



24 Nov 2022

DoDMA Intensifies Preparedness Interventions, Dredges Rivers In Lower Shire

As the on-set of the rainy season draws closer, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), has intensified disaster preparedness interventions through training and dredging of rivers that flood frequently.

With technical expertise from the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and funding from the World Bank, under the Malawi Resilience and Disaster Risk Management Project (MRDRMP), DoDMA is dredging and training Ndiola, Nyamadzere, Nyamkotola and Nyachilenda rivers in Nsanje District.

Speaking when he visited the sites to appreciate progress made in implementing the flood mitigating interventions, Commissioner for Disaster Management Affairs, Charles Kalemba said the department is leaving no stone unturned in disaster preparedness.

“Floods in the lower shire are mainly aggravated by siltation and debris in the rivers so much that even small amounts of rainfall result in flooding. The river dredging and training will greatly reduce flood risks. As we are making strides in moving communities at risk to safer places, we have also strengthened interventions aimed at protecting them from perennial disasters and building their resilience.

“Most of the rivers changed their course following Tropical Storm Ana and Cyclones Gombe and Idai and the works will see to it that running waters should not find their way to people’s houses,” said Kalemba.

He then called upon communities and councils in the country to take an active role in mitigating the impact of disasters.

“Disasters derail socio-economic development of communities and the country as a whole. Let us enhance our efforts in reducing disaster risks through protecting the river banks, among other interventions.” said Kalemba.

Disaster Risk Management Desk Officer for Nsanje District, Patrick Sipuni, said the flood mitigating and preparedness interventions could not have come at the right time.

“Most of the rivers changed their course following Tropical Storm Ana and Cyclone Gombe-induced floods. Coupled with high levels of siltation, Ndiola River alone affected 400 households from six villages. The families lost most of their household property.

“This [the river training and dredging] will go a long way in reducing flood risks in the district and as a Council, we are going to take advantage of the Climate Smart Public Works Programme to ensure that we have vegetative cover around the rivers. We will also work on addressing the root cause of siltation in the rivers,” said Sipuni.

In a quest to ensure a well-coordinated system in managing disasters in the lower shire, DoDMA is constructing an Emergency Operation Centre in Chikwawa District, with funds from the African Development Bank, under the Post Cyclone Idai Emergency Recovery Project.

The department is also constructing an Evacuation Centre in Mchacha James Village, TA Mlolo, Nsanje. The centre is expected to minimize situations in which classes are disrupted because classroom blocks have been turned into camps during emergencies.

As part of preparedness, the department has developed the national multi-hazard contingency plan in readiness for the season, to guide the response interventions for any type of disaster the country may experience.

The department has also, with financial and technical support from the World Food Programme, coordinated the establishment of a humanitarian staging area (HSA) at Bangula, in Nsanje District, to fast-track coordination and response to disasters in the Lower Shire. The HSA has in stock search and rescue equipment such as boats and relief items for timely and effective response.

DoDMA, in collaboration with the Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services (DCCMS), is also conducting awareness and sensitization campaigns on the prospects and implications of the 2022/2023 downscaled seasonal forecast targeting councils in disaster prone areas.