

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE (NDMC) SOUTH AFRICA

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As we commence the 2024/25 financial year 2024/2025 financial year, it is crucial that we address the shortcomings and gaps identified from the previous year. Reflecting on our experiences and lessons learned will guide us in effectively implementing our strategies for the current financial year.

Following the commemoration of Youth Day on 16 June, I urge all disaster management stakeholders to focus on programs that empower our youth to become ambassadors of disaster management within their communities.

#DisasterManagementIsEverybodysBusiness

This publication coincides with the imperative for disaster management stakeholders to develop Winter Contingency Plans. Such planning ensures preparedness by anticipating potential disasters, refining response systems, and identifying and rectifying gaps through regular simulations and updates.

Additionally, this edition coincides with the celebration of World Environment Day, emphasizing the need to mitigate climate change effects and prevent environmental degradation for the benefit of present and future generations. Recent climate dynamics, notably floods and tornadoes in KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape, highlight the urgency of proactive disaster management efforts.

In the 2024/2025 period, the National Disaster Management Centre monitored projects in Mpumalanga aimed at swiftly addressing disaster aftermaths to alleviate immediate consequences.

Aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, ongoing engagements with neighbouring countries enable the exchange of best practices in disaster management. The recent PhD colloquium hosted by the University of Free State, in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Centre, brought together academics from Lesotho and Zimbabwe to share insights and solutions in disaster risk reduction.

Moreover, the National Disaster Management Centre participated in a workshop in eSwatini on the pivotal role of drones in disaster response, advancing regional initiatives under the Sendai Framework.

Notably, a recent Disaster Awareness Session at Quarry Road Informal Settlement in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality focused on empowering residents with fire safety measures, crucial during the winter season.

I encourage all community members to heed Early Warning messages from the South African Weather Service and remain vigilant. The National Disaster Management Centre is committed to publishing this newsletter quarterly to disseminate disaster risk management information to stakeholders.

Looking ahead, stakeholders are invited to contribute articles to advance the Disaster Risk Reduction Agenda through Ms. Pumeza Tyali at **PumezaT@ndmc.gov.za** before each quarter ends.



Showcasing the Role of the National Disaster Management Centre

#NDMC in Action

By Bakang Mebalo

In response to the severe flood damages during December 2023 and January 2024, the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) conducted a site visit in Mpumalanga. This engagement aimed to monitor the implementation of emergency funding provided through the Provincial Disaster Grant and Municipal Disaster Grant. These grants are designed to proactively address the immediate needs following a disaster to mitigate its consequences.

The flood damages affected vital infrastructure, including roads and bridges, which connect communities to essential services such as schools and clinics. The inability to access these services significantly impacted the affected communities. In collaboration with the Mpumalanga Provincial Disaster Management Centre, the NDMC provided funds to restore services and livelihoods by repairing and constructing critical infrastructure, such as bridges, roads, and sewer treatment plants.

These projects not only restored infrastructure but also created job opportunities for local community members, empowering them with construction skills. Local contractors and subcontractors were appointed to carry out the repairs and construction, ensuring that the benefits extended to the local economy.

It is encouraging to see municipalities prioritizing the interests of their communities, ensuring access to essential services like water, education, and healthcare. Previously, community members and school children had to cross flooded rivers to access schools and other services, highlighting the urgent need for resilient infrastructure.

The NDMC continues to emphasize the importance of maintaining municipal infrastructure and adopting the principles of “Building Back Better.” These practices ensure that infrastructure is resilient to future disasters, reducing the need for repeated interventions. Through this monitoring process, the NDMC encouraged municipalities to develop maintenance plans and comply with relevant legislation during the construction and repair of infrastructure.

By fostering these practices, the NDMC aims to create a more resilient and prepared community, ensuring sustainable development and improved quality of life for all citizens.



Repairing of Water Treatment Plant to augment Water Supply in the community.



Re-gravelling of Damaged Roads connecting communities to access services



School Children used to cross over timbers to access school across the River. School Children were under the risk of drowning and result in Fatalities.



Foot bridge constructed to allow easy access to schools by Learners





PHD Colloquium In Disaster Risk Management And Climate Change Adaptation

By Koketso Mpshane

The academic community plays a crucial role in mitigating hazards and promoting disaster resilience through education, training, and research innovations. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees, the pinnacle of academic achievement, empower individuals to create new knowledge, solve complex problems, innovate, and develop specialized skills through rigorous research and empirical evidence. With this qualification, individuals can significantly impact societal, economic, political, and environmental improvements.

Recognizing the transformative potential of PhD-level research, a dedicated platform in the form of a PhD colloquium aims to enhance contributions to disaster risk reduction. Such forums nurture, support, and disseminate the scientific knowledge developed by PhD candidates over years of study, while inspiring and guiding those at earlier stages of their research journeys.

The primary goal of the colloquium is to serve as a high-impact scientific and academic platform, translating empirical findings, recommendations, and solutions into actionable responses to pressing societal challenges in South Africa and beyond. It fosters collaboration among PhD candidates, offering Masters students opportunities to learn from their peers and consider further studies.

Hosted by the University of Free State Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa (DIMTEC), in collaboration with partners like the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), Old Mutual group, and the Gauteng Provincial Disaster Management Centre (GPPDMC), the colloquium convened from 17-19 April 2024 in Bloemfontein.

This event marks a significant step towards making meaningful contributions through research and engaging in scientific discourse on Disaster Management and Climate Change Adaptation.

Aligned with international frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (SFDRR), the Paris Climate Change Agreement, Southern African Development Community (SADC) strategies, African Union initiatives, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the colloquium aims to advance multidisciplinary research in disaster risk reduction. It seeks to establish support networks for postgraduate research projects and facilitate the dissemination of research outputs.

The PhD Colloquium also supports national priorities outlined in the South African Disaster Management Act (Act No. 57 of 2002) and the National Disaster Management Framework (NDMF) of 2005, emphasizing the critical role of scientific institutions in effective disaster risk reduction and response.

During the event, Ms. Koketso Mpshane represented the NDMC on a panel discussion addressing the vital link between research and practice in Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation. The discussion highlighted the necessity for ongoing research and collaboration among institutions to enhance national resilience.





Unlocking Aerial Technology: The SADC Emergency Response Team on Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones) for Disaster Preparedness and Response

By: Modjadji Maphalle

In 2021, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat established the SADC Emergency Response Team (ERT) to bolster disaster preparedness and response efforts across the region. This initiative stemmed from the SADC Council of Ministers' decision in August 2019, emphasizing the urgent operationalization of regional disaster management mechanisms. Central to these efforts was the establishment of the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre (SHOC) and the surge capacity through the SADC Standby Force, tasked with supporting humanitarian interventions in member states.

The ERT, coordinated by SHOC in collaboration with the SADC Disaster Risk Reduction Unit, SADC Standby Force, and SADC Climate Service Centre, collaborates closely with global and regional organizations, including the United Nations, international NGOs, development partners, and national disaster management agencies. Its primary mandate is to support member states and communities during disasters, employing modes such as Search and Rescue operations and disaster impact assessments.

Traditionally, disaster response relied on time-consuming and costly methods. Drones offer a revolutionary alternative, enhancing response speed and efficiency. They enable rapid situational assessment, precise victim location, and delivery of critical supplies, significantly aiding in firefighting, medical supply transport, and disaster mapping. Despite challenges like accuracy and battery life, advancements in digitalized air-traffic control promise enhanced drone effectiveness in life-saving emergencies.

Key roles of drones in disaster management include:

- Rapid assessment and Search and Rescue support.
- Expedited response times compared to conventional vehicles.
- Accessibility to inaccessible disaster zones.
- Support in hazard profiling processes.

First responder drones equipped with advanced sensors, cameras, and communication tools play pivotal roles in emergency scenarios, augmenting capabilities of police, firefighters, and paramedics. Their ability to provide real-time aerial data enhances situational awareness, reduces search time, and minimizes risks to responders.

Drones are instrumental in:

- Providing real-time aerial data for situational awareness.
- Swift response to emergencies inaccessible to ground vehicles.
- Supporting Search and Rescue operations, disaster mapping, and structural damage assessments.
- Delivering emergency supplies and infrastructure during crises.

In conclusion, drones are pivotal in disaster management, offering unparalleled capabilities in providing rapid situational awareness and aiding in life-saving operations. As technology advances and regulatory frameworks evolve, drones are poised to play even more critical roles in emergency response across the SADC region and beyond.





Vulnerability to Fires Heightened in South African Informal Settlements

By Bakang Mebalo

South Africa is increasingly vulnerable to fires, driven in part by socio-economic factors such as rapid urbanization. This trend often leads to the formation of informal settlements composed of highly combustible materials like wood and plastics, densely packed in narrow streets. These conditions hinder fire service accessibility and firefighting efforts, exacerbated by challenges such as inadequate water supplies and the absence of street names, which impede timely emergency responses.

Quarry Road West, situated within Durban's urban core under the eThekweni Municipality, South Africa, hosts approximately 1,200 residents. Positioned in Ward 23, the settlement rests precariously on the floodplain of the Palmiet River.

On November 17, 2023, Quarry Road Informal Settlement fell victim to a devastating fire that rendered hundreds homeless, destroying 150 shacks and leaving residents bereft of most possessions.

In response, the National Department of Human Settlements, in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) and eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality, convened a Disaster Management Awareness Session at Quarry Road. Highlighting the session, Pumeza Tyali of NDMC emphasized that "Disaster Risk Reduction is Everybody's Business." The initiative underscores the imperative for community-driven strategies, grounded in Ubuntu spirit, to bolster resilience and readiness against hazards.

The following tips on how to prevent shack fire were highlighted to the community members within the Quarry Informal Settlement:

- » Turn off all electrical appliances if power failure occurs in your area.
- » Never overload wall socket, as this might start fire.
- » Do not leave pots unattended on a stove when cooking.
- » Ensure that your stove and candles are well placed in a balanced surface and cannot fall over any time.
- » Make sure you do not leave home or fall asleep while your candles, heaters, brazier or paraffin stove are still switched on.
- » Educate children about the dangers of a fire and what they should do if they find themselves in a dangerous situation.
- » Store matches and lighters up high, out of reach of young children.
- » Do not leave your children alone in the house when these items (candles, heaters, brazier and paraffin stoves) are on as these might endanger them.
- » If you have security bars on your windows or doors, make sure there is a release mechanism that works and that everyone in the household knows how to use them.
- » Do not allow children to play with an open fire, especially during heating time.
- » Make sure children never touch a space heater or put anything near it.
- » Keep appliance cords, wires, etc. out of reach of young children.



November 2023 Fire Incident



Quarry Road Informal Settlement situated in a flood line area



Ms Pumeza Tyali handing over Disaster Awareness Materials



Mr S Arjun: National Department of Human Settlements, giving an Overview and the Purpose of the Disaster Awareness Campaign



Mr K Ditshego, DDG for the Department of Human Settlement addressing the community on issues relating to relocation

