EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
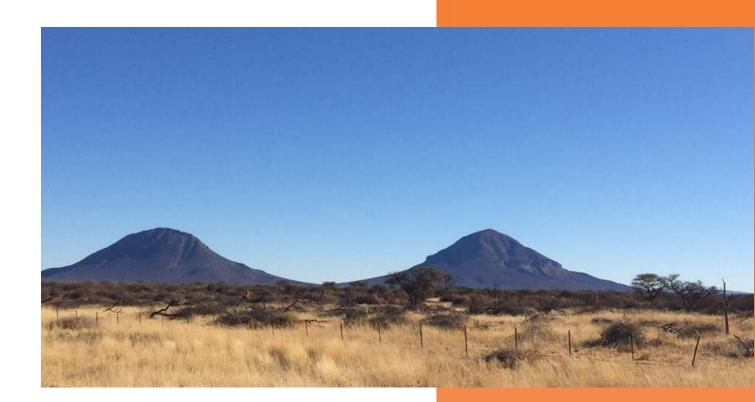
Capacity Assessment Report of the National Disaster Risk Management System in Namibia

Introduction

At the request of the Government of Namibia, an inter-agency capacity assessment of the disaster risk management (DRM) system took place between May and September 2016 with the aim to take stock of its existing capacities, needs and gaps and provide a set of prioritized recommendations for capacity development in areas identified as requiring adjustment.

The capacity assessment was led by representatives of the Directorate Disaster Risk Management (DDRM) of the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, supported by the United Nations (UN) Country Team in Namibia and an international team composed of 5 UN agency experts (OCHA; UNDP; FAO; WHO; IOM) and 7 United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) experts (representatives of Governments of: South Africa, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Germany, Estonia and Map Action). the international team was convened under the auspices of the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI), the largest UN-led partnership delivering capacity development support on DRM to countries at risk.

The capacity assessment included interviews with approximately 35 institutions (21 at the central level and 14 at local level), and comprised field trips to 4 Regions presenting various risk profiles: Ohangwena, Zambezi, Khomas and Hardap.

The capacity assessment findings and recommendations are presented in detail in the "Capacity Assessment Report of the National Disaster Risk Management System in Namibia". They have been structured according to the priority areas of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) (figure below). It is expected that the prioritized recommendations will guide the efforts of all stakeholders involved in DRM in Namibia to implement the requirements of the Sendai Framework at national and local level.

SFDRR Priority 1	• Understanding disaster risk
SFDRR Priority 2	• Strengthening governance to manage disaster risk
SFDRR Priority 3	• Investing in economic, social, cultural, and environmental resilience
SFDRR Priority 4	• Enhancing disaster preparedness, response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction

The purpose of this Executive Summary is to outline the highlights of the assessment findings and present a selected number of top-ranking recommendations on further capacity strengthening of the DRM system in the country.

SFDRR Priority Area 1: Understanding disaster risk

The Sendai Framework Priority Area 1 is focused on the degree of awareness and understanding of DRM concepts and practices of all stakeholders involved in the DRM system at all levels. A good level of understanding of DRM at both strategic/ policy level, as well as at operational level is a prerequisite of informed decision-making on DRM in any given country.

In Namibia, the assessment found that a majority of interviewed institutions and professionals, at all levels of administration (from central to local) have a good understanding of disaster and climate risks and a fair understanding of what disaster risk management means for their field of work.

Various technical institutions are formally mandated for data collection and forecasting, such as the Meteorological service, the Hydrology department and the National Statistics Agency, among others. The assessment found that these institutions are generally well equipped and highly skilled to fulfill their mandate. However, certain capacities are still required for systems to be fully performant, including for early warning and integrated information management.

As Namibia is largely affected by floods and drought, vulnerability assessments are carried out regularly by a number of institutions on the basis of a vetted methodology. Institutions such as the DDRM, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, the Meteorological service, among others participate jointly to such assessments and have been trained on the methodology.

While these capacities represent undeniable assets of the DRM system as far as the Priority Action 1 is concerned, a number of recommendations have been made in order to bridge existing gaps and needs of the system. Priority recommendations include:

- **Risk-informed decision-making for resilience and prosperity.** Conduct regular awareness events targeting decision-makers at all levels of administration and in all sectors in order to ensure that public and private development planning and investment in Namibia is risk-informed.
- **Multi-hazard risk profile of Namibia for informed decision-making.** Conduct multi-hazard risk assessment, develop and update regularly a national multi-hazard risk profile of the country and integrate climate change scenario modeling into the national disaster risk profile. Establish a central database containing the national multi-hazard risk profile as well as information on damage and loss from past disasters to systematically evaluate, record, share and publicly account for disaster impact.
- **Awareness, education and skills for community and citizen engagement in DRM at all levels.** Organize public awareness campaigns to promote behavior that does not increase vulnerability and exposure to hazards, integrate DRM into formal and informal education curriculum to instill a culture of safety and resilience, and invest in professional training and mentoring to develop and empower highly skilled and motivated disaster risk managers.
- **Streamlined and formalized information production and sharing for increased accountability and transparency.** Formalize data and information exchange among various technical institutions, line ministries, DDRM, the University and other institutions, and link up existing management information systems of various ministries in order to ensure accountability and transparency.

SFDRR Priority Area 2: Strengthening governance for managing disaster risk

The Sendai Framework Priority Area 2 outlines the requirements of a performing legislative, policy and institutional system for DRM as enabling factors for the implementation of DRM measures.

Namibia has a comprehensive DRM legislative and policy framework, a well-structured, deconcentrated DRM institutional architecture and a number of planning instruments. For instance, the DRM Act (2012) and Regulations (2013), as well as the National Disaster Risk Management Policy of the Republic of Namibia (2009) (currently being revised) are legal and policy instruments which gives direction and define the parameters for the application of the concept of DRM in the country. Similarly, the National DRM Plan (2011) includes important information regarding the operationalization of the DRM system. Last but not least, the Fifth National Development Plan (2016-2020), the main national development planning instrument of the Government, has the potential to further articulate the requirements for effective DRM integration in developmental priorities for the country.

The institutional structure for DRM is well articulated across all levels of administration, however the assessment found that it mostly performs at central level and in certain Regions, while lacking functional structures, capacities and resources at sub-regional levels. At national level, the DDRM is strategically located within Government structure at the level of the Office of the Prime Minister enabling privileged position to assume inter-sectorial coordination. At sector level, certain line ministries and technical departments have DRM Focal Persons assigned.

While the governance aspects of the DRM system in Namibia attain a certain level of sophistication and performance, a number of shortcomings have been identified through the assessment. Key recommendations have been formulated to address these, with a priority focus on the following:

> - **Legislative and policy framework fully implemented to ensure system performance.** Implement the legal and policy framework for DRM so that roles, responsibilities and standard operating procedures of all institutions involved in DRM at all levels are clear. In order to foster buy-in and conformity, organize regular sensitization of stakeholders at all levels of administration on the DRM legislation, regulations and policy.
> - **DDRM empowered to play a strategic coordination role for the national DRM system.** Refocus the mandate of the DDRM towards strategic coordination instead of operational implementation, and towards holistic DRM instead of emergency response. Implement human resource management strategy for the DDRM.
> - **Accountability mechanisms across levels of public administration for efficient and timely service delivery.** Review reporting lines and hierarchical levels or grades between the central and sub-national levels to increase accountability and effectiveness of implementation of DRM mandates. For instance, reorganize the position and hierarchy of the Regional DRM Field Officer in order to streamline their reporting obligations to the regional structure as well as to the DDRM.
> - **Public budgeting and financial accounting systems implemented as required by law.** Implement requirements of DRM Act (2012) to include a budget line for DRM activities in line ministries, and Regional and Town Councils, and establish transparent financial accountability mechanisms among all institutions at all levels. Decentralize emergency response funds allocation from DDRM to Regional Councils.

SFDRR Priority Area 3: Investing in resilience

The Sendai Framework Priority Area 3 is centered on the planning and implementation of structural and non-structural measures at sector level to reduce the risk arising from disasters and increase the resilience of at-risk populations.

Overall, the assessment found that there is a fair understanding of the current and potential impacts of disasters (including those arising from climate variability and change) on various sectors, particularly agriculture, environment and health, on which an in-depth assessment has been conducted. However, during the assessment, many institutions highlighted the fact that limited human, financial, technical capacities seriously hamper the effectiveness of their work as far as DRM is concerned.

Specific capacities and gaps in these selected sectors have been identified and are presented in the detailed report. A number of key recommendations for each sector have emerged in order to address the needs. The following recommendations have ranked as priorities in each of the concerned sectors:

- **Agriculture: A risk-proof and performant agriculture sector.** DRM should be mainstreamed in the institutional structure of the agriculture sector, as well as in key policy and strategic documents regulating the sector. Similarly, the revised National DRM Policy should take into account specific risks facing the agriculture sector, and provide guidance on risk reduction measures that should be implemented at sector level, both nationally and locally.
- **Health: Increased DRM and preparedness capacities for the health sector**. Strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Health to implement DRM activities, particularly at community level. Among others, develop emergency preparedness plans for hospitals.
- **Environment and urban planning: Promoting community resilience, citizen engagement and public-private partnership.** Develop local investment/ business plans for main urban centers in Namibia for solid waste management by involving the private sector (businesses, local commercial centers, banks, etc.) and local communities to set up waste collection systems, safe waste recycling/ transformation sites, train volunteers, and organize cleaning days in schools and public areas. Conduct public awareness raising on negative impacts of littering in informal settlements and facilitate low-cost waste collection, disposal and processing for these communities.

SFDRR Priority Area 4: Enhancing disaster preparedness, response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction

The Sendai Framework Priority Area 4 has a specific focus on structures, tools and operational capacities related to disaster preparedness, response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. When the risk of disasters cannot be reduced, transferred or managed, capacities are needed in order to prepare, respond and recover from the impact of disasters.

The disaster response system in Namibia performs relatively well, particularly when it comes to responding to localized droughts and floods. The legal framework for implementing disaster preparedness and response measures exists, however has some difficulties in being translated into a simple, robust, logical system that can be sustainable with limited resources.

Emergency preparedness and response capacities are more developed at Capital City (Windhoek) level and in those regions where frequent disasters are occurring. For instance, advanced emergency services are established in Windhoek City with highly motivated and professional uniformed personnel, covering tasks such as firefighting, technical rescue, hazmat incidents, and ambulance services. For large scale emergencies, the resources from the National Defence Forces and the National Police are also available to support disaster response. At local level, the Namibian Red Cross Society assists with emergency response services, especially in regions frequently affected by disasters.

In terms of contingency planning, the existence of well-equipped strategic storage facilities (warehouses) in some regions is an asset for the DRM system. This ensures that the country is in a state of preparedness to respond to different types of disasters by stock-pilling food and non-food relief supplies. Traditional early warning systems are present in communities experiencing recurrent floods. In most at-risk locations, people use their indigenous knowledge to prevent the adverse effects of the hazards, and self-relocate when flooding occurs.

The assessment has highlighted a number of challenges faced by the DRM system as far as preparedness, response and recovery planning are concerned. Selected recommendations focusing on top priorities include the following:

- **Clear lines of command for disaster response.** The existing legislation, policies and plans need to be harmonized within and among all institutions having a mandate in disaster preparedness and response, and need to be complemented by operational plans and regulations outlining formal lines of command for disaster response.
- **Contingency planning and simulations.** Capacities of stakeholders should be built at all levels in contingency planning through training in order to improve their state of preparedness to different hazards in the country. Develop, simulate and validate response plans at national and regional levels to be better prepared and respond to disasters.
- **Central disaster operations center.** A central disaster operations center could be established and equipped, combining the activities of the City of Windhoek, Khomas region as well as national bodies involved in DRM activities in order to optimize available funds and effective and streamlined coordination.
- **Central emergency service number.** A functional central call number for all emergency services including fire and ambulance services should be established.
- **Integrated multi-hazard EW systems.** Existing capacities (i.e. radios, mobile communications, TV, hydro-/ meteorological stations) should be used to design and establish proper integrated, simple and effective multi-hazard EW systems with timely, simple and clear instructions for all users at all levels.

- **Information management.** To strengthen the capacities and expertise in information management, a center of excellence could be established in the Ministry of Information, Communication and Telecommunications to serve as a hub for training, central services and support to other ministries and DDRM.
- **Recovery.** Recovery should be integral part of the revised National DRM Policy, as per the Sendai Framework. A framework for monitoring and evaluation of recovery activities should be established, and training on Post Disaster Needs Assessment methodology should be provided to technical staff in all institutions involved in DRM.