

Summary
Report ...

Zambia Floods
February, 1978



Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
Agency for International Development

July 1979

Zambia - Floods

PNAA P759

Date

Date: Early February, 1978

Location: Lusaka - townships of Kanyama, Misisi, Chaisa, George, Frank, and Johnny Lang

Dead: 11

Injured: 900

People Affected: 30,000

Damage: 1,255 private dwellings destroyed, roads and bridges damaged, damage estimated at \$195,000

The Disaster

- Rainfall was unusually heavy during February, 1978 (30-50% above normal) and heavy rains continued through April, 1978.
- Most seriously affected were the shanty towns surrounding the Zambian capital of Lusaka. Some areas were temporarily cut off by damage to roads and bridges.
- The extensive damage to housing was attributed to the construction of the houses. Many were squatters' residences that were built on marsh land with no foundations. The cement used had been mixed with mud.

Action Taken by the Government of Zambia (GOZ)

- President Kaunda declared a disaster in the flood-affected areas on March 3, 1978, and established a Disaster Relief Fund.
- The Office of the Lusaka Province Cabinet Minister was charged with responsibility for immediate relief measures through April. At a cost of \$54,000, the flooded area was drained, the transport system was restored, a preventive health program including spraying was implemented, and some 20,000 flood victims were evacuated to temporary accommodations at the Lusaka Fairgrounds. There was major concern about cholera; however, no epidemic conditions occurred. Dykes were built to allow drainage and roads were raised.
- Some 250 families were resettled in non-affected areas of Lusaka with the help of local voluntary organizations. Many other flood victims simply returned to their villages.

- Longer-term plans, which were the responsibility of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing included a permanent drainage system and the construction of all-weather roads.
- The Disaster Relief Fund received more than \$750,000 in addition to many goods in kind from local organizations, private individuals, and donor governments.

TOTAL - \$259,000

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

- On February 18, 1974, the U.S. Ambassador to Zambia, Stephen Loy, determined that a disaster of such a magnitude as to warrant USG assistance existed in Zambia.
- The Makeni Ecumenical Center, which provides training in the areas of health, education, agriculture, and nutrition, in addition to operating a medical clinic, received \$1,000 for emergency repairs to its buildings.
- To assist the GOZ in providing shelter for the homeless, \$12,000 was given to the Disaster Relief Fund.

TOTAL - \$14,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

- None reported

Assistance Provided by the International Community

- Danish Red Cross -- \$1,831 in kind
- German Democratic Republic Red Cross -- \$27,257 in kind
- Tanzania -- \$532,000
- USSR Red Cross -- \$204,123 in kind

TOTAL - \$825,211

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