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New drought monitoring tool gives hope of better preparation, mitigation at farmer level

A new satellite-based drought-monitoring tool will be able to indicate the presence of drought and its level of severity, providing authorities the maximum possible lead time to put mitigation strategies into place in India and across South Asia. In India, the South Asia Drought Monitoring System (SADMS) was developed by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the country's premier agricultural research institution. It has been tested in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan, and Bhutan.

The system will not just monitor the drought conditions but also incorporate this information of real-time weather updates and open-access satellite data and provide extension workers as well as agriculture and water resources authorities with all the information needed to forecast, monitor and manage drought on a weekly basis. Through this, the authorities can put in action district-wise contingency plans, which include measures like changing the crop or switch to drought-tolerant varieties.

IWMI has been testing SADMS by validating it at the district level. The platform is already in operation in the state of Telangana. The system is getting used to know when to initiate their strategy for mitigating drought. If the seasonal forecast indicates that a moderate drought is anticipated, for example, then the department might advise farmers to switch from planting rice to a more drought-tolerant crop, such as millet. The input data comes into the platform from India Meteorological Department (IMD) and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM). This includes soil moisture, precipitation, temperature, wind speed and available cloud ratio. The scientists will also factor in historical droughts and their conditions. India featured as one of the severely drought-impacted countries in the United Nation's latest drought assessment released May 11, 2022. Nearly two-thirds of the country suffered drought during 2020-2022. Severe droughts have reduced India's gross domestic product by 2-5 per cent over the 20 years from 1998-2017, studies estimated. Therefore, platforms like SADMS become important for timely monitoring of the droughts and preparation.

Source: <https://www.downtoearth.org.in>





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Worst floods on record hit Nigeria



Nigeria experienced its worst floods on record this rainy season, with more than 1.4 million people affected with about 500 death, 1546 injuries and 800,000 displaced. 27 out of the 36 states in the country were affected, with Kogi experienced the worst.

The floods damaged 44,900 houses & destroyed 45,249 as of October 9, 2022. As much as 70,566 ha (174,372 acres) of farmland & crops were destroyed and 76,168 ha (188,215 acres) were damaged.

This high level of damage was caused, in part, because people violated regional planning rules and constructed homes & buildings near waterways. More rains and floods are expected before the season ends in December.

Underwriting companies in the nation's insurance industry appear to be in dire straits and their woes compounded by the recent flood disaster ravaging about 22 states, which resulted in the loss of life and property, with an estimated insured losses of ~1 trillion Nigerian naira (\$2.3 billion).

Insurance penetration in Nigeria is still very low (*less than one per cent*), compared to acceptable levels in other countries. Low penetration and slow growth are some of the challenges of the Nigerian insurance sector which is a significant portion of the total economy.

The main reason behind this worst flood affecting Nigeria's waterways is when the Cameroonian authorities released water from their Lagdo Dam. Nigeria is preparing to meet with the Government of the Republic of Cameroun over the release of water from the Lagdo Dam. National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) explained that flood insurance is optional.

Source: TheGuardian





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Another year of failing to prepare hurts Nigeria

The last major flood emergency was between July and October in 2012, when the Niger and Benue rivers overflowed their banks. The reported death toll at the time was under 500, but it displaced a similar number of people as this year's. But in addition to state governments failing to prepare early for seasonal floods, this year's events have also been blamed on the release of excess water from Cameroon's Lagdo dam in the middle of September. Nigeria does not have a buffer dam to prevent this flow though this need has existed since 1982 when the Lagdo dam was completed. Thus, due to lack of adequate prevention, Nigeria succumbs to the damage of these floods, resorting to the disbursement of relief items as its main response.

Some big agricultural businesses are feeling the heat and that could increase food prices in the coming months. Olam Nigeria, which produces a quarter of Nigeria's rice, says 10,000 acres of its farmland have been submerged, leading to a shortfall that could raise prices. This is inevitable because the entire crop has been lost.



A man wades through floodwaters in Makurdi, Nigeria, earlier this month © Afolabi Sotunde/Reuters

Source: weforum.org





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Flood victims face loss of claims on underinsurance, ignorance

Some victims of the recent floods across the country may have difficulty making claims from their insurance companies due to underinsurance and ignorance errors. The insurance industry revealed that some clients in flood-hit areas are filing flood claims with their insurers despite not having the flood coverage. Flood insurance is a special peril that is covered under a policy extension. “In that case, the insured is charged extra premium for this extension, though it could be a small amount added to the original premium.

Public needs to be properly guided when taking any insurance policy and envisage the kinds of risk they are exposed to and make sure that those risks are taken care of. By looking at the magnitude of flood losses across the country; there is a need for the government to support the flood victims, as over 98% of those in the rural areas do not have insurance cover. Nigerian insurance companies, backed by their reinsurers, have enough capacity to bear the losses that might arise from the floods or any other disaster.

Some past flood events in Nigeria:

- Thousands of homes destroyed, 50 people killed after torrential rains hit Nigeria on 15/08/2022.
- Severe flash floods hit the Nigerian capital Abuja and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) on 12/09/2021.
- Weeks of flooding leave 155 people dead in Nigeria on 20/10/2020 - More than 2 million tons of rice crops had been destroyed.
- Jigawa sees worst flood in 32 years on 01/10/2020 - At least 40 dead and 2 million tons of rice destroyed.
- At least 21 dead, thousands of homes destroyed or damaged after severe flooding hits Nigeria on 08/09/2020.
- 300,000 people affected by worst floods in 7 years in Borno and Adamawa, Nigeria on 19/11/2019
- More than 100 people killed after widespread flooding hits Nigeria on 18/09/2018

Source: watchers.news / IDF





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Public-private partnership launched to develop urban flood risk cover for Lagos State in Nigeria

The Insurance Development Forum (IDF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the German Government, and the Lagos State Government in Nigeria on 10th November 2022 launched a EUR 1.6 million project to develop a sub-sovereign risk transfer scheme to provide flood risk cover for Lagos State, Nigeria.

Lagos State has a high proportion of poor and vulnerable people and suffers from regular widespread flooding exacerbated by the impacts of climate change. This Tripartite project leverages innovative insurance solutions to protect 1.7 million households (8.5 million people) in Lagos State and ensure quick pay-outs in the event of flooding.

This project aims to harness an innovative parametric insurance solution that will pay out a set amount based on the magnitude of the flood, as opposed to the magnitude of the losses in a traditional indemnity policy. The insurance product is expected to be integrated within the existing flood risk management framework, and to significantly enhance the Lagos State flood resilience and contingency planning in the coming years. The insurance will release funds to the Lagos State Government which will allow for direct cash transfer to affected households or contribute towards emergency disaster relief and rapid reconstruction of critical network infrastructures.

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