

EXPERTS WORKSHOP ON MARITIME SECURITY AND SAFETY
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Two major efforts are in progress to establish binding National Frameworks for Disaster Management In Africa :

- 1.) The push to establish the Pan African Parliament as a legislative organ by 2011.

This will enable the development of binding National, Institutional and Legislative Frameworks to manage and guide Disaster management policy and programs;

- 2.) The establishment of Parliamentary caucuses to lobby the integration of Disaster management into national planning through the legislative agenda .

However I believe as a continent we have not exhaustively addressed Disaster Management within the limits of our current resources. The need to use multiple and lateral approaches to Disaster mitigation and adaptation in Africa can realize rapid gains through:

- Religious Persuasion: It was interesting to note that during one of the surveys commissioned across 10 African countries amongst 1000 citizens and 200 opinion leaders

in 2009 (BBC World Service Trust 2009) God is cited as the foremost cause for climate change disasters visited upon the continent. The perception generally is that the continent's people are being punished and need to atone and show repentance to God. Deforestation was cited as the second reason for climate change .

Whereas the findings are intriguing they present a major opportunity to a) educate and significantly b) create new ,cost effective and sustainable channels of communicating disaster awareness as adaptation tools using faith based approaches. It is estimated that Christians account for 45% and Muslims 41% (Encyclopaedia Britannica Group 2003) of the population in Africa, with Bahai's, hinduism Judaism, and African traditional practices accounting for the rest.

It will be vital within National Disaster strategies for faith programs to be addressed uniquely given the massive religious potential for influencing change

- **Disarmament Of Pastoral/Migrant Communities:** Evidently natural disasters like droughts, famine and unmitigated flooding fuel conflict and competition for scarce food and water resources. The emphasis is on Governments to ensure harmonized and well coordinated intra and cross border disarmament exercises. Kenya and Uganda have

for instance recently commenced a joint disarmament exercise across the Karamoja and Pokot migrant communities –famous for cross border cattle and pasture raids. Similarly Kenya has embarked on an intra community disarmament exercise between the Turkana, Pokot and Samburu tribes people. These activities do not have to be resource intensive but mitigate against escalation of disaster through loss of lives and displacement. In many instances small incentives like provision of a meal in school (hence education also), guns for bicycles, small cash tokens for communal work (as in Ethiopia) and amnesty periods have all worked to mitigate disaster related conflicts

- The proliferation of democracies, ICT and Multi Media Communications: This is key in communicating disaster mitigation and adaptation programs and awareness campaigns. The growth in multi media i.e print, electronic (TV and FM stations including ethnic based media) and ICT based connectivity via internet (and broadband communications via fibre optics to for example digital villages) affords an opportunity to access a wider target audience, tailor simple and understandable content as well as rapidly communicate resource mobilization when required. Considering the fundamental changes in governance and democracy across Africa occasioned

through media tenacity, I feel that media potential has been under utilized in holding governments to account for inadequate national disaster frameworks and on the wider stakeholder sensitization aspects

-Food Security And Science: This area more or less reflects the leadership myopia, lethargy and inadequacy of Disaster programs in many of the African countries. With knowledge about basic technologies like Israel's drip irrigation, research on faster growing food strains and Genetically Modified foods , floods and rains continue to create food shortages in equal measure as the droughts and famine. Many pilot projects that enhance food security through increased output, shorter growth periods and lesser acreage dot the continent but governments have been slow to roll them out as national adaptation programs.

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