

METRO

2 drown, 3,233 households displaced as floods ravage Delta communities

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...As the Bayelsa task force on flooding visits affected communities

By Ochuko Akuopha

Two persons reportedly drowned, over the weekend, and 3,233 households were displaced from their homes as unabating flood worsened in Ndokwa East Local Government Area, Delta State.

This came from Bayelsa State Task Force on Flood Mitigation and Management, weekend, which visited some affected communities for an on-the-spot assessment of the impact.

Chairman of Ndokwa East Local Government Area, Mr Juan Governor, who confirmed the total number of households so far displaced by the flood, said one of the deceased was a lady in her 40s from Akarai in Ward 5 while the other one was a young boy from Otuoku community in Ward 6.

While disclosing that some persons across the LGA have relocated to relatives and friends in unaffected towns and cities, he said: “These persons were evacuated through self-efforts, community efforts and few cases of council-assisted evacuation.

“Some have no place to relocate to since IDPs camps are not set up in the LGA. The state attempted to set up IDPs camp in Ashaka two days ago but the flood took over the Ashaka Skill Acquisition Centre which was earmarked as the NELGA IDPs camp. Consequently, the setting up of the IDPs camp in NELGA was put on hold.”

Meanwhile, indigenes of the flood-ravaged communities in the council area have vowed to refrain from being treated as beggars, less-privileged or taken advantage of due to natural disasters, saying they would no longer be deceived by late attention, “especially when everything has got too the worst stage.”

Juan Governor, in a statement after a meeting with concerned leaders and NELGA Elders Advisory Council to evaluate the flood situation and chart a way forward, reiterated the resolve of the people not to tolerate anyone politicking with them on account of their ordeal.

“Every item in form of palliatives due for NELGA from the state, federal, government agencies, NGOs, companies, individuals or groups of individuals must be channelled through the council for proper documentation and accountability.

“NELGA people will henceforth refrain from being treated as beggars, less privileged or taken advantage of because of natural disaster.

“Therefore any help must be documented by the council, managed by the set-up flood committee and supervised by the Elders Advisory Council in each of the wards to enhance proper distribution, transparency and accountability with proper publication without prejudice to anonymous donors.”

Bayelsa task force visits affected communities

Communities visited in Yenagoa and Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Areas included Tombia-Ekpetiama, Odi, Sampou, Kaiama, Gbaranma Sabagreia, Okoloba, Biseni and neighbouring communities as well as some areas within the Yenagoa metropolis.

Speaking after the exercise, Commissioner for Environment and chairman of the task force, Iselema Gbaranbiri, lamented the impact of the flooding in the Biseni community, which he said was almost totally submerged.

Gbaranbiri sympathised with the people of the area on behalf of the governor, who he said was passionate about their well-being, hence the setting up of the task force on flood mitigation on Wednesday during the state executive council meeting.

On the situation in parts of Kolokuma/Opokuma LGA such as Odi and Sampou, Gbaranbiri said both communities were relatively safe at the moment due to the water barrier built by the government while areas like Gbarama, Sabagreia, Okoloba and Kaiama were heavily impacted with institutions such as the Ijaw National Academy, Girls Secondary School in Kaiama and the Bayelsa State Sports Institute at Asoama flooded.

The commissioner explained that the essence of the on-the-spot assessment was to get first-hand information about the situation and identify areas of need for government to provide succour to the people.

While calling on the Federal Government to assist the state government in alleviating the sufferings of victims, he stated that other local government areas will be visited and that succour would be provided for those affected in form of the building of higher grounds, provision of relief materials and medicals.

Also speaking, the Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Moses Teibowei, said the concrete water barrier built in three communities was a pilot project based on the advice of his ministry.

He noted that the trial water barrier has proved to be effective so far, saying the government was still monitoring its effectiveness.

Also, the Director of Operations, Bayelsa State Emergency Management Agency (BYSEMA), Mr. Ayii Aziowei, sympathised with those affected, stating that the government would do its best to provide relief for victims.

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