



## **Meeting of Experts on Strengthening Coordination for Drought Risk Reduction in Kenya**

**Jointly Organized  
By**

**The Office of the President of the Government of  
Kenya  
And  
The United Nations Secretariat of the International  
Strategy on Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR), Africa  
Outreach Unit**

**24 April 2007  
Nairobi Safari Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya**

### **BACKGROUND PAPER**

#### **Background**

The Office of the President of the Government of Kenya and the United Nations Secretariat of the International Strategy on Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR), Africa Outreach Unit, are jointly organizing a Meeting of Experts on Strengthening Coordination for Drought Risk Reduction in Kenya. The one-day event will be held at the Nairobi Safari Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya on 24 April 2007. The Meeting will examine ways and means of strengthening the coordination and fostering policy harmonisation between the different agencies and programmes involved in Drought Risk Reduction in Kenya.

The Meeting will undertake a broad process of discussion and consultation amongst a select group of 30 key national and international experts, academics and known figures in the areas of Drought Risk Reduction in Kenya. The Meeting is a logical follow-up to the National Disaster Risk Reduction Platform Meeting hosted by the Office of the President and UN/ISDR in Nairobi in 2005 which recommended that drought policies and legal frameworks should be established, strengthened, harmonised and enforced. It also recommended that appropriate linkages and coordination should be established and strengthened with various key stakeholders.

Further to the 2006 mission from the Special UN Envoy for the Horn of

Africa in response to the drought crisis in the region, through OCHA's Humanitarian Appeal and with the support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), UN/ISDR is coordinating a regional initiative which aims at building strong multi-sectoral national platforms and mechanisms to reduce the impact of drought disasters in the Horn of Africa (Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Somalia). The Project was launched at a regional workshop in October 2006 at the IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC) where all countries were represented. As a follow-up, a national inception workshop and field consultations with communities were held in Nairobi and Kajiado in November and December 2006. While the previous meetings served as forums for identifying key national issues, learning lessons from communities and raising awareness about the role of National Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction in relation to Drought Risk Reduction, the current Meeting takes the debate much further to look at the concrete ways of increasing the synergies and harmonising the existing policies and programmes into one common Drought Risk Reduction Framework that would also strengthen coordination mechanisms amongst all relevant actions and actors.

### **The Problematique**

The 2006 Drought which heavily affected the countries in the Horn of Africa was yet another account of how nations, communities and individuals are confronted daily with the suffering and loss of lives and livelihoods resulting from their multi-faceted vulnerability to and limited capacity to address the risks associated with drought hazards. Assessment records available over a number of years reveal that both the scale and severity of the situation is dramatically on the rise. To date the number of people estimated to be at risk in the Horn of Africa is over 15 million, of which more than 8 million rely on emergency assistance every year. In Kenya, *"the 2006 drought affected 37 out of 78 districts with a total population of 3.5 million people left in dire need of relief. About 40 people, mostly children, died due to complications arising from malnutrition"* (National Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction: 2006-2016). There is therefore strong global and national recognition of the pressing need to shift the focus from responding to crises to a more systematic approach to building the capacities and resilience of governments and communities to address the risks associated with droughts. This shift calls for a greater attention to better coordination of Drought Risk Reduction (DRR) at national, regional and international levels.

In the Kenyan context, it is broadly recognised that there exist a wealth of knowledge and a number of strong programmes and policies which already address drought risk reduction at the national level. These include, inter alia, the "National Policy on Disaster Risks Reduction" (Government of Kenya-GoK), the "National Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Drought (GoK), the "National Food and Nutrition Policy" (GoK), the "National policy for

the Sustainable Development of Arid Lands of Kenya” (GoK), the “Arid Lands Resource Management Project” (World Bank), the “Drought Management Initiative Project”, including the future set-up of a Drought Contingency Fund” (European Commission), the “Drought Risk Reduction and Development Africa Forum” (UNDP-DDC/BCPR and UN/ISDR), “FEWSNET” (USAID), the “Horn of Africa Special Initiative” (FAO and WFP), and numerous other relevant policies and interventions from other Government, non-governmental (e.g. Red Cross/Red Crescent Society, Action Aid, Cordaid, PISP “Pastoralist Integrated Support Programme”) and international partners.

While all of these policies and programmes have both strengths and limitations, they often operate individually with limited or symbolic coordination with other past and existing initiatives and frameworks. Many of these interventions and policies lay emphasis on response strategies instead of addressing prevention aspects to Drought Risk Reduction; some focus on certain geographic areas and sub-sectors while others have different interests and priorities. Hence they often are implemented in silos with UN institutions and Government line ministries having limited or no inter-sectoral and inter-agency dialogue.

There is nevertheless a number of existing disaster-related coordination mechanisms from which lessons can be learnt, none of which are however specifically focussed on Drought.

And yet to ensure sustainability of the positive changes promoted through these different Drought Risk Reduction initiatives in Kenya, there is a need to find ways and means of harmonising all of these efforts under one coherent nationally-owned long-term framework.

Concurrently ensuring a more synergetic approach and better coordination would guarantee that Drought Risk Reduction is increasingly integrated into national development policy frameworks as well as enabling all relevant actors to maintain the focus on addressing the risks associated with Drought rather than sustaining a more reactive and sometime fragmented approach to development, humanitarian support and food security.

In this context, it will be essential to assess the approaches as well as the lessons learned from the different Drought Risk Reduction actions in Kenya and to formulate concrete recommendation that would lead to the adoption of a common national framework and strengthened coordination mechanisms for greater impact and more appropriate Drought Risk Reduction.

## **Mandate of UN/ISDR and the Office of the President in Drought Risk Reduction**

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: *“Building the resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters”* that was adopted by 168 Governments at the World Conference for Disaster Reduction in Kobe (Japan) in January 2005 called on the United Nations International Strategy on Disaster Reduction Secretariat (UN/ISDR) to facilitate coordination of effective and integrated action by international, regional and national partners to advance integrated approaches to building disaster resilient nations and communities, by encouraging stronger linkages, coherence and integration of disaster risk reduction elements into humanitarian and sustainable development programmes. Drought is consequently one of the natural hazards to be considered in implementing the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Framework for Action and is of particular importance to the countries in the Horn of Africa, with a focus in this instance on Kenya.

Under the aegis of the HFA, with the support and collaboration of UN agencies and partners such as UNDP, UNEP, World Bank, UNICEF, WFP, FAO and national Governments and others, UN/ISDR has supported numerous countries in setting up dynamic national platforms on disaster risks reduction. To date there are 19 platforms in Africa. The National Platforms are responsible for integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into development planning, policies and programmes in line with the implementation of the HFA. They are concerned with enhancing collaboration and coordination among national stakeholders as well as to help increase national commitment to help the most in need.

The Kenyan Government and its partners have taken a leadership role in implementing the HFA. The Office of the President has established an effective National Platform which is headed by a National Focal Point. A National Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction was drafted in 2006 and is awaiting Cabinet’s approval. As regards the current joint Meeting, the Office of the President’s role is to support greater integration and inter-sectoral coordination amongst Government agencies and national actors while UN/ISDR will ensure greater synergies and coordination amongst bilateral and multilateral actors.

## **Objectives**

There are two main objectives for this Meeting.

- a) To strengthen existing mechanisms of inter-sectoral and inter-agency coordination amongst national and international actors and initiatives on Drought Risk Reduction.

- b) To agree on a collective way forward for harmonising existing policies and programmes relevant to Drought Risk Reduction under one common National Drought Risk Reduction Framework with a tentative timeframe, milestones and roles and responsibilities.

### **Organisation of the Meeting**

The Meeting will be opened and co-chaired by representatives of the Office of the President and UN/ISDR Africa. They will first provide the background, agenda and objectives of the Meeting. This will be followed by an explanation of the respective roles and mandates of the Office of the President and UN/ISDR in context of Drought Risk Reduction in Kenya.

The participants would then be divided into four sub-groups of about 8-10 people to deliberate on the first issue:

- 1) How can we strengthen existing coordination mechanisms amongst pertinent national and international Drought Risk Reduction actors and interventions? What sort of consultative mechanism is needed? What would be the roles and responsibilities of such a Committee? What would be its ToRs?

They would meet again in the plenary room to present the findings of each of the sub-groups and agree on a set of recommendations for question 1. Then the participants would be divided again into sub-groups to deliberate on the following second issue:

- 2) What are the necessary actions for preparing a common framework on Drought risk Reduction in Kenya? What are the main elements of such a Framework? What roles and responsibilities could be played by the different actors? What would be the timeframe and milestones for developing such a framework?

They would meet again in the plenary room to present the findings of each of the sub-groups and agree on a set of recommendations for question 2.

Four individuals would be selected to chair and direct the discussions of the sub-groups. Each group would select one rapporteur to prepare a summary of the recommendations.

There would be a team of rapporteurs comprised of the co-chairs, rapporteurs of the sub-groups and resource persons from UN/ISDR.

Meeting minutes, including recommendations and way forward would be disseminated through email with all participants.

Necessary arrangements will be made for lunch and coffee breaks.  
The official language of the Meeting will be English.

## **ANNEX I**

### **Meeting of Experts on Strengthening Coordination for Drought Risk Reduction in Kenya**

#### **DRAFT AGENDA**

#### **Morning**

Plenary Session:

**08:30-09:00**

**Registration**

**09:00-09:15**

**Introduction**

**09:15-09:30**

**Opening Ceremony (Speeches by  
Representatives of GoK and UN/ISDR and Group  
Photo)**

**09:30-09:45**

**Roles of the Office of President (NFP) and  
UN/ISDR in DRR in Kenya, Africa and Globally**

**09:45-10:15**

**Meeting Objectives and Structure**

**10:15-10:30**

**Coffee Break**

Break-up Session:

**10:30-11:30**

**Group Discussions (How to Strengthen  
Coordination in DRR in Kenya?)**

Plenary Session:

**11:30-12:30**

**Presentations of Groups'  
Recommendations and Discussion**

**12:30-13:30**

**Lunch**

#### **AFTERNOON**

Break-up Session:

**13:30-14:30**

**Group Discussions (How to Harmonize  
Relevant Policies and Programmes into one  
Common National DRR Framework?)**

Plenary Session:

<b>14:30-15:30</b>	<b>Presentations of Groups' Recommendations and Discussion</b>
<b>15:30-15:45</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>15:45-16:15</b>	<b>Overall Summary of Recommendations and Way Forward</b>
<b>16:15</b>	<b>Closure</b>