

Stakeholders meet on national contingency plan

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Stakeholders including International partners and the National Disaster Management Agency Officials(NDMA) recently met at the United Nations House at Cape Point, Bakau to review the “national contingency plan” of The Gambia.

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The meeting facilitated by the World Food Programme (WFP), suggested for the document to be updated at least every two years. The review of this national document, according to officials, was done in 2011 involving NDMA, the UN system and relevant government agencies among other humanitarian agencies.

The Executive Director NDMA, Lt. Col Alhajie Sanneh , lamented the devastating consequences of disasters on the development of the continent. He pointed out that disasters in Africa are increasing in frequency and that their negative impacts compounded the challenges of sustainable development. This, he said, undermines prospects of achieving the government's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Sanneh said disasters that occurred in The Gambia, particularly during rainy seasons are acknowledged to have silently affected the people and posed threats to life and livelihoods as well as government developments efforts.

The NDMA boss highlighted government's commitment to disaster management and prevention in The Gambia, recalling its intervention in relocating the inhabitants of the Kotu Quarry to a new and less vulnerable site called "Allahtentu" in Sotokoi village Kombo North. "I hope this two-day session will provide the opportunity for a valuable exchange of experience and ideas on hazards as well as vulnerability in the country and will define common plan of priorities for concerted national contingency plan," he stated.

The UN resident coordinator in The Gambia, Ms Ade Mamonyane Lekoetje declared that The Gambia is vulnerable and experiences various recurrent shocks, making reference to the natural hazards that resulted to the 2011 crop failure, the subsequent floods in 2012 and the poor harvest in 2013. She said the authorities' partnership with UN agencies to carry out such projects is a key indicator that disaster risk reduction is a priority to The Gambia.

The UN resident coordinator said the two-day session will ensure that they jointly identify and update the risks associated with emergencies and develop the potential scenarios in areas of risks. The WFP country representative, Victoria Ginja said it is important that humanitarian agencies came together to discuss and share ideas and roles of their respective sectors. She said one of the objectives of this exercise was to test efficacy of various participating agencies in coming up with probability of occurrence, impact of palpitation and the kind of measures that

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can be implemented to mitigate the hazards.