

## **GFDRR Case Study: Swaziland**

GFDRR is supporting the Government of Swaziland to identify institutional and investment requirements for mainstreaming disaster risk management. Through a dedicated capacity assessment the primary objective of GFDRR's initial engagement is to update stakeholders on implementation progress to strengthen disaster risk management under the National Action Plan developed in 2005. The capacity assessment will take into account current capacity constraints, government's future plans and potential donor support. A secondary objective will be to explore the feasibility of including Swaziland as part of a Global Catastrophe Mutual Bond.

The project has been initiated in January 2008 and is expected to be undertaken over a twelve month period. A key outcome of the initiative will be to identify possible World Bank support and opportunities for 'mainstreaming' disaster risk management into Bank-supported operations.

### **RATIONALE**

Swaziland is beset with several hazards, mainly hydro-meteorological. Review of international data on disasters in Swaziland shows an increasing trend in the number of people affected by drought. This applies particularly in the rural sector, where 80 percent of the population depends on subsistence farming. The impact of drought induced disasters on vulnerable segments of the population is further exacerbated by the national HIV/AIDS pandemic. The emerging system for disaster management has a dual structure as separate mechanisms develop for addressing both HIV/AIDS and drought.

The motivation to review progress in strengthening disaster risk management therefore takes place against a challenging country context. In 2005 a UNDP assessment concluded that the existing disaster policy and management plan required revision, updating and further development. While a National Action Plan (NAP) was then developed through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and UNDP, resulting progress has been unclear. A major area of concern relates to the capacity of the Natural Disaster Task Force, which has had limited scope in reaching decentralized area and has tended to focus more on ex-post rather than ex-ante risk management interventions.

The current emphasis to streamline disaster risk management structures shares strong support amongst national and international stakeholders. The Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan, approved by Cabinet in October 2007 identifies drought and crop failure as key underlying causes of poverty in Swaziland. To address these issues key government agencies including the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development are engaged in the process. In addition major UN agencies including UNDP, FAO and WFP are engaged to ensure effective donor coordination and harmonization of activities.

## **PROGRESS and PROGRAM FEATURES**

The major focus of the capacity assessment will be to identify implementation gaps in the disaster management structure within Swaziland. Using the UNDP findings as an initial starting point, the capacity assessment will address a number of country level challenges identified in the 2005 assessment. First, developing a human resource base for the disaster risk management system and ensuring appropriate capacity at decentralized level. Second, institutionalizing assessment and early warning activities within appropriate domestic structures. Third, integrating risk management interventions with key social sectors including HIV/AIDS and land tenure. Forth, supporting integrated response options covering immediate and longer term needs. Finally, enhancing coordination between national and international stakeholders, including NGO actors.

Based on these findings the assessment will provide strategic advice on opportunities to strengthen capacity in key priority areas. A key entry point will be to consider governance and institutional aspects covering national legislation, governance structures and mechanisms to ensure excellence in future monitoring and evaluation of risk management interventions. Recommendations will also be elicited in the areas of preparedness and emergency management, risk assessment and awareness, information and knowledge management as well as risk management applications.

A key project features will also include a preliminary assessment as to whether Swaziland's risk could be covered y a Global Catastrophe Mutual Bond. Given the size, geography and capacity constraints facing Swaziland the opportunity for such risk pooling carries significant appeal amongst concerned stakeholders.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

Based on the findings of the capacity assessment a key output of this project will be the identification of capacity and investment opportunities to strengthen disaster risk management at national and sub-national level. It is anticipated that the assessment will also prioritize opportunities for 'mainstreaming' into Bank supported operations, which could be supported through further GFDRR funding.