



INSTITUTION OF SURVEYORS OF KENYA

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

29th April 2024

ISK STATEMENT ON FLOODING IN SEVERAL REGIONS IN THE COUNTRY

The Institution of Surveyors of Kenya (ISK) extends its deepest condolences to the people and nation of Kenya for the loss of lives caused by the ongoing devastating floods. Our thoughts and sympathies are with all the affected families and every Kenyan impacted by the unprecedented rainfall and flooding that we continue to witness. The government needs to declare the flooding a national disaster and bring in the required resources to mitigate the current issues.

We recognize that climate change has become a critical and urgent issue affecting our daily lives, demanding immediate attention as a nation. The current flooding witnessed in Kenya is unprecedented, and while we acknowledge possible factors such as:

1. Clearing of vegetation cover on the riparian reserve leaving it prone to fast flowing surface run-off;
2. Disregard for planning and zoning regulations during property developments;
3. Blocking of waterways thus resulting to back flows;
4. Bursting or sudden opening of private dams thus leading to massive overflow of water; and
5. Over-development by developers without regard to drainages and percolation of run-off water.

We understand that rapid urbanization and expansion of cities has contributed greatly to the current problem. We note however that solely attributing blame is not the solution. We must proactively respond to this crisis with comprehensive measures, understanding that the likelihood of future, possibly more severe flooding events cannot be ignored.

We urge the Government to relook at the policy that has allowed high residential density developments on very small parcels of land. The consequence has been the

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removal of vegetation that ordinarily slowed the surface runoff and enabled percolation. The aftermath has been very high velocities of surface runoff from these high grounds to lowlands. The existing river channels and drains are inadequate to hold the flood water, consequently flooding homes. The solution is to relook the width and depth of these channels against the amount of total discharge. In our view Nairobi and other cities need to have flood surge tunnels with defined depth that can absorb the excess storm water discharged during heavy rains.

In our commitment to addressing the current and future flooding challenges, we propose the following actions:

1. Declaration of all storm water outfalls as public spaces;
2. Land uses on the riparian reserves should be controlled and strictly monitored;
3. Urgent baseline surveys of affected areas through Geospatial techniques like aerial survey and mapping should be undertaken;
4. Repeat aerial mapping post-flooding should be undertaken to facilitate post-analysis and hydrological studies. We note that continuous observation and data collection will inform future measures that will help curb the situation. The Government should ensure regular mapping as we have espoused in the draft Survey and Mapping Policy;
5. Utilization of historic satellite data to identify and implement corrective measures such as storm drainage systems, channels, tunnels, dykes, and dams.
6. Ensure that we conduct topographical surveys of construction sites before development. The surveys can also be used on all water bodies to determine the highest water mark of which human activities should be restricted.
7. Harmonizing and strictly enforcing laws regarding riparian reserves to protect water resources. There is a serious need to undertake afforestation drive on the riparian reserves in line the Government policy of planting 15 billion trees by 2032.
8. County Governments to undertake suitability studies in flood prone areas before approving development of structures. This can be achieved through zoning of

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regions within counties. Approved development plans must indicate how internal storm water is collected and how it connects to outside storm drainage systems. In addition, maintaining of these drainages MUST be done by the developers and enforced by the County Governments.

9. Simple solutions like unclogging of blocked drainages and channels will go a long way in easing the flooding situation. This should be one of the quick wins that government should be focusing on at the moment.
10. We reiterate that punitive measures should be put in place to discourage dumping of garbage on the drainage systems.
11. The Government should remove all encroachments on rivers and water falls. In addition, should control private water dams, some of which we suspect could have opened their dams thus releasing massive amounts of water;
12. Ensure that all new roads have functional and well-maintained drainages connecting to natural waterways.
13. There is need to enforce the ratio of concrete space to natural space, to ensure easy percolation of water. We urge that concrete should not form 100% of the built up area and developers should be discouraged from building from beacon to beacon;
14. The approving Authorities should encourage developers to use porous concrete blocks for estate roads and parking bays; and
15. Government agencies responsible for development of infrastructure like roads must plan, design, and implement these structures effectively ensuring proper drainage and continuous monitoring for their proper functioning.

We urge the government to consider our contribution as essential in managing city-wide flooding, drawing inspiration from cities like Tokyo and London, which have successfully implemented massive underground storm water drainage systems.

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About ISK

The Institution of Surveyors of Kenya (ISK) is the professional body that brings together professionals who provide services in the Land built sector. The professionals fall within eight major disciplines of the surveying profession namely Land Surveying, Valuation, Building Surveying, Land Administration Management, Engineering Surveying, Geospatial Information Management, Estate Agents and Property Management. Our membership of over 6,000 is widely spread across the Country.

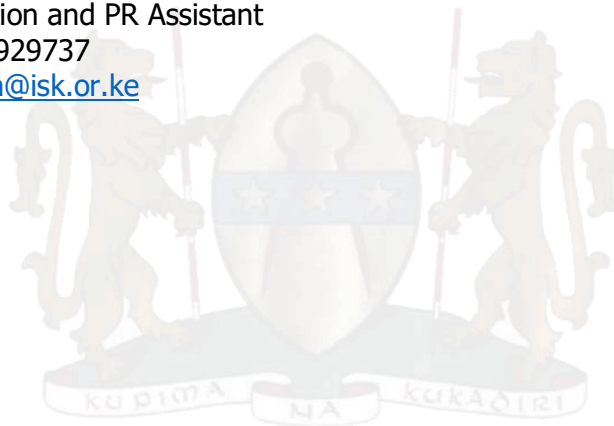
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