

VRA INTENSIFIES HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS TO SUPPORT FLOOD VICTIMS

The Volta River Authority has intensified its humanitarian efforts to help alleviate the plight of people adversely affected by heavy flooding resulting from spillage of excess water from the Akosombo and Kpong Hydro-electric Dams. The spillage, which began about a month ago, and is still ongoing, has created a humanitarian challenge downstream of the lower volta in several communities in parts of the Volta, Eastern and Greater Accra regions.

Deploying an all-hands-on-deck approach, the VRA is working round the clock to protect lives in the affected communities through the evacuation of victims and their subsequent relocation in areas designated as safe havens as well as the provision of relief items to support their temporal stay in the safe havens. In that regard the Authority has provided buses and off-road pick-up vehicles to convey victims to designated areas of safety.

In its effort, the Authority has partnered with the National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), the Ministry of Energy, District Assemblies and their related security and emergency services and agencies, to ensure the protection of lives and property in those affected areas. In addition, the VRA has triggered all its internal emergency, community engagement and relief units to deepen its concentration on cushioning the pain of victims and creating some comfort for them. Led by the Authority's Chief Executive, Mr. Emmanuel Antwi-Darkwa, Units such as the Emergency Preparedness Unit, the Community Relations Section, the Environment and Sustainable Development Team, the Public Health Unit, and others, have been on the ground even before the commencement of the spillage. The Team is literally living among the communities to experience the issues firsthand and provide the needed support.

It will be recalled that in May 2023, the VRA worked with NADMO, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Energy, the nine district assemblies downstream likely to be impacted by the Authority's operations, the security agencies, the ambulance service, the US Embassy, and the North Dakota National Guard to implement a simulation exercise on the VRA Emergency Preparedness Plan. The simulation, dubbed **Exercise "DA WO HO SO" 2023**, was run to test the resilience and effectiveness of the EPP. The real simulation exercise took place in North Tongu, Asuogyaman and Ada East, while complementary simulations took place in the six remaining districts. Following the successful implementation of the simulation exercise, the Authority deployed its Community Relations Team to do continuous sensitisation of vulnerable communities on what to do in times of emergencies such as what we are witnessing currently.

Acknowledging the many challenges faced by the impacted communities, the VRA is engaged in regular supply of food items such as rice, maize, beans, gari, cooking oil, tomato paste, groundnut, cookies, fruit juice and drinking water. Other relief items include mosquito repellent creams, mosquito nets, blankets, mattresses, solar powered lanterns with telephone charging features, toilet roll and many more.

It is the hope of VRA that in the next couple of days the water level will go down and curtail spilling.

In the interest of safety and security, the VRA is appealing to all residents of the affected areas to cooperate with the rescue and relief agencies to protect lives. The VRA expresses its deep regrets about the inconveniences the spillage has caused downstream.



