

PUBLIC DIALOGUE REPORT



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION

THE AFTERMATH OF CYCLONE IDAI

★ PURPOSE

Proceedings of the first public dialogue on disaster management in Africa post Cyclone Idai and Kenneth.

Dialogue date: 19 July 2019, Wits Business School, Johannesburg in partnership with the Graça Machel Trust and the Mandela Institute for Development Studies.



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In opening the dialogue, Prof Bhekinkosi Moyo of the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) at Wits Business School (WBS) explained why the Centre decided to host a dialogue around disaster management in the face of climate change. He noted that, after the devastation of Cyclone Idai, CAPSI Programme Manager Belinda Keratiloe Mogotsi had challenged him to do something about it. In response, Prof Moyo turned to humanitarian and activist – Mrs Graça Machel – to frame a discussion around the matter. This resulted in a collaboration between the CAPSI, WBS, the Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS) and the Graça Machel Trust (GMT).



OPENING REMARKS

Following Prof Moyo's introductory remarks, Mr Ian Mashingaidze, MINDS' Programmes Director, elaborated on the early preparations of the dialogue. Mashingaidze noted the significant contribution made by the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), an organisation which provided critical support on the ground for the victims of Cyclone Idai. Sadly, the CEO and founder of REPSSI, Noreen Huni, who had agreed to be one of the panellists, passed away a few days before the dialogue. A moment of silence was held on her behalf.

The dialogue was moderated by well-known radio host Bongani Bingwa. In his introduction, Bingwa highlighted the fact that climate change is a global challenge and that platforms such as this dialogue would go a long way towards providing solutions, however modest.

Dr Sibusiso Sibisi, then Head of WBS, welcomed the delegates and panellists. Dr Sibisi noted that this initiative should be embraced by the university as a whole, not just by CAPSI or the business school. The topic of climate change and disaster management is critical for the continent and the world as a whole, he noted. Dr Sibisi then invited the keynote speaker, Mrs Graça Machel to provide the official opening address.

Mrs Machel noted that natural disasters have robbed us of many lives, but those people just become statistics, subjects of plan and recovery. Ordinarily, people don't take time to mourn the departed as human beings, as part of ourselves who have left us, she said. She lamented the fact that the aftermath of such disasters became the responsibility of international communities. People complain that the international community is not doing enough, but what about us?, she asked. What are we doing from our side? She stressed that Africans need to take responsibility because it is about the lives of our own citizens, and it is our responsibility to support and work together with the international communities towards a dignified restart.

"Mama" Machel posed this question to the panel: "We know it [a disaster] is coming, but are we preparing ourselves adequately?" She also listed pointers for the stakeholders present to ponder on as the discussions of the day progressed. She said that she needed actionable recommendations. With regards to governments, Mrs Machel noted that they need to focus on mobilising people in areas where disasters are likely to hit so that the impact on people is minimised. "If it is happening or it has happened, what do we mean by response? Are we concentrating on giving out food and medicines – the utmost necessities that people need to survive?", she asked.

"Africans need to take responsibility because it is about the lives of our own citizens..."

Mrs Machel said that she did not want to pre-empt the discussions, but wondered "what does resettlement really mean?" In many cases things like infrastructure are given primary attention, but not people. In what conditions are these people being resettled? Governments call on the international community to come and assist with resettlement and reconstruction with little attention to psychosocial support.

"As researchers, check out how much these governments have put into resettlement themselves, not only relying on international bodies to provide", she challenged the delegates and panellists. "We talk of infrastructure, to rebuild schools, railways, clinics - but how much are we focusing on human rebuilding? The disasters leave behind traumatised people, deprived of everything, including the loss of their dignity. How much focus should we place on humans? Who comes to sit with me to ask of those of my family who died? Who were they? It is not enough to say four of my family members died, but who were they? After the water subsides, do we go back to search, maybe not for bodies, but for bones?" Mrs Machel concluded that when reconstruction happens, it needs to focus on the entire social fabric. ✨



OVERVIEW PRESENTATIONS

After the introductory remarks and official opening of the dialogue, there were three presentations documenting the events of the two cyclones that affected Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe: Cyclone Idai and Cyclone Kenneth. The three presentations were by Sithembiso Gina of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Melody Mandevere of CAPSI and Wycliffe Nduga Ouma of CAPSI. There was also a video presentation documenting the humanitarian response in Mozambique by the Fundacao para o Desenvolvimento da Comunidade (FDC).



Sithembiso Gina noted that as a people, we should know each other, that each and every community is vulnerable in a particular set up and in a particular way. She began her presentation by showing the climate change trends across the global hemispheres, including the temperatures and wind patterns over the last four decades. She noted that the global mean surface temperature has increased by about 0.86% from the 19th century. 2018 was recorded as the fourth warmest year, and the last four years have seen the warmest recorded temperatures. The capacity for earth (the environment) to service growing economies is decreasing, especially with regards to agriculture and food production. Climate-related risks and events are on the rise, in frequency and intensity, according to the SADC report of 2016.

Gina proceeded to profile the risks facing the SADC region especially in responding to the changing climatic conditions. Extreme weather leading to (chronic) drought, (flash) floods, hail, and strong winds are among the outstanding risks recorded for the region. Animal and plant disease outbreaks, low production and breeding failures are the results of these climatic changes. Poverty, stagnant economies, agriculture trade flows disruption and food price volatility also add to the list. Seismic activity leading to earthquakes and landslides are becoming common.



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Gina also noted the region's inadequacy when it comes to dealing with, and responding to, natural disasters. She noted that there was limited research, data and information for relevant and timely policies, procedures, response and recovery actions, as well as early warning infrastructure, capacities and alert messaging. There is also inadequate mapping of socio-economic and business risks, and a limited use of indigenous and cultural knowledge.

Climatic changes such as a reduced or lack of rainfall critically impact agriculture. Gina noted, for instance, that lack of rainfall and high temperatures lead to crop failures, low agriculture production and food insecurity: a case in point was the 98% crop failure in Botswana in 2019. The impact on the environment includes depletion of the ecosystems and arable land, limited hydro-electricity production during droughts or when the electricity infrastructure has been destroyed, lack of vegetation/dry rangelands leading to no livestock and wildlife feed, for example the 30,000 livestock that were reported dead in Namibia in 2019. Other notable impacts are low ecosystem and agriculture production, increased social vulnerabilities, and deepened poverty and inequality.

In conclusion, Gina highlighted the levels of preparedness that should be put in place to deal with the effects brought about by climate change and natural disasters. There should be standard operating procedures in place, evacuation plans and safety routes, and emergency communication standards and logistics which should include signals and short-wave devices response capacities. In the aftermath, search and rescue infrastructure should be firmly in place, including rapid assessments, sectoral support and emergency response stock-piling and logistics support. Drills and simulations need to be conducted, and manpower and finance for the disaster response need to be provided. In addition, goods and services for the affected communities and individuals need to be provided, and lastly innovation and the use of technology need to be actively promoted.



**30,000
LIVESTOCK
REPORTED
DEAD
IN NAMIBIA
IN 2019**

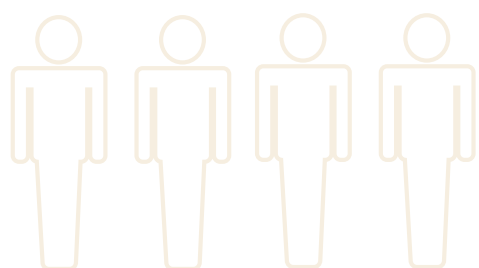
According to Ouma, over 90,000 people were displaced, with reported deaths totalling to about 60.

Mr Wycliffe Ouma, a PhD candidate at Wits Business School and a research associate at CAPSI, followed with an overview presentation on Malawi. Mr Ouma embarked on a fact-finding mission to that country in the immediate aftermath of Cyclone Idai, and developed a comprehensive report on the impact, response and the gaps following the floods. Mr Ouma went to three of the worst affected districts of southern Malawi and interacted with the affected communities as well as humanitarian communities and government agencies who, he noted, had done an excellent job in responding to the disaster. The three districts included Chikwawa, Nsanje and Phalombe. Chikwawa was the most badly affected in terms of the numbers displaced, followed by Nsanje and then Phalombe. The raging floods resulted in few deaths, despite the great number of people displaced. According to Ouma, over 90,000 people were displaced, with reported deaths totalling about 60. Other notable impacts of the disaster included housing units destroyed, schools submerged or completely destroyed, and agricultural lands, crops and livestock, health facilities, sanitation facilities, roads and bridges either damaged or destroyed.

Mr Ouma also documented the timely and orderly response by the government of Malawi and the humanitarian organisations. Local business communities and other local communities provided help in the temporary re-settling of the affected people. Red Cross Malawi and Gift of the Givers SA had a strong presence in all the camps, according to Ouma. Companies such as Illovo Sugar, Castel Malawi, and Telkom Network Malawi were among the local businesses that

significantly contributed to settling the affected in the camps by providing sanitary materials, food, water, tents among many others. International humanitarian organisations under the United Nations (UN) also provided help.

Glaring gaps reported in Malawi, as at the time of the report, included inadequate shelter for the displaced communities, inadequate food (in the camps), as well as inadequate reconstruction materials and crops for resettlement. In addition, there was a need for the reconstruction of the destroyed schools and health facilities, as well as the roads and bridges.



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Ms Melody Mandevere, a PhD candidate at WBS and a research associate at CAPSI, was also mandated by CAPSI to embark on a fact-finding mission in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai in Zimbabwe. Mandevere documented the impact, response and the gaps in Zimbabwe following the cyclone. Mandevere concentrated on the Chipinge and Chimanimani districts. She reported that over half of the population (63%) and households (52%) in the Chimanimani district were affected by the cyclone. Chimanimani was the most affected, followed by Chipinge rural with 17%. The least affected areas of the province were Mutare rural and Makoni. In total, about 9% of the population and 8% of households in the Manicaland province were affected by the cyclone.

As in Malawi, there was significant support by the local communities and local businesses in settling the people affected in Zimbabwe. Mandevere reported that companies including Econet, CBZ Bank, Alpha Media Holdings, Afreximbank, NetOne Webb, Low and Barry Rotary Centre, EatOut Movement and Naspers provided help in various forms. Some of the local communities on the higher grounds offered to house some of the displaced people. ✨

Displacements, deaths and missing persons in Zimbabwe.

District	Deaths	Buried	Missing	Injured
Buhera	1	1	0	14
Chimanimani	169	169	328	164
Chipinge	6	6	19	2
Makoni	1	1	0	0
Mutare rural	4	4	0	2
Mutare urban	0	0	0	0
Mutasa	0	0	0	1
Nyanga	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	181	181	347	183

Source: Melody Mandevere's tabulation.



PANEL DISCUSSIONS



PANEL ONE: CHALLENGES THAT DISASTERS CAUSE

Opening the discussion panel I, Bongani Bingwa, the moderator, challenged the panellists on “how do we begin to put a human face to such tragedies?” Prof Hassan Kaya of the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) kicked off the discussion by alluding to indigenous knowledge systems and innovations needed to survive natural disasters. He emphasised that culturally acceptable innovation systems need to be taken into consideration in disaster preparedness. This is because indigenous communities had well-functioning early warning systems, and they have also developed agricultural systems to survive in those specific ecological areas. Prof Kaya went on to stress that, in terms of disseminating information, the language used should be able to access the broader audience, and that communication is key given the limited resources. Due to poverty and limited resources, communities have to juggle between meeting their basic needs and preparing for natural disasters. Prof Kaya concluded by stressing that the indigenous knowledge systems have a holistic approach to disaster management because there is life before and after disasters.

Getrude Chimange of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (Zimbabwe) noted that it is not all about the force and the impact of disasters, but sometimes there is human failure to implement, and to put effort into preparation. She also mentioned that sometimes the interventions put in place are too militarised and do not take the interventions of the local communities into account. What is needed is to build the capacity of the local people to deal with interventions at the local levels. So, at the time the national governments have to pronounce a disaster as a national problem, they need to allocate funds and organise relevant government agencies because the people on the ground have already suffered a great deal and, in some circumstances, loss of life.

Prof Colleen Vogel of the Wits Global Change Institute, opened by stating that there is a need for a new type of science, the science that is not just sitting at the universities with courses and models. In her current work, she stresses the need for the transformation of how science is done, that requires not only talking about responses, but having structural controls. The issues that are driving the vulnerabilities need to be addressed head-on. She said that until the universities and research institutions mobilise and work together with societies (science **and** societies, not science **for** societies), not much is going to be achieved.

Bongani Bingwa asked Col. Etienne van Blerk, of the South African Defence Force, what the military can do in terms of conservation. Col. van Blerk, being a conservationist and a military man, indicated that the Department of Defence takes into consideration the effects of climate change, combined with various other environmental threats such as loss of biodiversity and ecosystem functioning. This includes desertification and land degradation, and freshwater decline. He noted that all of these threats interact with each other and they amplify the effects of climate change. These then come together as an impact on human security, and eventually have an impact on the social fabric, leading to possible conflicts.

While responding to Bingwa's question on how countries can begin to insure against disasters such as Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, JP Blignaut of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) mentioned that all corporates need to have disaster management programmes in place. He noted that there are insurance products at national level for such disasters that can be used for rebuilding and compensating the affected communities. He also noted that when we have a risk transfer mechanism at national or regional level, when such disasters strike, there is cash immediately available to start paying for whatever needs to happen. He said this is not new, it has been working in many places for years, giving California as the best example where the state has insurance covers for its people. Caribbean countries have also come together to take out insurance for the hurricanes that move along their shores.



PANEL TWO: ACCURATE RESPONSE PLAN, WHERE TO FROM HERE? CALL TO ACTION

Andrea Wojnar of the United Nations Population Fund opened the conversation by drawing attention to the experience of women, such as vulnerability, decision making capacity, and fewer opportunities for education and economic empowerment. She differed with the call of the preceding panel to go back to traditional leadership, which in her opinion never worked well for women, hence the need to modernise, which includes involving women in leadership. She maintains that statistically, women and children are more exposed and lose more lives than men in humanitarian situations, which is linked to vulnerability. She said that about 20% of displaced women in general become victims of gender-based violence, and that these women require critical medical care.

Njongenhle Nyoni of the Food, Agriculture & Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, explained that his organisation focuses on policies on food and agricultural practices so as to ensure food security in Africa. They ensure sustainable food productivity for the vulnerable.

... the commonly cited 3Ps – Public-Private-Partnership – in their foundation have become the 5Ps: **People, Private, Philanthropy, Public, and Partnership.**

Responding to Bingwa's question regarding early response during disasters, Kennedy Mubaiwa of The Higherlife Foundation mentioned that the commonly cited 3Ps - Public-Private-Partnership – in their foundation have become the 5Ps: People, Private, Philanthropy, Public, and Partnership. Giving examples of communities in Chimanimani in Zimbabwe, he noted that the first responders to the disasters were the people helping each other. In their response, there is no framework given the economic situation of Zimbabwe.

In addressing the role of artists in such disasters, Berita Khumalo mentioned that as Africans, music is there in times of pain, in times of joy, in times of sadness and even during war. As a young pan-African singer, she has always asked herself how best she can help the community. She uses social media to educate her audience on the impact of climate change.

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In addressing Bingwa's concern for food security being at the centre of climate change and critical when disasters strike, Brian Bogart of the World Food Programme, opined that emergency is what gets attention, but devastation continues for life. Hence, there is a need to maintain the focus on rebuilding the communities. Bogart stressed that, in order to ensure food security, attention needs to be paid on crops that would survive even in the changing climatic conditions, because drought is the new norm. He talked about adaptation to new diets, and new food production technologies that are more resilient to the impact of climate change.

OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS

How do you sensitise people to become volunteers?

Does the government have a long term policy in place so as to avoid the same episodes repeating over and over? ✨



CONCLUDING REMARKS



Mr Ali Mafuruki, a board member of MINDS, provided the concluding remarks. He noted that there were numerous solutions suggested by the panellists, but said that if we could separate response from preparedness, it would be much easier to enable people to save their own lives. This is because there is never going to be an opportunity to raise enough money to save all the lives that needs to be saved. Mafuruki stressed the importance of empowering people to save themselves with the right tools, for communities to be able to organise, to sensitise each other about the seasons and the dangers posed by a changing climate. He also pointed out the importance of infusing indigenous knowledge systems with modern knowledge in forecasting, and good government planning in order to deal with disasters holistically. Mafuruki concluded that there should be a shift in thinking towards creating a robust system of preparedness, actionable at community level, family level, school level and at business level, before worrying about national level, because, at the end of the day, people have to save their own lives. ✨

The late Ali Mufuruki (pictured above) passed away on the 7th of December 2019 after partaking in this workshop. May his soul rest in Peace.



To view the full event programme and speaker profiles please [click here](#)

