



Remarks

By

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Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) Workshop

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Ojjiwarongo, Otjozondjupa Region

Namibia

Director of Ceremonies,

**Deputy Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, Hon.
Christine Hoabes,**

Governor of the Otjozondjupa Region, Hon. Otto Ipinge

**Acting Permanent Secretary of the Office of the Prime
Minister, Mr. Shivute Indongo**

**Esteemed Government Officials, Development Partners and
Guests,**

UN Colleagues,

Members of the media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning,

On behalf of the UN Family in Namibia, I am pleased to be here at the opening of the Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) Workshop in Otjiwarongo – Cheetah capital.

Allow me to start by thanking the Government, especially the Office of the Prime Minister's Directorate for Disaster Risk Management (DDRM), for inviting the UN to be part of this very important workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Evidence suggests that climate change has affected the magnitude and frequency of extreme weather events.¹ You just have to turn on your TV to witness the impact of more severe droughts, hurricanes, and floods.

Research has found that, “natural disasters caused more damage in 2017 than in any of the five previous years.”² Research also shows that women are disproportionately affected by disasters.

UN-OCHA predicts that over 135 million people around the world will need humanitarian assistance and protection in 2018³; with conflicts and natural disasters being the main drivers.

Disasters do not respect country, regional or community borders. For this reason, this preparedness workshop is extremely relevant; we need to be prepared!

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers. <http://bit.ly/1NhQeDC>

² **This refers to damage in regards to financial costs - USD 330 billion worth of damage. Information from German reinsurer Munich RE, quoted by UNFCCC in article “Damage from Natural Disasters almost Doubled in 2017 Compared to 2016”. <http://bit.ly/2C9dTmp>

³ OCHA. The Global Humanitarian Overview 2018. <http://bit.ly/2tXqDcq>

Master of Ceremonies,

The Land of the Brave is no stranger to emergencies including drought, flash flooding, veldt fires and disease outbreak:

- 97% of rainfall is lost through some form of evaporation⁴.
- 28.8% of Namibia's population is considered undernourished⁵.
- And, Namibia is in the middle of a Hepatitis E outbreak, having seen over 550 cases⁶ since October 2017⁷.

Although disasters can happen anywhere, and at any time, we can do our part to ensure that our actions are sustainable and that our communities are prepared and resilient.

Master of Ceremonies,

In 2015, global leaders adopted a new development agenda aimed at eradicating poverty, saving the planet and ensuring prosperity for all.

Disaster risk management is at the core of achieving this Agenda and its 17 Development Goals.

⁴ Think Namibia. Fact Sheet on: Saving Water. <http://bit.ly/2nJBtBR>

⁵ The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2017. <http://bit.ly/2jubGOu>

⁶ Government of the Republic of Namibia (GRN). Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) Namibia. Outbreak of Hepatitis E in Windhoek Situation Update as of 29/01/2018. Total amount – 554 cases.

⁷ World Health Organization. "Hepatitis E – Namibia". <http://bit.ly/2DL8K9e>

- SDG 11 'Sustainable Cities and Communities' aims to:
 - Increase the number of cities implementing disaster risk management in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030;
 - And, to reduce the number of losses and deaths caused by disasters.
- SDG 13 'Climate Action' aims to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.
- SDG 1 'No Poverty' aims to build resilience, and reduce exposure to disasters by the poor and vulnerable.

Not only is, "disaster risk reduction an integral part of social and economic development, [but] it is [also] essential if development is to be sustainable for the future."⁸

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When it comes to responding to and preventing disasters, Namibia has good stories to tell.

⁸ United Nations. Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. "Disaster risk reduction". <http://bit.ly/2oEj5cv>

Over the years, Namibia has developed an impressive disaster risk management (DRM) legislative and policy framework and put in place a solid DRM institutional structure.

This includes: The National Disaster Risk Management Policy of (2009)⁹; The DRM Act (2012) and the DRM Regulations (2013).

However,

Despite these achievements, Namibia has recognized that there is still work to be done.

Therefore, Namibia's Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, requested that CADRI¹⁰ (The Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative) assess¹¹ the country in 2016.

This week's workshop is in direct response to CADRI's recommendations, specifically to:

- 1) Build capacity in contingency planning at all levels;

⁹ This is currently being revised.

¹⁰ CADRI is a global partnership composed of 15 UN and non-UN organizations that works towards strengthening countries' capacities to prevent, manage and recover from the impact of disasters.

¹¹ The CADRI assessments evaluated Namibia's ability to manage the risk of and response to disasters with the aim of reducing impact and reducing mortality.

- 2) Create clear response plans for different hazards;
- 3) Conduct simulation exercises to test contingency plans;
- 4) Allocate funding, and assign accountability for contingency planning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the years, the UN has developed a systematic, coordinated and holistic approach to emergency response preparedness.

And this week, led by OCHA and WFP, the UN in Namibia, your partner of choice, is here in full force to share experience and lessons.

Therefore, in this year of reckoning and accountability, and in conclusion our message is simple:

If we are to build the future we want, a future that is sustainable, with less people pushed below the poverty line due to crises; with less livelihoods and lives lost due to disasters, we must be prepared!

I thank you.