

Good Practice for Resilience Planning to Address Water Governance Challenges in Africa

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SUMMARY

Resilience applies to both the industrialised and less-industrialised parts of the world and is associated with many aspects of human activity, often responding to the effects of climate change. It could be related to food, water, land, or energy scarcities. It could relate to living by the coast and the threat of sea-level rise and storm surges, or in mountainous areas threatened by glacial deluge, or in arid areas with erratic rainfall, or on small or low-lying islands facing increasingly violent storms. It could also relate to living in rural areas or in urban situations. Whenever and wherever there is a threat of a natural hazard (such as flooding, drought, heatwave), then there is an associated need to “come back” after the effects of that hazard have been endured.

Development gains can be quickly wiped out by a natural hazard directly, a surge in prices (as a consequence of a disaster), or a resource conflict. Gains could also be undermined over time by the cumulative effects of stressors such as climate change; environmental degradation; water, food, and energy scarcity; and economic uncertainty. While humanitarian responses to crises have saved lives and helped to restore livelihoods, such efforts have not always addressed underlying vulnerabilities. A resilience-building approach helps to address the damaging effects of shocks and stressors before, during, and after crises, thereby minimising human suffering and economic loss. The ability and capacity to “come back” is a measure of the individual or collective resilience. In this working group, the focus is on resilience in urbanised areas in Africa from a water governance perspective and the role of surveyors.

Some current thinking on the following policy issues are presented:

- Current and future challenges in terms of the resilience of water

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governance;

- Principles of conventional water governance and understand how those principles could be re-configured or aligned with climate change imperatives;
- Current practices around Africa for managing water resources and combine with climate change predictions and population growth scenarios;
- Critical success factors when managing water resources; and
- Possible future scenario strategies for managing water resources and provide guidance to governments, municipalities, communities, and professionals on reflecting these potential futures into current practice for sustainable, spatially-informed water governance.

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