



Safety and Dignity for Flood Survivors in West Pokot County, Kenya

by: Tom Ogola

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UNFPA Kenya today joined the West Pokot Governor, Kenya Red Cross Society (KCRS) and other partners during the handover of houses, dignity kits, mattresses and other household items to flood survivors in West Pokot County. The floods have displaced over 100,000 persons and claimed 116 lives, according to reports from the Disaster Operations Centre. Many of the displaced households are living in camps. Kenya Red Cross Society is one of the partners that UNFPA works with to ensure integration of Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Gender Based Violence and harmful practices in emergencies.

UNFPA is currently supporting the flood response in 10 counties. Acknowledging that emergencies impact women and girls differently, UNFPA prioritizes their safety and dignity while ensuring that men and boys retain access to critical reproductive health information and services. Promoting the well-being of youth and adolescents underlies UNFPA's actions in emergencies, including conflict.



The housing project initiated by the KRCSS in the last quarter of 2019 with support from the corporate sector and not-for-profit sector has benefitted 223 households in West Pokot County at a cost of US\$ 26,000. The shelters will shield the residents from the vagaries of nature and enhance the personal safety of especially women and girls.

“I am excited to have a place I can proudly call home,” said Nekesa, excitedly. “I am grateful to the Kenya Red Cross Society and UNFPA for the mattresses, blankets and dignity kits. I will sleep soundly and forget the pain of displacement,” she concluded. The West Pokot County Governor, H.E John Krop Lonyangapuo, and the Kenya Red Cross Society Secretary General,

Dr. Asha Mohammed who also represented UNFPA, presided over the historic event.

“I want to thank all the partners who supported this housing initiative and donated items to give the people of West Pokot a comfortable place to live in. I appeal for more support following the recent landslides in other parts of this county where more people have been affected,” said the Governor.

The Kenya Red Cross Secretary General noted expressed concern about the ongoing rains across the Country that continue to wreak havoc, leading to massive loss of lives and property.

“I am pleased to be here to see families move into these new houses and start to rebuild their lives.



relief supplies donated to West Pokot for flood victims

. However, we are in the middle of heavy rains that have caused flooding with over 17,000 families currently in the cold-countrywide, 100 of them here in West Pokot following last month's landslides. We must all come together again and support them in the immediate term but also explore more long term solutions to what has now become a perennial problem," observed Dr. Asha Mohammed.

UNFPA's has the hearts of the people of West Pokot County for championing the rights of women and girls against violations such as female genital mutilation and for the practical support during calamitous natural disasters. Speaking on phone, Dr. Ademola Olajide, the UNFPA Kenya Country Representative said:

"The loss of life and community resources occasioned by the floods is disheartening. UNFPA Kenya remains steadfast in growing partnerships and collaborative strategies that sustain and expand our commitment to reduce maternal deaths, the unmet need for family planning, and elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices. We applaud the work done by the County Government of West Pokot and our partners like the Kenya Red Cross Society and World Vision to ensure no one is left behind in this response especially adolescent girls whose risk of undergoing FGM and child marriage are magnified during such emergencies."

UNFPA will is working with the national government, county governments and other partners in Kenya to alleviate the unprecedented impact of multiple emergencies occurring concurrently: floods, locusts and Covid-19.

"The current floods are compounded by the global COVID-19 pandemic and the locust infestation that is a grave threat to food security. Yet our resolve to weather the storm and deliver the dream of every woman and girls, man and boy, to reach the utmost potential remains unshaken. Our triumph as guaranteed as the rising of the sun," Dr. Ademola reassured UNFPA's partners and the community in West Pokot County.



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