



## **South Africa Celebrates United Nations' Annual International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction - 13 October**

### **MEDIA STATEMENT**

South Africa joins the global community, on this day marking the commemoration of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDR), in recognising progress made in reducing disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030. The IDDR further promotes a global culture of disaster reduction, including prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

Celebrated under the theme "Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of the present framework by 2030", this day honours the efforts of individuals and communities in South Africa and around the world who worked tirelessly to reduce vulnerability to disasters and raise awareness about the necessity of limiting the dangers they and others face.

As a country, we use this day to remind ourselves and others that many developing nations lack the capacity and resources to implement effective policies that can assist in establishing the groundwork for attaining several of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including poverty eradication, climate action and the development of sustainable cities and communities. South Africa is mindful of the effect of global integration and is one of the countries that ratified the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 during March 2015 in Japan.

Following the global magnitude and severity of the COVID-19 outbreak, we, on 15 March 2020, declared a national state of disaster under Section 3 of the Disaster Management Act, 2002. We continue to grapple with the negative impact of COVID-19 on our society and the economy. We welcome the confirmation by the South African COVID-19 Modelling Consortium that South Africa has emerged from a third wave of COVID-19 infections. The pandemic has, without doubt, demonstrated the need for countries to collaborate on programmes and initiatives that seek to reduce disaster risks and build societal resilience.

While South Africa is predominantly prone to meteorological hazards such as drought, floods, storms, and heatwaves, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to integrate health threats in national and local disaster risk reduction strategies, support the implementation of the International Health Regulations and build resilient health systems. COVID-19 has also

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made it clear that our safety is interdependent and that nobody is safe until we are all safe, therefore, international support for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is, more than an obligation. It is an essential requirement to build the resilience of our international community and planet.

It is also critical to use this commemorative day to chronicle some of the notable achievements we realised through implementation of the previous themes stating from 2017 IDDR theme notably:

The 2017 IDDR theme: Reduce the number of affected people globally

Empowerment of the most vulnerable members of community is fundamental to reducing the number of people affected by disasters. Through capacity building programmes on crop suitability to climate change, farming communities including women and youth were identified as recipients of the climate change project "Implementation of the change research programme on crop suitability:" which is currently being implemented in the Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo provinces.

- Over 120 smallholder farmers and producers have been identified and trained as beneficiaries who continue to be capacitated on crop suitability for sorghum production under climate change.
- Over 300 smallholder farmers and extension officers continue to benefit from capacity building programmes and training on Climate Smart Agriculture throughout the country.

The 2018 IDDR theme was "Reduce direct economic loss in relation to global Gross Domestic Products (GDP)"

The 2018 IDDR was commemorated in the Northern Cape Province taking into consideration drought that continues to affect the province socially and economically, exacerbated by the alien invasive species that pose a great threat to livelihoods and food security in the country. Some of the disaster risk reduction measures applied was the eradication of the alien invasive species, namely the *Gnidia Burchelli* and the *Prosopis Glandulosa* that worsens the impact of drought in the area. To enhance grazing for livestock, and to minimise impact of alien invasive species, the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development controlled –

- 6551 (Ha) of *Gnidia Burchelli* in John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality during 2018/2019 to 2019/2020 financial years.



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- 33534 (Ha) of Prosopis have been controlled, mechanically, manually, and chemically in Koopmans Farm (Niekerkshoop) during the 2020/2021 financial year,

The Department of Environment, Fisheries And Forestry (DEFF) on the other hand managed to clear a total of 16 673. 59 (Ha) of Prosopis Glandulosa in the Northern Cape from April 2018 to March 2021.

The 2019 IDDR theme was "Reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services".

Under this theme, substantial progress has been made by different sector departments. These includes projects on construction of 19 Bailey Bridges as one of the disaster mitigation measures for rural areas that were implemented in Eastern Cape, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng Provinces. These bridges are critical to reduce the number of fatalities that are experienced when flooding occurs. While Department of Water and Sanitation developed an Emergency Preparedness Plan to mitigate against dam failure or excessive overflow situation, the Department of Transport initiated a Provincial Road Maintenance Grant to provide for special maintenance and disaster emergencies.

The 2020 IDDR theme was "Increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies".

Guided by this Theme, the NDMC continues working with stakeholders on the development of disaster management plans which must form an integral part of planning by organs of state. To date, a total of 138 plans have been submitted by different stakeholders from all three spheres of government. These disaster management plans are assessed and feedback has been provided to the respective institutions.

As part of giving effect to its international mandate and in line with the 2021 IDDR theme, the NDMC has partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in implementing a COVID-19 pandemic post disaster review project. The purpose of this research project is to assess the efficiency and functionality of institutional arrangements across all spheres of Government; assess grant funding, budgeting, use of reserve funds, data management, information flow and reporting to COVID-19 structures including roles, responsibilities, relations, and coordination between disaster management and NATJOINTS



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structures. The project will also develop post disaster review guidelines based on international best practices and lessons learned.

The manufacturing and supply of COVID- 19 vaccinations is another example of international cooperation between the developed and developing countries. While developed countries had the capacity to develop covid-19 vaccine, developing countries had challenges and had to import from those countries that had such vaccines.

We urge all stakeholders to make zoonotic disease prevention, pandemic preparedness, and vaccine distribution equality priority areas for international cooperation. We further call on all sectors to use this year's commemoration to entrench international collaboration and accelerate implementation of international programmes and initiatives that seek to reduce disaster risks within the broad context of sustainable development as this will lay a solid foundation for advocacy and action-oriented programmes that will promote transboundary disaster risk reduction.

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