. Please remember we welcome your comments and contributions of what you are doing for the environment or what is happening in your area. Please send them to the Editor on infor@blackcrystal.co.zw. If you no longer wish to subscribe to the Crystal then please email us with this instruction.

Thank you and happy reading!

Black Crystal Consulting is one of Zimbabwe's leading reputable companies offering a quality service in environmental and socioeconomic consultancy services. Black Crystal Consulting believes in caring for the environment beyond today to ensure that biodiversity is maintained and that natural resources are not depleted for the next generation.

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Staying Safe



I hope you're reading this in the comfort of your home as we try and combat the COVID-19 pandemic using measures such as social distancing which were put in place for our benefit to minimize the spread of the virus, let us not forget to maintain our hygiene: washing our hands under running water for at least 20 seconds, sanitizing our hands regularly, avoiding touching our face and covering our mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing. We know you already knew that but safety first!



What are Disasters?

According to the United Nations a disaster is an unplanned natural or man-made event that results in a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or society, which involves widespread human, material, economic or environmental impacts that exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources. A disaster occurs when a hazard impacts on vulnerable people. The combination of hazards, vulnerability and inability to reduce the potential negative consequences of risk results in disaster.



Types of Hazards

Disasters can be separated into three categories according to the hazardous event:

Natural hazards are naturally occurring physical occurrences caused either by rapid or slow onset events that have immediate impacts on human health and secondary impacts causing further death and suffering. These hazards can be: environmental (soil erosion, land degradation, deforestation), geological or geophysical (earthquakes and volcanic activity), hydro meteorological (floods and droughts) technological hazards (industrial pollution, transport accidents and dam failures) and biological (bacteria, viruses or parasites and disease-causing agents such as mosquitos). Zimbabwe has also experienced some of these disasters with devastating impacts on the affected communities such as seen with Cyclone Idai.

Statics reveal that a tsunami for example, has an average death toll of 79 deaths for every 1000 people.



Scales and complexities of disasters

Humanitarian Emergency: These are disasters requiring support from other nations (humanitarian assistance) to meet the basic needs of the affected population

Complex Emergencies: Humanitarian crisis are often the result of a combination of political instability, conflict and violence, social inequities and underlying poverty. Complex emergencies are essentially political in nature and can lead to the loss of the cultural, civil, political and economic stability of societies, mainly when aggravated by natural hazards and diseases such as HIV and AIDS, which further demoralize livelihoods and worsen poverty.

Epidemics: the occurrence of disease cases in excess of normal expectancy. The number of cases varies according to the disease-causing agent, and the size and type of previous and existing exposure to the agent. Epidemic diseases can be waterborne, such as cholera; foodborne, such as dysentery; or, vector borne, such as malaria. Some, like Ebola, are spread through person-to-person contact.

Pandemics: an epidemic that has spread over multiple countries or continents and affecting a large number of people. These can occur to the human or animal population and may affect health, upset services leading to economic and social costs. It may also be an unusual or unexpected increase in the number of cases of an infectious disease which already exists in a certain region or population or can also refer to the appearance of a significant number of cases of an infectious disease in a region or population that is

usually free from that disease. Pandemic Emergencies may occur as a consequence of Natural or Man-Made Disasters. Examples of these include Corona virus (COVID-19), Ebola, Zika, Avian Flu, Cholera, Malaria and Yellow Fever.



What is Disaster Management?

Disaster Management can be defined as the organization and management of resources and responsibilities for dealing with all humanitarian aspects of emergencies, with an emphasis on; Mitigation (These activities eliminate or reduce the probability of disaster occurrence, or reduce the effects of unavoidable disasters. Mitigation measures include building codes, vulnerability analyses updates, zoning and land use management, building use regulations and safety codes, preventive health care; and public education), Preparedness (The capacities developed by governments, response and recovery organizations, and communities to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of imminent or current hazard events), Response (The provision of emergency services and public assistance during or immediately after a disaster in order to save lives, reduce health impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected) and Recovery (Programs which go beyond the provision of immediate relief to assist those who have suffered the full impact of a disaster these include Development activities, Health Care and Rehabilitation) in order to lessen the impact of disasters. These four factors are also called the Disaster Management Cycle.

Disaster management is guided by a set of principles that ensure its success; it should be: comprehensive, progressive, risk driven, integrated, collaborative, coordinated, flexible and professional.



Why is it Important?

The characteristics of disasters that have been discussed previously make dealing with disasters very difficult especially if there isn't any policy or framework in place. Disasters cause Economical, Environmental and Social damage; Damage to infrastructure and property, damage to our surroundings and damage to humans sometimes resulting in loss of life. These aspects make planning for disasters very important as it can dramatically reduce the impacts of disasters. Disaster Management reduces the impacts of disasters by saving lives and reducing human suffering by providing Early Warning Systems which is a process of constantly monitoring signals and indicators of both natural and man-made threats the information warns of emerging events like hazardous weather, flooding and conflict (war). This allows those most at risk of being affected time to react, prepare and take the necessary action which will in turn save lives.

Reducing the risks faced by communities affected by disaster and conflict. This is achieved by making disaster management part of national policy which ensures that there is development that takes into account the possibility of a hazardous event that could result in a disaster this includes reinforced infrastructure, capacity building, early warning systems, back-up systems, research facilities and improving the health sector this ensures that in the event of a disaster most of the risk would have been taken care of.

Disaster management also improves emergency response and recovery as there are usually institutions and funds that have been set aside for such events this ensures that the economy, environment and affected communities recover quickly and people get back to their normal routines.

Zimbabwe has a long history with hydro meteorological disasters and every single time we have encountered

