

COGTA MEDIA STATEMENT REGARDING THE SEVERE TROPICAL STORM “ELOISE”

The South African Weather Service have been tracking and provided updates to stakeholders in government and civil society regarding the severe tropical storm “Eloise” which is currently located in the central part of the Mozambique Channel and is expected to reach South Africa by Sunday.

The National Disaster Management Centre today convened a meeting of the National Joint Flood Coordination Committee which forms part of the National Disaster Management Advisory Forum. During the meeting the SAWS provided a detailed briefing on the current position and modelled track for the tropical storm which is expected to cause significant rain, that may result in flash flooding and strong winds over north east Limpopo, Mpumalanga and the northern parts of KwaZulu-Natal.

National, provincial and municipal organs of state during the NJDCC meeting shared details on the activation of their contingency plans and the activities they will follow in the coming days to prepare response measures, provide early warnings to the public and monitor the development of the storm.

Residents in these three provinces are urged to:

- Monitor the local news for updates on the development of the storm thereby raising their awareness of the developments to enable them to take informed and appropriate action where needed
- Prepare their properties, as far as possible for the occurrence of strong winds and severe rain by securing loose items.
- Secure animals, livestock and pets in high lying areas.
- Make preparations in the home by having the following items at hand,
 - potable water for at least three days,
 - three day’s supply of non-perishable foods
 - a battery powered radio and flashlight
 - extra batteries
 - gas or other alternative energy sources for safely heating water and cooking
 - a first aid kit and a supply of chronic medication
 - a fire extinguisher and or fire blanket
 - matches and candles
 - masks, soap and sanitisers
 - blankets
 - compiling a list of contact details for the local emergency services, medical practitioners etc.
 - secure key documents such as ID’s, bank cards etc in waterproof containers.
 - prepare an evacuation plan and decide on when and where to evacuate

- make special arrangements to provide for the needs of woman, children, people living with disabilities and the elderly
- make arrangements with family and friends to know your location
- from Sunday morning,
 - stay indoors
 - wear comfortable clothes and shoes that are supportive of your ankles
 - monitor the news
 - avoid low lying areas
 - avoid the shores of rivers
 - avoid dry river beds as flash flooding can occur suddenly due to severe rain upriver
 - don't cross rivers by wading or driving through the water
 - don't seek shelter under trees or use umbrellas when out in the rain to avoid being struck by lightning
 - act immediately if the evacuation order is given for your area.

The National, Provincial and Municipal Disaster Management Centres in these areas are activating their disaster operations centres and will meet regularly with organs of state to coordinate preparations and response efforts where they become necessary.

Members of the public are urged in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic to maintain their social distancing and practice other preventative measures.

Government will issue further guidance and statements in the coming days on the development and trajectory of the storm.