

NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE (NDMC) SOUTH AFRICA

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cooperative
governance

Department:
Cooperative Governance
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



The third quarter of the 2023/2024 financial year in South Africa is marked by the Summer season, prompting reflection within the disaster management community. This season acts as a catalyst for us to bolster our programs and address gaps in our Disaster Risk Reduction efforts.

This publication comes at a crucial moment where the global community, guided by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, underscores the importance of a resilient future. This imperative aligns with the commemoration of the International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR). In a world contending with the challenges posed by natural disasters, the IDDR stands as a beacon of hope, bringing nations together to forge a global culture of resilience. On the 13th of October, South Africa joined hands with 186 other countries to commemorate the 2023 IDDR under the theme, "Fighting Inequality for a Resilient Future". This theme resonates deeply, highlighting the intrinsic link between inequality and vulnerability to disasters.

Moreover, this provides an opportunity to acknowledge the progress that South Africa has made in taking proactive steps towards building a resilient future. Through collaboration, education, and community engagement, the nation has laid the groundwork for a society capable of withstanding and recovering from the challenges posed by disasters. The commemorations of the 2023 IDDR clearly demonstrate the power of collective action among stakeholders and the strides taken towards creating a resilient country where no one is left behind in the face of adversity.

Notable steps taken during the commemorations include the involvement of school children and communities in practical activities such as tree planting, allowing children to speak up about issues of bullying within the school environment. The tree planting exercise instills a sense of responsibility and ownership, fostering a community-driven effort towards disaster resilience. Allowing young girls to speak up about various forms of abuse is a significant step towards nurturing not only physical but also mental resilience in the face of potential disasters.

The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC) continues to work with various stakeholders to promote formal and informal initiatives that encourage risk-avoidance behavior among state institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and communities, as prescribed by the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002). Additionally, the Act emphasizes the pivotal role of schools as focal points for raising awareness about Disaster Risk Management and Disaster Risk Reduction, aligning with the National Disaster Management Framework, 2005.

As we share this third Disaster Management Newsletter for the 2023/2024 financial year, the NDMC eagerly anticipates continued contributions from stakeholders to advance the Disaster Risk Reduction Agenda. Please direct your articles of interest to:

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Celebrating World Food Day 2023: “Water is life, Water is food, Leave no one Behind”

By Bakang Mebalo

On the 16th of October, the world comes together to celebrate World Food Day, echoing the powerful mantra: “Water is life, Water is food, Leave no one Behind.” This year’s focus is not only on the vital role of water in sustaining life on Earth but also on its profound impact as a source of nourishment and the cornerstone of our global food system.

The objectives of World Food Day extend far beyond a mere commemoration. It serves as a platform to raise public awareness about the critical role of water and its connection to food production. One of the key goals is to equip communities with the knowledge and tools needed to address the impact of rising food prices. This involves the establishment of community food gardens and the support of agricultural cooperatives, fostering food security, job creation, and economic growth.

Water, constituting over 50% of our bodies and covering about 71% of the Earth’s surface, is undeniably a life force. Only 2.5% of water is freshwater, suitable for drinking, agriculture, and industrial uses. Agriculture, responsible for 72% of global freshwater withdrawals, highlights the significant relationship between water and food. However, the reality is that our freshwater resources are not infinite.

As our planet grapples with rapid population growth, urbanization, economic development, and climate change, water resources face increasing stress. Freshwater resources per person have declined to 20% in recent decades, and poor use and management, over-extraction of groundwater, pollution, and climate change further threaten water availability and quality. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations highlights that 2.4 billion people live in water-stressed countries,



particularly affecting vulnerable groups such as smallholder farmers, women, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, and refugees.

The competition for this precious resource is intensifying, leading to conflict and jeopardizing the livelihoods of around 600 million people who rely on aquatic food systems. Pollution, ecosystem degradation, unsustainable practices, and the impacts of climate change further exacerbate the challenges faced by these communities.

In the face of these complex challenges, there is hope and a call to action. World Food Day urges everyone to contribute to a sustainable future. Governments play a crucial role in designing evidence-based policies that consider data, innovation, and cross-sectoral coordination. These policies should be supported by increased investment, legislation, technologies, and capacity development. Farmers and the private sector are encouraged to engage in integrated solutions for a more efficient use of water and its conservation.

Individually, we can make a difference by adopting mindful practices in our daily lives. Our food choices and how that food is produced directly impact water resources. Choosing local, seasonal, and fresh foods, reducing food waste, and finding safe ways to reuse it can collectively contribute to water conservation efforts.

Together, as a global community, we have the power to take meaningful water action for the future of food, people, and the planet. World Food Day serves as a reminder that by appreciating the value of water and adopting sustainable practices, we can ensure a bountiful and equitable future for all. Let’s celebrate not just a day but a commitment to a world where no one is left behind, and where water continues to sustain life and nourish us all.



Commemoration of the 2023 International Day for Disaster Reduction: A Step Towards a Resilient Future

In a world constantly grappling with the challenges posed by natural disasters, the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDR) stands as a beacon of hope, bringing nations together to forge a global culture of resilience. On the 13th of October, South Africa joined hands with 186 other countries to commemorate the 2023 IDDR under the theme, “Fighting Inequality for Resilient Future.” This theme resonates deeply, highlighting the intrinsic link between inequality and vulnerability to disasters.

The National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), in collaboration with Provincial and Municipal counterparts, held a series of build-up events leading to the grand finale on the 1st of December 2023, the National Practitioners IDDR. These events showcased the commitment of various stakeholders, including NGOs, the private sector, and communities, towards promoting disaster risk reduction (DRR) and addressing the root causes of vulnerability.

One notable event took place in the Capricorn District Municipality, where the IDDR was themed “Develop A Girl Child – Girls Role in Disaster Risk Reduction.” The initiative aimed at developing emotional resilience among young girls in schools and addressing the pervasive issue of bullying. As a result, social workers will be deployed to identified schools to provide free counseling for an entire year. This is a significant step towards nurturing not only physical but also mental resilience in the face of potential disasters.

The Xhariep District Municipality, in collaboration with various stakeholders, outlined plans for the 2023/2024 fiscal year to commemorate the IDDR under the same theme. The focus is on forging partnerships with NGOs, Private organizations, and financial institutions like Old Mutual, emphasizing the need to combat inequality for a resilient future.

The core objective behind these commemorations was to engage all relevant stakeholders in addressing crucial DRR issues, including inequality and Gender-Based Violence. Particularly poignant was the emphasis on inculcating a culture of risk avoidance post the mine dam wall collapse incident, showcasing a proactive approach towards preventing social, economic, and environmental damages.

A highlight of the commemoration events was the involvement of school children and communities in practical activities like tree planting. Beyond environmental benefits, this hands-on approach instilled a sense of responsibility and ownership, fostering a community-driven effort towards disaster resilience.

The Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality targeted community members vulnerable to flooding, offering valuable information and tips to enhance their resilience. Skill-building sessions on interpreting Impact-Based Early Warning Systems were conducted, empowering communities to respond effectively when warnings are issued.

The Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality focused its efforts on NU10 Mdantsane, a community recently affected by floods. The commemorative event sought to educate residents about the challenges of building in unsafe areas and promoted an integrated community approach to disaster response.

The climax of these efforts was the National Practitioners IDDR on December 1, 2023, where stakeholders shared strategies to enhance disaster risk reduction mechanisms. Key outcomes included a call for the promotion of insurance products, intensified capacity building for vulnerable communities, and a heightened focus on research for preventive measures.

Collaboration emerged as a common theme, with stakeholders recognizing the power of partnerships in planning for resilience. The Department of Women, Youth, and Persons with Disability pledged to work closely with the NDMC to develop a Risk Reduction Strategy tailored for Persons with Disability, illustrating a commitment to inclusivity in disaster preparedness.

As we reflect on the events surrounding the 2023 IDDR, it is evident that South Africa is taking proactive steps towards building a resilient future. Through collaboration, education, and community engagement, the nation is laying the groundwork for a society capable of withstanding and recovering from the challenges posed by disasters. The 2023 IDDR commemorations demonstrate to the power of collective action and the commitment to creating a world where no one is left behind in the face of adversity.





2023 IDDR
Bufflalo City





2023 IDDR Capricorn





2023 IDDR Thabo Mofutsanyana







2023 IDDR Xhariep DM





Empowering Tomorrow: South Africa's National Research Agenda for Disaster Resilience

By Koketso Mpshane

In the face of mounting challenges posed by an increasing frequency of disasters, South Africa is taking proactive steps towards building a more resilient future. The recent spate of devastating floods in provinces like KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, North-West, Mpumalanga, and Northern Cape has underscored the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to mitigate the impact of such events on human lives, infrastructure, property, the environment, and the economy.

At the forefront of this transformative effort is the National Disaster Management Centre (NDMC), which recognizes the imperative to adopt a multidisciplinary research approach. This approach aims to empower the country with more comprehensive strategies and effective mitigation measures. The NDMC, in line with its mandate, has embarked on a mission to engage all stakeholders likely to confront disaster situations. Their responsibility is not only to respond but to build capacity for preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery. By doing so, South Africa aims to significantly reduce the threats posed by various types of hazards.

To develop this multidisciplinary research approach, the NDMC has collaborated with various institutions, including Higher Education Institutions and Research Institutions. These institutions, with their pool of students and academic staff possessing invaluable skills and access to historical information, are best placed to manage research programs.

The collective effort of these sectors has resulted in the identification of 16 Research Thematic Areas. Aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction (2015-2030), the National Research Agenda has set a strategic timeframe of seven years. This alignment emphasizes South Africa's commitment to global frameworks that advocate for sustainable solutions.

In a forward-looking move, the National Research Agenda has been synchronized with the NDMC Bursary Programme. The 2024 Bursary Advertisement encourages master's students to choose research topics from the 16 identified Thematic Areas. The outcomes of this research will be made accessible through the Research Portal developed by the NDMC. This commitment to transparency ensures that the conducted research is not only relevant to advancing the country's Disaster Risk Reduction measures but also addresses the pertinent problems faced by the nation.

Research, backed by relevant scientific data, is positioned as the cornerstone for operations. The insights gained will empower stakeholders to develop programs that add tangible value and bring about positive changes in people's lives. The research outputs will play a pivotal role in developing risk profiles for different forms of disaster risk, enabling the identification of communities that will be affected by specific disasters. This, in turn, will enhance Disaster Risk Reduction measures and fortify South Africa against future calamities.

As South Africa embraces its National Research Agenda for Disaster Resilience, the nation is not just tackling the immediate challenges but is investing in a brighter and more secure future. Through collaborative research, the country is laying the foundation for a society that can withstand and overcome the complexities of an ever-changing world, ensuring the well-being and prosperity of its citizens for generations to come.

