

Chapter 3.

Policy

3.1 The context of poverty reduction and disaster management policies

Mozambique's recovery from the 2000 and 2001 floods took place in the context of the country's wider reconstruction and development following the end of the war in 1992. The objective of the government's Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty (PARPA) 2001 – 2005 is to reduce the incidence of absolute poverty from 70 percent in 1997 to less than 60 percent in 2005 and less than 50 percent by 2010 (GoM 2001c). An assessment of the PARPA found that national ownership of the Plan was quite strong and that it was likely to contribute positively to Mozambique's poverty reduction efforts (Falck 2001). Various agency strategic frameworks are aligned to the PARPA, including the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the World Bank Country Assistance Strategy (CAS).

The PARPA does not give prominence to disaster mitigation and preparedness, however. A short section appears under "Other Areas of Action," after sections on tourism and the environment, which states that the national capacity to respond to natural disasters will be strengthened and the standard of the national early warning system improved (GoM 2001c). There are no specific indicators or budget allocations listed (GoM 2001c).

The National Policy on Disaster Management was passed in October 1999. This document marked a shift from a reactive approach to a proactive one towards disaster management aimed at developing a culture of prevention. The policy set up the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC), replacing the DPCCN (see section 2.1). The INGC was intended to play mainly a coordinating role. The role of the community is stressed in the principles of the policy, although mechanisms for stimulating community level participation and building on people's disaster coping mechanisms are not described. The role of the INGC is further discussed in chapter 4.

The national policy focuses mainly on disaster response and preparedness. The INGC's role in terms of post-disaster rehabilitation involves mobilizing resources, ensuring linkages between emergency and rehabilitation phases, and keeping the ministerial level Coordinating Council for Disaster Management (CCGC) informed of rehabilitation activities.

National disaster policy has yet to have the legal backing of a national disaster management plan. As of the end of 2002 a draft plan was in the pipeline but yet to be brought before parliament. As a result, the INGC lacks a legal framework for action.

In general many agencies had allowed disaster management and mitigation to drop out of their strategy and planning documents. DFID's 1998 Country Assistance Strategy had a brief mention of drought and cyclone hazards but no mention of floods. The 1998 – 2000 World Bank Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) had little reference to the threat of natural disasters. However the 2001 – 2003 CAS notes a need to improve the Bank's evaluation of hazard exposure and help the government incorporate appropriate measures for reducing and transferring risks of future loss or damage (WB 2000f).

In policy terms, donor, UN and national agencies reacted to the 2000 disaster by updating their strategy documents and by renewing a commitment to disaster preparedness, response and mitigation. The 2000 UN Common Country Assessment (CCA) gave a high profile to disaster management under the right to personal security (UN 2000b). However, there was little specific coverage in agencies' policies of recovery strategies.

3.2 Recovery objectives and strategy

The objectives of the government's reconstruction appeal were to:

- Re-establish minimum conditions for population resettlement
- Restore basic services – potable water, sanitation, health, and education
- Restore self-sufficiency
- Restore social and economic infrastructure, providing employment opportunities wherever possible
- Strengthen national capacity to manage and execute infrastructure works
- Restore public infrastructure
- Restore private sector activities (GoM 2000d).

The recovery strategy was planned to function within a stable macroeconomic framework and to have a decentralized approach. It consisted of two parts:

- Restoring public services and reconstruction of public infrastructure with capacity building of public administration to manage future disasters in a sustainable manner
- Assisting the private sector through support for small economic agents, emphasizing the importance of small shops that support agricultural marketing and links between formal and subsistence economies (GoM 2000d).

The government's objectives and strategy for recovery following the 2001 floods were very similar (GoM 2001d).

In general recovery took place in the context of the PARPA with broad reconstruction and development policies already in place. Some policy development was needed, such as in the case of housing resettlement. There is also a move to develop a more comprehensive national water policy, which focuses mainly on water supply and does not refer specifically to natural disasters.

The government's policy, supported by the World Bank and other donors, was to move as quickly as possible from the relief mode to a recovery agenda. The government of Mozambique saw recovery as an opportunity to move parts of the country forward developmentally and to act as an engine for development. An underlying philosophy has been that reconstruction of infrastructure systems should not merely restore the previous level of development, but rather should promote activities that will lead to reducing the vulnerability of the population and infrastructure to future disasters.

The community survey for this review notes that a number of policy issues have been raised during the recovery period and could form part of the contingency planning for government, donors, and implementing agencies in future disasters (see chapter 8 and Section II).

The community surveys noted some examples of good practice in relation to recovery work that responded to the needs and situation of women. However, in policy terms, there seems to have been little priority given to gender equity.