



ACT UBUMBANO



"Always Needed, Always There"



South African Council of Churches

## Media Release

4 April 2019

### Churches, Faith-based Organisations and the Red Cross and Combine for Long Term Response to Cyclone Disaster

**Introduction:** We are all still in shock as a result of the scale of the disaster that has befallen the people of Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, affecting some 3 million people in the three countries, with Mozambique the worst hit. Ordinary words cannot describe the magnitude of the tragedy, and the costs in human suffering, infrastructure and basic living going forward! With the flood waters receding, many are struggling to obtain food, shelter and clean water, and a cholera outbreak is spreading fast.

**The Response Group:** In the face of this mammoth challenge The Cyclone Disaster Response Group (The Group), held a press briefing on 4 April 2019, at Khotso House in Johannesburg, to inform South Africans about their consolidated emergency relief efforts and appeal for support for the victims of Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. The Group is setting up a long term response to this disaster. The purpose is to more coherently coordinate the channelling of aid, to avoid causing recipient communities having to go to multiple support options, and to have a more orderly phasing of assistance for more effective long term support. The Group comprises the South African Council of Churches, the Red Cross Society, The Evangelical Alliance, HOPE *worldwide*, The Warehouse, Youth for Christ, A-Better-Africa and ACT Ubumbano.

**How to contribute:** The Group is launching a support fund, located at a dedicated bank account of the SACC to receive donations for the Disaster support. All people of goodwill with compassion, churches and faith communities, are requested to make direct grants to the fund, to support the affected communities in addressing the immediate needs and their long-term recovery from this storm. We request all churches, not only SACC and TEASA member churches, to mobilise their members and congregations and regional structures - presbyteries,

districts, diocese, etc. to make financial donations to the fund. The money will be used to purchase prescribed goods as needed from phase to phase in the disaster areas of the three countries, and for the administration and the distribution of the goods through approved agencies. The account details are:

**Name: SACC Healing & Reconciliation**

**Bank: Nedbank, Fox Str,**

**Branch code: 190805,**

**Account Number: 1129715000**

**Reference: “Cyclone Idai” plus name and contact number**

From outside South Africa:

**Bank name: Nedbank**

**Address: 135 Rivonia Road, Sandown, 2196, South Africa**

**Phone number: +27 (0) 11 294 4444**

**Swift code: NEDSZAJJ**

**Reference: “Cyclone Idai”, plus name and contact number.**

**Audit:** Audit firm Deloitte will provide audit services to the fund, *pro bono publico*, to evaluate that donations received are spent in line with the objective of this project.

**Various Roles:** We employ the diverse strengths of Group members. For example, HOPE *worldwide* engages with retailers for significant discounts on essential supplies for disaster relief. The Red Cross has logistical infrastructure and capacity to transport, as well as more than 30 collection points across the country for identified items for relief needs. Some of our partners have the networks to mobilise financial resources from South Africa and around the world.

The churches have a broader and a more nuanced role:

1. First, we encourage South African congregations that have existing relationships with local churches in the affected areas, to build on these on a bilateral basis, and support the relief effort. This should be primarily through donating funds and providing long term support for reconstruction work in the communities.
2. Second, South African denominations that have extended institutional relationships with the affected countries should seek to work alongside their denominations in the affected communities, supporting their work through financial, logistical and pastoral support. A number of churches are doing this already. This week the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Archbishop Makgoba whose pastoral responsibility

includes Mozambique, has been visiting Beira and hosted by the locals in their misery, to be with, and work with them as they craft their solutions to the crisis.

3. Third, through the Fellowship of Christian Councils in Southern Africa (FOCCISA), the SACC has a direct relationship with the councils of churches in the three countries, this enabling local oversight for accountability and feedback on the impact of the organised support from this system.

A more detailed “Guideline for Churches”, including prayer requests, is being developed and will be available by Friday 12 April. When available it will be published in the SACC monthly e-newsletter *The Outlook*, and the various electronic platforms and newsletters of member churches and partner organisations in the Cyclone Disaster Response Group. We are disciples of the One who said:

“For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.” Matt. 25:35

**Additional Information:** The most immediate basic needs include food and potable water to survive; shelter and sanitation for hygiene and disease management. Following the immediate first aid, and in the mid-term, there will be the need to ensure food security, as the crops that were about to be harvested have now been washed away. In Mozambique alone, nearly 670, 000 hectares of crops have been damaged. Estimates are that some 12% of Malawi’s national maize output has been lost to the cyclone.

There will be need for:

- Rebuilding the lives of people living with the missing relatives, some of whose bodies may never be found.
- The counselling and recalibrating the lives of orphaned children, some of them were first to be saved, leaving their parents who perished before the rescuers returned for them.
- Trauma counselling for those children who may have seen their parents perish in the floods. UNICEF puts the number of children at risk as a result of the cyclone at about 260,000, and direct support will be needed to provide mechanisms to secure these children. This, not to mention the reconstruction of households, and public infrastructure of schools, health services and roads.

Immediate HOPE *worldwide* Compassion Shipment: As a start, next week the first truck shipment that has been organised by HOPE *worldwide* is scheduled to depart for Beira. That effort began before the creation of the collective Cyclone Disaster Response Group. We are working together to support this first shipment, and seek to build on that experience. We are also aware that a number of church denominations have initiated their own individual response systems which are commendable.

In this challenge we have come to recognise that there will be phases, from rescue, food and shelter; to recovery of the deceased and burials; to disease prevention and temporary village building and rebuilding of homes. There will be need for seeds to replant lost crops, and trying

for winter cultivation; the building and equipping of public facilities, schools, health centres; and the rebuilding of destroyed infrastructure, etc. All these will need a consistency of support beyond the immediate. Again, at the human level, there is the deeper work of trauma counselling, especially for children who may have seen their parents perish in the floods.

**Contact details:**

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