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FEEDBACK TUTORIAL LETTER

2nd SEMESTER 2017

ASSIGNMENT 2

DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

DRM712S

DSM712S

FIRST TUTORIAL FEEDBACK LETTER 2017

SEMESTER 2/ 2017

2ND ASSIGNMENT

Dear Student,

Let me take this opportunity to thank you for submitting your final assignment for Disaster Risk Management. I'm glad that we are done with all the assignments for the year; and only left with the examination. As you know by now, the purpose of this feedback tutorial letter is to give you general feedback on the outcome of marking your assignment. Hence, the purpose is to discuss important issues that I came across during the marking of your assignment. As is usually the case, I provided comments in your respective assignments. These comments are meant to help you understand what was expected from you and what you needed to do. Please read and understand these comments and if you do not understand; do not hesitate to contact me. The comments I made are meant to help you in your academic journey and to ensure that you learn and at the same time get good marks.

Assignment Questions

Assignment 2 consists of 2 questions as follows:

Question 1

According to the Centre for Research on Epidemiology of Disaster and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2016, p.6), the performance of the Hygo Framework for Action and the Millennium Development Goals indicated that the progress was limited. The slow progress was due to underlying risks such as 'poverty, environmental degradation, short comings in disaster risk governance, rapid urbanisation, climate change and increased population in hazards prone areas'. With reference to Namibia, discuss how these challenges can be addressed to ensure that current policies such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development Goals achieve their objectives.

Question 2

One of the guiding principles of the Namibian climate change policy is to ensure sustainable development and environmental sustainability. Evaluate whether Namibia is applying these principles to mitigate and adapt to climate change. On the basis of your findings, make the necessary recommendations.

Let start with question 1

Question 1 asked about the challenges in the following sectors that hindered the full accomplishment of MDGs and the Hygo Framework for Action. Here are the challenges:

- Poverty
- Environmental degradation
- Short comings in disaster risk governance
- Rapid urbanisation
- Climate change and
- Increased population in hazards prone areas

Poverty

Poverty makes people vulnerable because most of the times poor people live in hazard-prone areas. If we are to look at our informal settlement, people that are living there are poor and most of them are not employed and those are employed, receive low salaries. According to the 2016 Labour Force Survey, unemployment rate stood at 34% in Namibia. Unemployment is a contributing factor to poverty since people cannot afford to buy food or properties. They then settle in informal and illegal settlement using whatever material they can set their hands on. This is indeed a problem since this people's houses are likely to be washed away by floods or storms and they are also likely to burn. In the towns of Walvis Bay and Swakopmund for example, on a weekly basis, there are cases of shack fires. Due to this, people are ever in the cycle of poverty without any development. Every year their properties are being destroyed and this take them back given that they have to start all over again. And this hindered the progress of the MDGs and the Hygo Framework for Action.

What can Namibia do to address poverty?

First of all, Namibia as a country needs to empower the people, mostly through education and training. Educated people are likely to find employment and if they cannot find employment, they can also create. The fifth National Development Plan made some good recommendations on how the country can address poverty as follows.

- Increase agricultural production for cereals, horticulture and livestock
- Develop agro-processing industries by utilizing local produce and regional value chains
- Provide information on modern farming practices including how communal farmers can organise cooperatives and access credit and acquire agriculture equipment.
- Promote the planting of drought resistance varieties

What needs to be done is to implement these strategies. The government has however started implementing some of these strategies through several programmes and projects. For example, the irrigation or green scheme projects aimed to increase food security in the country. We have Etunda Irrigation Scheme, Shadikongoro Irrigation project, Sikondo Green Scheme Irrigation just to mention but a few. One successful project under the Green Scheme is the Kalimbeza Rice Project which is even

being sold in the local market by AgriBusDev. These projects are contributing towards food security in the country and creating employment. It is clear that these projects are reducing poverty and the government needs to create more projects of this nature.

Environmental degradation

Environmental degradation is defined as a process whereby natural resources such as air, water and soil are depleted or weakened and unable to cater for the living organisms. Environmental degradation involves the destruction of the ecosystem; habitat destruction; the extinction of some plants or animal species and pollution.

Namibia can address environmental degradation by conserving the environment and using natural resources on a sustainable basis; and managing the environment and climate change.

The government also need to promote the use of public transport and use of green energy to mitigate or lessen pollution. Public transports reduce the number of vehicles on the road and hence the reduction of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The use of green energy like solar and wind energy will lessen toxic gases in the atmosphere. This is also referred to as climate change mitigation.

The fifth National Development Plan outlines measures to address environmental degradation as follows:

- Strengthen sustainable land management
- Safeguard ecosystems, species and genetic diversity
- Environmental awareness campaigns
- Strengthen environmental protection
- Promotion of re-use and recycle concepts
- Awareness and campaigns on the causes of climate change since climate change can be caused by environmental degradation

Some of these measures have been introduced in Namibia, what is needed, is more awareness so that the messages get across to all the people.

Short comings in disaster risk governance

Namibia has disaster risk governance at national and regional levels. According to the National Disaster Risk Management Act of 2012, there should be disaster risk management committees at national, regional and local levels to oversee disaster risk management activities in their areas of jurisdiction. However, these committees are only in place in all the regions but only the Windhoek Municipality has a division on disaster risk management. All other local authorities do not have a responsible division entrusted with disaster risk management.

All local authorities need to implement the National Disaster Risk Management Act to ensure that they address the short comings in disaster risk governance because if there is no structure to drive the process forward then there will be no success in addressing disaster risk management issues.

Rapid urbanisation

Urbanisation is caused by the belief people have that cities and towns are centres of economic development and by extension centres of employment. People flock to cities and towns in large numbers in search for greener pasture. But when they arrive in cities and towns reality hit them and they find themselves in informal and illegal settlements where they are prone to disasters.

Measures to be taken to address rapid urbanisation

➤ Rural economic development

The government need to develop rural areas in order to prevent movement of people from rural to urban areas. If there are employment opportunities in rural areas, people will not move to urban areas. The central government also need to provide funds for servicing of the land to ensure that informal settlement are done away with. Most disasters in urban areas occur in informal settlements because of their vulnerability.

➤ Proper planning and urban development

Local authorities need to ensure that they plan and develop their areas sustainably in order to prevent and mitigate disaster risks. Unsustainable development leads to disasters because this development does not take hazards into account.

Climate change

Climate Change can be defined as the alteration of the world's climate that we humans are causing, through fossil fuel burning, clearing forests and other practices that increase the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere.

Climate change can be addressed through the following two ways: Mitigation and adaptation

- Mitigation is defined as an anthropogenic intervention to reduce climate change
- Mitigation involves the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere, such as the reduction of the use of fossil fuels
- It also includes strategies to reduce greenhouse gas sources and emissions and enhance greenhouse gas sinks, for examples reforestation or planting of trees.

Adaptation is also defined by the World Resource Institution as a continuum of responses to climate change.

Adaptation is divided into three types:

- Addressing issues that make people vulnerable
- Capacitating the community, ensuring that people have the capacity to fight disasters.

Examples of adaptation include:

- preparing risk assessments
- protecting ecosystems
- improving agricultural methods
- managing water resources
- building settlements in safe zones
- developing early warning systems
- instituting better building designs
- improving insurance coverage
- developing safety nets

Increased population in hazard prone areas

The cause of many people in hazard prone areas is caused by urbanisation. For example in towns and cities, there are many informal settlements. These informal settlements are built in river beds and valleys or top of mountains.

Measures to this problem will be the same as the measures to urbanisation. If you address urbanisation, chances are you will have less people in hazard prone areas

This is more or less what I expected from you; I expected you to address the challenges as per the question. If the above-mentioned measures are followed, Sustainable Development Goals and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction are likely to achieve their targets.

Question 2

The second question asked about whether Namibia is applying the guiding principle of sustainable development and environmental sustainability which is one of the guiding principles of the climate change policy.

The answer to this question can be a yes and no or both as long as you support your claim.

I will say Namibia is applying this principle given that Namibia has an environmental Act, Act No. 7 of 2007.

The objectives of the act are as follows:

- To make sure that people consider the impact of activities on the environment carefully and in good time
- To make sure that all interested or affected people have a chance to participate in environmental assessments
- To make sure that the findings of environmental assessments are considered before any decisions are made about activities which might affect the environment

The government is also promoting the use green energy to ensure that the environment is protected and pollution is minimised. For example, the Ministry of Mines and Energy has what is called the Solar Revolving Fund. This Fund gives credit to mostly rural areas dwellers living in off-grid areas, but also to urban clients. The objective of the Fund is to provide access to appropriate energy technologies to rural

areas and also protect the environment. Solar energy is clean energy and does not pollute the environment. Therefore, Namibia is applying the principle of sustainable development and environmental sustainability.

There is also an Environmental Investment Fund which is aimed at promoting sustainable economic development of Namibia through investment in and promotion of activities and projects that protect and maintain the natural and environmental resources of the country. The Act also requires an environmental clearance certificate for activities as provided for in the Act. Below are some of the activities:

- Energy generation, transmission and storage activities
- Waste management, treatment, handling and disposal activities
- Mining and quarrying activities

I'm sure you can remember the public outcry on the approval or awarding of an environmental Impact Assessment clearance certificate late last year (2016) to a company called Namibia Marine Phosphate. The awarding of the said certificate caused a public outcry and was later revoked by the Minister in order for due process to be followed. The said certificate was never re-awarded, because people were complaining that the project will degrade the environment through contaminating the sea and this will lead to a reduction in oxygen in the sea which is essential for survival of the sea-living organisms. In addition, phosphate mining can lead to radioactive phosphorus, which is harmful to people living within the vicinity. This is a sign that Namibia is following the principle of sustainable development and environmental sustainability.

Even when forests are being cleared or trees being chopped, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism needs to provide a clearance certificate. This is happening and hence, the principle of sustainable development and environmental sustainability is being applied.

According to the fifth National Development Plan, there are however challenges of poaching wild animals such as rhinos and also the issue of human wildlife conflict that need be addressed. There are also cases of people using natural resources unsustainable. The Minister of Environment and Tourism stated that 162 rhinos have been killed since 2015 to 2016. This is as per the article by Adam Hartman of the Namibian dated 4th August 2016. Though this is a challenge, offenders or culprits are being arrested for the offences they commit. By May 2017, six lions were killed in the north by farmers because they were attacking and killing their animals. Perhaps, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism can come up with a better plan on how to manage the conflict between humans and wildlife. According to the Parliament's website, a parliamentary standing committee on natural resources undertook consultative visits to Zambezi region in order to find an amicable solution to the problem of human-wildlife conflict. The Committee wanted to find out from the communities what they want the Government to do for them, in terms of how they can be assisted if their crops are damaged by wild animals or if they are in danger or people are killed by animals. The committee will also look at measures to be put in place for the protection of both community members and animals.

Some of the recommendations you could have given are:

- The use of renewable energy
- Full implementation of the Environmental Management Act
- Stiffer penalties for those poaching
- Awareness on the benefits of sustainable development and environmental sustainability

That's more or less what I expected from you for question 2.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate those that have qualified for the examination and urge them to study hard for their exams and to start studying as early as possible; the earlier the better. To those of you that could not qualify, there is always a next time, please put in more effort next time. Please let's cultivate the culture of reading to understand, instead of just completing the assignment. Further, let's learn to ask where we do not understand.

Guidelines for exams

You need to read the following documents for exam purpose:

1. Sustainable Development Goals: focus on the goals and see how they contribute to disaster risk reduction.
2. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction: focus on the priorities for action.
3. The National Disaster Risk Management Act (Act 10 of 2012): focus on the functions of several committees and declaration of national, regional and local disasters
4. The National Disaster Risk Management Policy of 2009: focus on the objectives.
5. A document by the African Union, NEPAD and International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction titled Guidelines for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in Development, read page.13-19.
6. Units from the study Guide: Unit 1-5 and 7.

I have attached the above-mentioned documents for your convenience. Alternatively, most of them are available on the internet; you can also search for them.

I wish you all the best of luck for the exam.

For more information or enquiries, do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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