



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT MINISTRY OF STATE FOR SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

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HIGH LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LARGE- SCALE
NATURAL DISASTERS, TOKYO JAPAN, 4TH JULY 2012**

1.0 DISASTER PROFILE IN KENYA

On behalf of the people of the Republic of Kenya and on my behalf, I want to thank the Government and the people of Japan for inviting us to this conference to share our experiences on issues of disaster risk reduction.

I also want to offer my empathy with the people of Japan following the great earthquake and the subsequent tsunami in March 2011 which not only resulted in many loses of lives and property but also dampened the dreams of many youths as captured in the speech presented by the two students yesterday. Indeed the resilience of the Japanese people has seen them overcome the two disasters and come out more strong as a nation.

I want to thank the Japanese Government for coming to the assistance of our nation whenever we face disasters. Only last year, my Government received a Grant of ksh.438 million in form of disaster management equipment. I want to thank the Government of Japan for this kind gesture.

Background

Kenya has been faced by various disasters majority of them resulting from climate change. Indeed over 70% of the hazards are related to extreme weather and climate events resulting to floods, flash floods, droughts, landslides/mudslides and lightning.

1.1 Drought

Kenya is generally an agricultural country. Most people derive their livelihood from agriculture and pastoralism. However, about two-thirds of the country is either arid or semi-arid. This makes it prone to drought resulting in frequent food shortages. As result of this, the Government has been running a relief programme for many years to provide assistance to an average of 4 million people each year whose lives and livelihoods are perennially threatened by recurrent droughts.

In the year 2011, the country experienced the most severe drought which was declared a national disaster. The Government spent ksh. 10 billion to mitigate against the drought. The citizens also came together under an initiative called Kenyans for Kenyans and were able to contribute approximately ksh. 600 million toward assisting the hunger stricken Kenyans in the Northern parts of the country.

Current Drought Interventions

On the short term basis, the Government provides assistance to 4.3 million needy populations through two channels:

- i. Through monthly allocation of relief food to 165 Districts by the Government. The number of beneficiaries under this programme fluctuates according to the prevailing food situation in various parts of the country.
- ii. Through a programme called Protracted Relief and Recovery Programme that is jointly implemented by the Government and the World Food Programme, Districts that have been assessed and found to be food-insecure are targeted for relief supplies.

Long term drought interventions

In order to provide long term solutions to the persistent drought in Kenya, the Government has established the Drought Management Authority whose main aim are to:

- Address the cycle of short-term stopgap solutions to drought that have proved to be unsustainable in the past.
- Improvement of the overall effectiveness of public resources geared towards poverty reduction and economic growth in the ASALs;
- Enhancing the security of the poor by addressing the critical issues of marginalized groups and to protect vulnerable groups. This is aimed at dealing with crisis and shocks due to adverse weather and social insecurity;

- Allocating increased resources targeted on human capital development; and,

Kenya is faced with many challenges arising arising from lack of appropriate Policies to manage disasters and internal displacement. Consequently, we have formulated the National Disaster Management Policy which provides for appropriate disaster management coordination mechanisms. We have also developed the Policy for Internal Displacement to address all issues regarding internally displaced persons in Kenya.

Thank you for listening.