



INTERNET ARTICLE

Flood Preparedness Plan in place for flood victims in KZN

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The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) in KwaZulu-Natal has implemented a Flood Preparedness Plan amid tropical Cyclone Eloise which has left many homeless as a result of severe flooding in some parts of the province.

Each year ahead of the rainy summer season, the Department puts together a plan to assess the likelihood of flooding incidents. This is done to enable it to convene interventions which may be required to assist affected communities.

“With the current Tropical Cyclone Eloise, we’ve had to ensure that the Flood Preparedness Plan is speedily implemented, especially in the three affected provinces (Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo),” said Spokesperson Sputnik Ratau.

He further stated that the Department’s KZN office has teams of specialised technicians who are readily available to operate infrastructures for controlling floods when necessary. “Currently our technicians are out in the field updating and fixing malfunctioning equipment, particularly at the Tugela and Hluhluwe River Systems,” Ratau maintained.

He said the Department uses real-time hydrological and meteorological data for flood monitoring and forecasting. “Hence all our gauging stations used for flood monitoring are equipped with real-time transmission capability,” he said.

The Department also noted that the recent heavy rains have filled up the province’s water storage from 63.3% last week to 65.6% this week. Comparative to levels recorded last year, the average storage capacity was 57.5%.

DWS has since assured members of the public that most of the country’s dams are built to handle floods. A team of highly specialised officials who help facilitate the required five yearly safety evaluation of dams across the country are on high alert to offer help when required.

“The evaluations are carried out by Approved Professional Persons (APPs) who conduct flood frequency analysis to check whether the dam is able to route through different flood occurrences. This helps us in knowing beforehand whether the dam would be overtopped should a certain size of a flood occur and help predict any potential damage to infrastructure,” he said.

Ratau said while the damage to property was unfortunate, there was no need for panic as the province’s infrastructure was secure enough to withstand flooding caused by Tropical Cyclone Eloise. He urged the public to stay away from overflowing watercourses as this can be deadly.

“Human life is irreplaceable, it is for this reason that we call on people to stay away from rivers and dams which are overflowing,” he concluded.

Lebogang Maseko

