

uMLALAZI MUNICIPALITY DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

If the uMlalazi Local Municipality's physical characteristics are taken into account, and these are coupled with the social characteristics of the area, there are a number of disasters that are likely to occur. These include the following:

- ❖ **Flooding** due to the fact that the area is located in a area that can be categorized as a generally high rainfall area and is characterized by an undulating topography with rivers and streams in abundance. Due to the absence of potable water in many of the rural areas, communities tend to locate near rivers and streams, mostly without any consideration for flood control lines. This occurs to obtain proximity to water for consumption.
- ❖ **Veld or bush fires** occurring during periods of protracted drought and as a result of generally dense vegetation as a result of cane fields, forests and invasive vegetation. In recent times, such fires have caused considerable damage.
- ❖ The occurrence of **cholera and other related diseases** as a result of the absence of purified drinking water and sanitation resulting in the contamination of water sources. These diseases may also develop into disaster proportions and is specifically applicable to the rural areas. The diseases are life threatening and should be carefully monitored.
- ❖ The existence of the **HIV/Aids pandemic**, also highlighted in the sector plan in respect of this disease. It is calculated that there are in excess of 83 000 persons of the total population having been infected by this disease and this may place significant pressure on burial space available within the municipality.

The uMlalazi Local Municipality has a Disaster Management Plan in place and this plan has identified all the key role players in respect of the effective implementation of the plan.

2. NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Disaster Management Plan, as prepared by the uMlalazi Local Municipality, is designed to:

- ❖ Anticipate the types of disasters that are most likely to occur in its area of application;
- ❖ Identify the possible effects of any disaster that may occur;
- ❖ Identify the preventative and mitigating strategies to deal with any possible disaster;

- ❖ Involve all role players in a coordinated manner to respond to the challenges posed in disaster situations;
- ❖ Procure essential goods and services for disaster management;
- ❖ Identify the weaknesses in respect of capacity and skills to deal effectively with disaster situations;
- ❖ Provide essential training in skills and to promote awareness and preparedness in respect of the occurrence of disasters; and
- ❖ Plan in advance the relief operations that may be required or to be exercised in disaster situations.

3. CAPACITY PROBLEMS

The uMlalazi Local Municipality is a local municipality formed from the de-establishment of three previous autonomous transition local municipalities, which operated as separate and independent entities. A lack of coordination was therefore the order of the day. Through the amalgamation process, the three separate local authorities were merged and consolidated into one, but importantly, a very large rural area was also incorporated into the equation. Not only does this imply a difficulty in coping with infrastructure capacity, but also in respect of manpower capacity. Not one of the previous independent municipalities built the capacity or acquired the equipment to deal with the challenges posed by such a vast local authority area of 2 217km².

It is therefore a factual situation that the uMlalazi Local Municipality does not have the capacity in terms of manpower nor technical equipment to deal with a major disaster. This conclusion is underlined by the fact there are for instance 6 police stations too little in the municipal area, there is a serious need for a new fire station with the necessary basic equipment, and regional clinic for health-care rendering a 24-hour service. The latter is the result of the backlog in respect of the provision of neighbourhood clinics as well as the capacity and technical problems being experienced at the four existing hospitals within the municipal area.

In the needs analysis of the uMlalazi Integrated Development Plan, one of the highest-ranking priorities is the upgrading of the existing roads infrastructure coupled with the improvement of accessibility in the rural areas. It is of little value to have built the required capacities to deal with disaster, only to experience the inability to reach areas wherein disasters occur, due to inaccessibility due to poor roads infrastructure.

It is submitted that the uThungulu District Municipality take due cognizance of this situation and deal with these issues in collaboration with the KwaZulu Natal Department of Transport in the preparation of a district level disaster management plan.

4. IDENTIFIED ROLE PLAYERS

In the uMlalazi Disaster Management Plan, the key role players have been identified and are actively involved in the plan. These role players are the following:

- ❖ The Municipal Manager and the departmental managers of the municipality, namely the Manager Protection Services, Manager Corporate Services, Manager Engineering Services, Manager Community Services and Manager Financial Services.
- ❖ The Manager of protection Services obviously plays the key role in the overall structure.
- ❖ Non-governmental organizations (NGO's).
- ❖ Community based organizations (CBO's).
- ❖ The South African Police Service (SAPS).
- ❖ The South African National Defense Force (SANDF).
- ❖ Private companies and enterprises.
- ❖ The local commercial sector.

The advantage for the uMlalazi Area is that both the South African National Defense Force and the South African Police Service are based in Eshowe, with Eshowe having a central locality in respect of the municipal area.

5. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The management structure for the uMlalazi Disaster Management Plan is the following:

- ❖ The Municipal Manager and a Management Committee, consisting of the senior municipal officials of the uMlalazi Local Municipality, execute the core management function.
- ❖ A **Health and Medical Committee**, which is headed by the Manager Community Services and includes as members the Senior Medical Superintendent of the Eshowe Provincial Hospital, the District Surgeon, Senior Health Nurse, and others.
- ❖ A **Welfare and Relief Committee**, headed by the Manager Corporate Services of the uMlalazi Local Municipality, with other officials of the municipality serving as members thereon.
- ❖ A **Response and Rescue Committee**, headed by the Manager Protection Services with representation thereon by the Principal Roads Inspector of the KwaZulu natal Department of Transport, the Station Commissioner of the South African Police Service and the Commanding Officer of GR27 of the South African National Defense Force.
- ❖ A **Reconstruction Committee**, headed by the Manager Engineering Services, officials of the municipality and the General Manager of the KwaZulu Natal Department of Transport.

- ❖ A **Development Committee**, headed by the Manager Financial Services of the municipality and other officials of that department.

6. THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

❖ PREVENTION

The uMlalazi Local Municipality has a 24 hour Alpha Emergency Control Centre located at the offices of the Manager Protection Services in Butcher Street, Eshowe. The center is equipped with emergency telephones, radio communication and the telephone numbers of all role players who are to take part in the event of a disaster. Regular staff training takes place. If a disaster occurs in the areas of Mtunzini or Gingindlovu, the Eshowe Centre will be used as the Disaster Management Centre.

❖ DISASTER MITIGATION

The Management Committee is responsible for **hazard assessment** in terms of the type of hazard that is occurring. These hazards may include fires, flooding, drought, people fleeing violence or disaster, homeless victims, transportation accidents or health epidemics and diseases.

A **vulnerability assessment** is done of the uMlalazi Local Municipality in terms of house fires, sugar cane and grass fires in the farming areas, rural areas and the urban areas. Flooding potential in the area such as occurred during the Demoina Cyclone Floods is also determined. All low-lying areas have been identified.

In instances where droughts occur, water tankers are put to use for the supply of water.

Further issues that have been assessed are the potential of bus accidents and collisions with specific reference to the district roads in the rural areas, the care for homeless people living under inhumane circumstances and epidemics such as cholera.

❖ PREPAREDNESS

The management structures that have been put in place, presents a situation of continuous preparedness for the entire area.

❖ RESPONSE AND RESCUE

The uMlalazi Local Municipality has a 24 hour protection service carrying out traffic control and fire and rescue services. All central and provincial departments of government are integrated in the process.

❖ REHABILITATION AND CONSTRUCTION

Non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations are integrated into dealing with this matter.

❖ **DEVELOPMENT**

This responsibility vests in the committee put in place for this purpose and is tasked to take care of the development of all essential services and the care of victims as a result of a disaster.