

# Financing to prevent recurring disasters will save more lives, public resources



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## What are some of the recurrent Disasters and their Impact in Uganda?

There is convincing evidence that the number and seriousness of disasters is increasing. The disasters most likely to occur in Uganda are: Epidemics, drought and famine, floods, landslides, earthquakes, hailstorms, Insurgency, environmental degradation, road accidents, and fire.

Currently, Uganda is being faced with a number of incidences of fire outbreaks and lightening that has caused loss of lives and destruction of school properties, this has negatively affected retention and completion at the primary level. The education sector still has challenges with structures such as classrooms, teacher's accommodation and sanitation facilities. These substandard structures especially in hard to reach districts like Mbale, Agago, Gulu, Yumbe, Kaabong districts where building have either sunk and collapse down due to poor texture of the soil, failure of the contractors to adhere to specified quantities in the BOQs and lack of supervision from responsible officers.

The problem of inadequate infrastructure is further exacerbated by the high influx of refugees in some districts in Uganda like Adjumani, Arua, Hoima, Isingiro, Kamwenge, Kiryandongo, Koboko, Kyegegwa, Lamwo, Moyo and Yumbe. With a current total number of Sudanese refugees/asylum seekers of over 1,006,779, the hosting areas of in Yumbe, Lamwo, Arua, Isingiro, Kyegegwa, Kiryandongo and Adjumani Districts have faced massive environmental degradation; this is likely to promote livelihood insecurity and widen spread poverty gaps among the local population and refugees.

There is no mention of road safety in the NBFP 2018/19 and yet the Road Fatalities/Injuries in Uganda are on the rise. Uganda is one of the African countries with very high rates of accidents. In the year 2016, 14,474 accidents were reported of which 2,981 were fatal, 7,153 were serious and 4,340 were minor and this resulted into 3,503 deaths on Ugandan Roads during the year 2016 up from 3,224 in 2015.

We commend government of Uganda for the quick response towards pests, diseases and vectors outbreaks in the country and for recognizing pests diseases and vectors as a challenge to the agriculture sector during the FY 2017/18 budget speech, however pests, diseases and vector control has not been given the ultimate attention and funding it deserves considering that agriculture is a sector of the economy. The examples of pests, diseases and vectors constraining the agriculture sector include; foot and mouth disease for example in the districts of Lyantonde, Sembabule and Kiruhura among 30 districts affected in 2017.

## What are some of outstanding financing challenges for disaster and response?

Uganda continues to face challenges in managing disasters and reducing risk. At the heart of these challenges is the limited availability of funds. We note that there is inadequate

allocation to the contingency fund. Government is proposing to allocate UGX 77bn to the contingency fund which is below the 0.5% of the previous financial year's budget as provided by Section 26 in the Public Finance Management Act 2015 as amended. We recommend that government allocates UGX 95.166bn to the contingency fund as this will reduce supplementary requests for certain aspects like disasters.

The proposed allocation in the Budget for FY 2018/19 of installing lightening arrestors in at least eleven (11) primary schools in ten Districts of Uganda is a good gesture but inadequate, to address the potential disaster that may occur because of lightening, fire outbreak and thunder storms. Government should plan and prioritize the allocation of funds to purchase and install fire extinguishers and lightening arrestors in all schools to curb incidences of fire outbreaks and lightening respectively.

In the proposed budget estimates FY 2018/19 we observe that crop pests and disease control under Crop Resources has been allocated 4.93 million and under the Directorate of Animals livestock disease control has been allocated 11.49 million. There is no allocation to control diseases under fisheries in the budget proposals for FY 2018/19.

## How do you want these challenges to be addressed?

Uganda is in the process of transitioning away from focusing on disaster management, preparedness and prevention to emphasizing management and reduction of disaster risk in its development planning. We posit that the structure of financing disaster related activities is also made consistent with this shift.

Government through MAAIF should strengthen the capacity of its inspection units in order to predict and manage pests, diseases and vector outbreaks in collaboration with extension service providers at the district local governments.

Government should also fast-track the implementation of the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (Re-HoPE) strategy and ensure adherence to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, as stipulated in the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants. We also recommend that government puts aside money to cater for the predictable and recurrent disasters such as floods, landslides and disease outbreaks.

## How do you see the future of Uganda's financing for disaster mitigation and Response?

There is hope that the government of Uganda is responding to the needs of disaster in the country in terms of the broad financing framework. For the very first time, they have provided UGX 77 Bn. What we want to see more is the focus on financing the more regular and predictable disasters such as those caused by floods and landslides. When government puts more money in disaster preparedness and mitigation, it will end up spending much less when disasters occur.

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