



# MAJOR INCIDENTS REPORT FOR 2002

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## Major incidents reported

PLACE	DISASTER	LIKELY CAUSE	EFFECTS / COST
<b>Country wide (Zimbabwe)</b>	Drought 2001 /2002 (Declared State of Disaster on 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2002 )	Natural Phenomenon	Loss of crops and means of livelihood, loss of livestock, Acute food shortages country wide Decline in exports
<b>Masvingo</b>	Mhunga Bus Disaster 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2002 (Declared State of Disaster)	Negligent Driving / human error	37 people died Several others injured Loss of manpower Loss of \$millions worth of assets/ property
<b>Masvingo - Chivi</b>	Kombi Accident 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2002	Negligent Driving	11 people died Loss of valuable property
<b>Old Village Selous</b>	Mine Accident 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2002	Falls of Ground	6 gold panners died
<b>Midlands Province KweKwe</b>	Keystone Bus Accident 5 <sup>th</sup> November 2002 (Declared State of Disaster)	Human Error / Negligent driving	17 Deaths and several injured Loss of valuable property
<b>St Mary's Chitungwiza</b>	Lightning bolt 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2002	Natural Phenomenon	10 death 61 injured

## 1.0 DROUGHT DISASTER: 2001 / 2002 AGRICULTURAL SEASON

### Background

In October 2001, the Zimbabwe Meteorological Services predicted a high chance for normal rainfall amounts over the whole country for the 2001 to 2002 rainfall season. Slight chances of above normal rains particularly in some areas in the northern region were predicted.

The outlook for the rainy season was that for the months of October, November and December a normal rainfall season was expected throughout the whole country and normal to above normal in the months of January, February and March across the country.

### Mid season dry spell

The prolonged and severe mid season dry spell, which eventually culminated into a drought badly, affected cereal production in the SADC region. By the end of February, much of Zimbabwe and parts of Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and Botswana had been badly affected. The early-planted staple maize crop was affected at the critical stage of flowering. The drought conditions resulted in complete crop failure in most parts of the country.

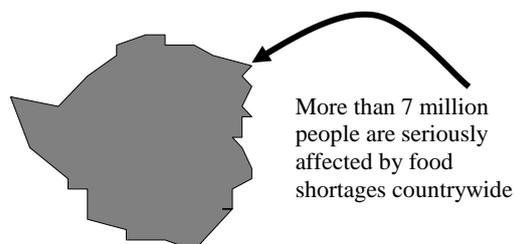
### Declaration Of State Of Disaster

On 3rd April 2002, His Excellency, the President in terms of the statutory instrument 102A of 2002, declared a state of disaster in all communal lands, resettlement areas and urban areas as a result of the drought. The Declaration of State of Disaster was further extended for a further 3 months with effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2002.

### Extent Of The Problem And Other Compounding Factors

Over seven million Zimbabweans are at risk due to the worsening food

shortages in the country, a shortage estimated at 1.8 million Metric Tonnes (MTs). The drought condition was exacerbated by the unavailability of basic commodities in local shops both in the urban and rural areas. As a result the urban populations was equally affected.



### Food Vulnerability Assessment

Following the national vulnerability assessment on food security carried out in November 2002, the food security situation had continued to deteriorate in all parts of the country.



At sub-national level, availability of a wide range of basic commodities continued to be limited. Forty percent of the communities visited reported that cereals were “not or rarely” available from the GMB and/or local markets. Other indicators such as coping strategies, food and livestock prices, and dietary intake also support the conclusion that cereal is extremely unavailable at the community level.

The price of maize on the black market has risen by 167% since August 2002 to an average of Z\$130 per kg. Increased deaths of livestock due to both drought and diseases occurred.

### Coping strategies

Many households were resorting to unusual and often harmful income-generating activities such as gold-panning, prostitution, theft and sale of

household assets. Wild foods (fruits, leaves, roots, tubers and insects) were being consumed across the country as main meals.

### **Prospects for 2002- 2003 agricultural season**

Prospects for the 2002-03 agricultural season appear poor. As of December 4<sup>th</sup>, only 38% of the area planted to maize last year had been planted this season. Serious shortages of inputs, especially fertilizers, seed, and tillage also hampered planting, while a dry period during the second half of November also worsened the situation.

### **Interventions**

The short-term goals identified by the UN Country Team (UNCT) and its partners focus on alleviating the effects of the current crisis and were consistent with the overall and sectoral strategies and priorities identified in this Appeal issued by the Government of Zimbabwe. The short-term goals were to:

- Ensure that the urgent humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations in Zimbabwe were met;
- Assist in preventing marginal populations from falling into the category of destitution that would necessitate the provision of humanitarian assistance for their survival;
- Lay the foundations for recovery programme in food security, education, health services and the economy at large;
- Prevent, contain and address the outbreak of diseases, including HIV/AIDS;
- Assist vulnerable populations to improve their coping mechanisms to make them more resistant to economic and natural shocks;

- Influence the policy debate on issues which could improve food security, economic revival and service provision, including the role of the private sector;

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## **2.0 MASVINGO [MHUNGA] BUS DISASTER : 9 JUNE 2002**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2002, at about 11.30pm a Mhunga Bus carrying 102 students and two lecturers from the Masvingo Teachers College was involved in a head-on collision with a heavy truck near the 65km peg along the Masvingo-Harare road. The students were coming back from a sports trip in Harare and were trapped on the bus as a result of the head-on collision with the mangled two vehicles catching fire instantly.



Thirty-five (35) students and the two (2) drivers died due to the impact and the resultant fire. Of the sixty-nine (69) passengers that survived, thirty-four (34) of them were injured, ten (10) of them with serious injuries.

### **Response**

According to information gathered in Masvingo, both Chatsworth and Masvingo Police were alerted and swiftly responded. The Masvingo Fire Brigade also responded and was later on joined by the Gweru Fire Brigade. However, by the time help arrived, most of the damage had been done. It would appear that most of the survivors were either thrown out of the bus on impact or were rescued by their colleagues, whilst the dead were either killed by the impact or overwhelmed by the smoke and the fire.

### **Identification Of Survivors and the Dead**

The Police immediately embarked on the identification process to establish who was affected and to what extent. By the end of the following day, with the help of fellow students, lecturers, and parents, about thirty of the dead were positively identified.

This left about seven (7) unidentified bodies, which were severely burnt and disfigured. These required the special intervention by the Forensic Scientists Department.

A team comprising a pathologist from the University of Zimbabwe and Forensic Scientists was set up to try and identify the last seven (7) bodies. The team managed to identify three (3) of the seven (7) burnt bodies and only four (4) bodies remained to be identified. The local team was later joined by a team of Scientists from South Africa who collected muscle tissues from the remaining four (4) bodies for DNA tests in South Africa.

#### **Burial of the deceased**

All the identified bodies were buried in their respective districts. Also buried in a mass grave in Masvingo were bits and pieces of human remains which were collected from the scene of the accident. A woman who had come to identify a relative collapsed and died at Masvingo Hospital and was also given similar assistance accorded to the initial victims.

#### **The Injured**

Thirty four (34) injured victims were hospitalised, four were seriously injured and had to be admitted at Parirenyatwa, Harare, Matadei and Mpilo Hospitals.

#### **Counseling Of Survivors**

A team comprising pathologists, Counselors from Connect (private company) and Social Welfare, ZRP and Masvingo Technical College was set up to counsel the survivors and work out a follow up programme.

#### **Government Assistance**

The accident was Declared a State of Disaster. The Ministry of Local

Government Public Works and National Housing through its Department of Civil Protection assisted the bereaved families as follows :

- 1 standard coffin
- transport for the deceased and the mourners
- \$15 000 cash per family for food stuffs
- 5 x 50kgs of maize per family

### **Major Constraints in Management of the Emergency**

- \* **Lack of adequate ambulance services ;** the available ambulances in the province are both inadequate and old.
- \* **Medical equipment ;**  
The only functional X-Ray machine constantly broke down due to over use and there was a shortage of some sizes of X-Ray film. The equipment is inadequate to cope with a disaster of such proportions, this equipment includes wheel chairs, stretchers, drip stands and instruments for wound care. The hospital autoclave [which is used to sterilise equipment] was out of order during the disaster.
- \* **Medical Personnel**  
The shortage of both professional and non professional staff impeded the provision of efficient quality service. The staffing levels have to be increased in order for the establishment to maintain standards.
- \* **Mortuary Facilities**  
The mortuary cannot cope with a disaster of this proportion as it has capacity for only 18 (eighteen) bodies, the cold room freezer was also out of order during the disaster.

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### **3.0 CHIVI KOMBI ACCIDENT ( MASVINGO PROVINCE) 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2002**

In less than 48 hours of the Mhunga bus accident, another fatal accident involving a Kombi occurred in Chivi District resulting in the loss of 11

people. The cause of the accident was attributed to negligent driving by the Kombi driver who was speeding resulting in the overturning of the mini bus.

The Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing through the Department of Civil Protection assisted the bereaved families as follows:

- 1 standard coffin
- transport for the deceased and the mourners
- \$15 000 cash per family for food stuffs
- 5 x 50kgs of maize per family

### Recommendations

- Police roadblocks and speed traps should be intensified along major highways,
- An EPR programme for Public Transportation Operators should be developed and implemented.

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## 4.0 FATAL MINING ACCIDENT: OLD VILLAGE MINE- SELOUS: 23 JULY 2002

### Cause of the Accident

The fateful event happened on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2002 in Mashonaland West Province at an old village mine- Solous.



Whilst the gold panners were panning underground, the hanging walls of the workings gave in and trapped the panners. It was believed that a group of illegal panners who after having paid \$500 each as entrance fee into a disused section of the mine met their fate as the roof of the mine collapsed on them. The following are some of the causes of the incident;

- The workings were unprotected

- There was no appointed mine Manager
- There was haphazard extraction of ore as there was no supervision
- The mining methods used were not clearly defined as a result the roof collapsed burying the miners alive.

The exact number of the people who ingressed into the workings could not be ascertained, as it was also believed that some of them escaped unhurt and disappeared into the dark and never bothered to report of missing friends and relatives.

### Response.

After ten hours of the incident, the mines inspectorate was on site in Selous. With the help of Makwiro platinum mine rescue team three panners were successfully rescued. Unfortunately one of them died on the way to Chegutu Hospital.

A decision was made by the inspectorate to call off the rescue operations. The decision was based on the safety of the rescue team. It was felt that the whole mine could collapse any time.

As the workings were not in competent ground, the use of mechanical mining equipment was seriously considered. An excavator, a Komatsu PC220, was contracted from a Chegutu based miner. The excavator was brought to the scene of the accident after 48 hours.

Operations using the mechanical digger commenced on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2002 (day 5) at 0700 hours. By end of the day, four (4) bodies had been retrieved. The other body was retrieved on day 6.

Due to the large numbers of people who were reported by the local media to be missing the workings were

completely exposed. However, there was no more foul smell emanating from the pit. A decision was reached to call off the rescue operations.

The open pit that had been created was backfilled and four other vertical shafts were backfilled resulting in workings becoming inaccessible.

More incidents involving gold panning were reported countrywide.

#### **Recommendations**

- There is need to enforce mining regulations
- All miners who breach the regulations should be prosecuted.
- Gold panning activities are on the increase as a result control mechanisms should be put in place

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#### **4.0 LIGHTNING BOLT: ST MARY'S- CHITUNGWIZA: 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2002**

Ten worshipers were truck and killed and several others burnt by a bolt of lightning while attending a Johane Masowe Chishanu church service in Chitungwiza's St Mary's on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2002.

Eight adults and two children died instantly while 61 other members of the congregation were rushed to Chitungwiza General Hospital. Of the injured, 53 were treated and discharged while the other eight were detained overnight with serious burns

#### **Intervention**

The Government through the Department of Civil Protection complemented the efforts of the relatives and the church to minimise the hardships endured by the

immediate families by providing the following;

Each family benefited from - \$15 000, 250killogramms of maize, payment of grave sites, payment of hospital fee for those who were hospitalised and transport for those who were buried outside Chitungwiza.

#### **Recommendations**

- A major research project on lightning should be carried out,
- An intensive awareness campaign should be carried out to sensitise the general public on ways of mitigating lightning hazards.

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#### **5.0 TENDA BUS ACCIDENT: MASVINGO PROVINCE: 5<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2002**

A Tenda bus travelling from Bulawayo to Mutare was involved in an accident at the 16KM peg along Masvingo – Mashava road on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2002 at 1030hrs.

The Driver of the bus attempted to overtake a haulage truck and rammed on to the trailer killing 5 people on the spot and injuring 56 people. Of the injured, two died on arrival at Masvingo General Hospital and other two died after being admitted to bring the total deaths to nine.

#### **Intervention**

The owner of Tenda bus services offered transport to the bereaved families and paid \$20 000 per family.

The Government through the Department of Civil Protection also intervened and assisted the bereaved families with a standard low cost

coffin per deceased victim and with 250kg maize per bereaved family

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### **6.0 KWEKWE BUS DISASTER: MIDLANDS PROVINCE: 5<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2002**

A bus belonging to Keystone was involving in a head on collision with a haulage truck on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2002 along the Harare Bulawayo road near Redcliff turn off. The cause of the accident was attributed to human error.

The tragedy resulted in the death of 17 people. Kwekwe General Hospital mortuaries failed to accommodate all the 17 dead bodies and as a result some were transferred to Doves Morgan funeral parlour

#### **Declaration of State of Disaster**

The accident was declared a State of Disaster as a result; the Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing through the Department of Civil Protection again assisted the bereaved families with the following:

- 1 standard coffin
- transport for the deceased and the mourners
- \$15 000 cash per family for food stuffs
- 5 x 50kgs of maize per family

#### **Recommendations**

- Police roadblocks and speed traps should be intensified along major highways,
- An EPR programme for Public Transportation Operators should be developed and implemented
- There is need to enforce road regulations.

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### **7.0 OVERALL RECOMMENDATION ON THE REPORTING SYSTEM**

There is need to improve on the reporting of major incidents. Much emphasis should be placed on how the disaster was managed by various sectors that had a part to play in the management of the disaster. Guidelines for reporting major incidents were dispatched to the provinces and districts. In most of the reports major issues such as the management roles played by various sectors, recommendations, strengths and weaknesses etc were left out. Detailed reports would help in planning for EPR programmes.

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