

Natural Disaster and Modalities for Preserving Information Resources in Library Archives and Information Centres in Africa

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Abstract

Information from available data shows that natural disaster occurs in the form of earthquakes, landslides, heat-waves, droughts, cyclones, hurricanes, floods and volcanoes. Between 2000 and 2008, an average of 50,184 people were killed every year by earthquakes, while floods displaced an average of 99 million people a year. The urban disaster in Iran in 2003 left damages totalling US\$500M, the South Asian Tsunami of 2004 affected seven countries including Africa and killed 226,408 people as reported by the World Disaster Emergency Committee. It also reported that about 950 million people who lived in urban slums worldwide would be vulnerable to disaster in the next ten years. These are the catastrophic tendencies of natural disaster. It costs colossal loss, irreparable damage to human lives and the environment. It is, therefore, pertinent to preserve information resources for national development, decision making and national heritage during disasters by taking preventive measures, disaster planning, contingency planning, write a blueprint, specifying all programmes and actions, and resources mobilisation to prevent disasters from happening. It is also important to ascertain that regular checks of information centre buildings are carried out appropriately, and the fitted equipment be maintained, and the personnel be well-trained to handle disaster when it occurs.