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MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
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OF
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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Ref. **POP/PA.30/5A**

29th October, 2015

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and date

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Mr. Jeremiah Nyegenye, CBS
Clerk of the Senate
The Senate
NAIROBI

Dear

Mr. Nyegenye,

**GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON THE STATEMENT OF PREPAREDNESS
ON THE FORECASTED ELNINO RAINS**

Your letter dated 30th September, 2015 on the above subject refers.

Forward herewith is the statement on the Government preparedness on forecasted elnino rains for your information and further necessary action.

Yours

Amb. Monica Juma, DPhil, MBS
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY/INTERIOR

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GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ON THE STATE OF PREPAREDNESS ON THE FORECASTED EL NIÑO RAINS

The Kenya Meteorological Department issued an alert stating that most parts of the country would receive enhanced rainfall during the short rains season of October to December 2015, leading to the El Niño phenomenon.

In view of the above forecast, the Government moved with speed to put in place measures that would address the impacts of these El Niño rains in the various sectors of the economy. It was clear that the rains would impact positively to some areas of the economy, while negatively impacting on other sectors. Adequate preparations were initiated so that the country could avoid the negative impacts, while taking full advantage of the positive impacts.

Fourth Schedule of the Constitution distributes functions between the National and the County Governments. Accordingly Part 1 Section 24 gives the role of the National Government in dealing with disaster management, while Part 2 Section 12 allocates the County governments their responsibility in disaster management and fire-fighting. The National Government has a Draft Policy on Disaster Risk Management, while the Counties have also developed draft Disaster Management Bill which is before the Senate for debate. These two documents are being used as a guide to address the impending El Niño disaster.

A Cabinet Sub-Committee chaired by the Deputy President, was formed to deal with El Niño Disaster Preparedness and Response. The Government then put in place a Multi-Sectoral Task Force under the Presidency, which brought together a technical team from the various ministries to address the various intervention measures required to address this issue exhaustively. The Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government was tasked to lead the process. A National Contingency Plan that had been prepared in 2014 and coordinated through National Disaster Operations Centre was activated and a National Preparedness Action Plan on El Niño was put in place.

The Task Force was constituted, with Sectors drawn to include the Agriculture, Health, Livestock, Fisheries, Water, Transport and Infrastructure, Food and Non-Food Items, Education, Energy, Environment, Security, and Communication and Coordination sectors. The Council of Governors, Kenya Red Cross Society and UNOCHA was also incorporated in the process.

Disaster mapping of the whole country was done and areas susceptible floods, mudslides and landslides were identified. The counties were also asked to do disaster mapping of their counties. The National coordination and communication is being led by the National Disaster Operations Centre, and the Counties have been advised to start their Emergency Operations Centre coordinated by the Governors, and co-shared by the County Commissioners. There is Communication and coordination that is in place between the National Disaster Operations Centre and the County Governments, and daily situation updates are being prepared.

The following are the major areas of intervention identified by the sectors:

The Health Sector is faced with possible outbreak of diseases, mainly those that are water-related. These include: cholera, malaria, dengue fever, highland malaria, diarrheal, bilharzia and Rift Valley Fever. Measures have been put in place to raise awareness among the communities about the possibilities of these diseases, and the need to take protective measures. Meanwhile, stockpiling of medicines and other medical commodities in distant places has been done to ensure that medicines are available in all areas before the rains start. Technical assistance to Counties for disease outbreak preparedness and response has also been offered.

In the Agriculture sector, increased agricultural production, especially in the areas normally associated with food shortages, such as the arid and semi arid areas have been advised to take advantage of the increased rains to increase food production, and hence increase food security. In this regard the ministry has already provided subsidized fertilizers and seeds to farmers and advised them to commence planting, which is now on-going. In the areas that have ready harvests, farmers have been advised to commence early harvesting to avoid post harvest losses. At the same time the government has provided driers to help dry the grains and reduce moisture content for proper and safe storage.

In the Livestock Sector farmers have been warned about the possible outbreak of Rift Valley Fever, and advised to have their Livestock vaccinated. The government has provided vaccines for the livestock and the vaccination is already on-going in the areas prone to Rift Valley Fever.

On raising awareness, the Government has used all the available means to raise awareness among the communities. Use of the electronic media, print media and public barazas have also been some of the mediums used to raise awareness. A multi-agency communication team has been constituted that issues daily media updates. All national and regional radio station have been

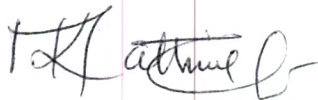
broadcasting early warning before the 7.00 am and 7.00 pm bulletins. The print media has also dedicated a page to cover awareness. The message to the general public has been advising them to move from low lying areas to high grounds to avoid drowning, or being swept away. In areas that are prone to landslides and mudslides the communities have also been advised to move to safer grounds to avoid getting buried by the landslides. Early warning systems such as targeted SMS systems to specific areas have been put in place and ready to be used when need arises. Implementing Community Based Flood Early Warning Systems, Flood Disaster Education, Evacuation Drill and Community Based Flood Hazard Mapping are all measures that are being employed to raise awareness among the population.

On the issue of the resources needed to prepare for the El Niño rains the Counties have been advised to use the budget allocations that have are normally set aside to meet disasters and emergencies in their budgets to prepare for the El Niño rains. The National Treasury released the budget allocations for the first half and Counties have been advised to use these funds. Where necessary the Ministries have been advised by the National Treasury to re-allocate the funds within their annual allocations in order to address the interventions required. Meanwhile, the National Treasury has set aside Ksh Five Billion from the Contingency Funds to mitigate against El Niño negative impacts. The Government has also mobilized the Development Partners, and the Private Sector to step in and assist in these interventions. Good progress is being made towards this end. Part of the assistance being provided is being channeled through some of the on-going development projects and hence reaching the communities speedily.

The National and County Governments have taken appropriate measures to take advantage of the increased rains through the following interventions through the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. It is expected that there will be improved access to water to households and Institutions. The existing storage reservoirs will get recharged, and communities have been advised to take full advantage of the rains to increase water storage for domestic use and for future use. The Ministry is initially purchasing 600 storage tanks to be distributed to the communities for water harvesting. The Ministry is also providing plastic tanks and collapsible water tanks to communities to increase water harvesting. It is also providing water treatment chemicals to minimize incidences of water borne diseases. It has also prepared and prepositioned rapid respond repair teams to attend to damaged water supply infrastructure.

The El Niño flood waters will quickly fill up already existing dams and pans and the newly built ones. There exists over 5,000 small dams/pans and 17 large dams in Kenya with an approximate capacity of 180 million m³. Over the last 2 years, the Ministry and County Governments have been constructing and desilting small dams and pans. In the last 24 months alone, 701 water pans and 54 small dams were constructed which have provided a storage capacity of 16 million m³. In addition the National Irrigation Board has completed 15 water pans with a capacity of 1.3 m³ in Mandera, Wajir, Makueni, Kwale and Taita Taveta Counties. It is clear that the additional storage capacity created will be filled during the El Niño rains and this will provide water for human, livestock and irrigation use.

In conclusion the Government has put an elaborate Action Plan to deal with the El Niño phenomenon, mitigate its negative impacts, while taking advantage of the opportunity that the additional water provides.



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