



GABON



Civil Defence Directorate (*Direction de la Protection Civile*)

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1. Legislation :

- Decree 00269/PR-112 of 9 March 1976 relating to the re-organisation and responsibilities of the Ministry of Interior;
- Law 3/85 determining a legal framework governing the requisition of property and services.
- Decree 249/PR/DN of 15 February 1972 providing for the intervention of the National Defence Force to assist the civilian population in the advent of disaster.
- Decree 113/PR/MSSBE of 9 August 1982 relating to the organisation and responsibilities of the Ministry for Social Affairs
- Decree 269/PR/SEAS/UNSG of 3 May 1971 concerning social assistance.
- Order 454 relating to the creation of the Commission Nationale des calamités naturelles (National commission for natural disasters).

2. Mission :

Gabon's Civil Defence is charged with establishing prevention and relief measures intended to safeguard people and property and ensuring that adequate living conditions are re-established following a disaster.

3. Regulation and procedure :

Decree 00269/PR-112 of 9 of March 1976 authorises the Minister of the Interior to take charge of disaster management. Under his authority the Civil Defence Directorate has at its disposal three central services :

- Equipment and infrastructure ;
- Liaison and communication ;
- Documentation.

The Directorate is now decentralised since, in addition to these three central services, there are provincial and departmental outposts under the command of a police or gendarmerie officer answering to the prefect or the mayor.

The dangers involved in everyday life are so diverse and complex that the measures required to deal with their consequences come under the remit of a number of different bodies: Directorate for Road Safety, National Commission for Housing and Urbanisation, National Commission for Assistance and Relief, Emergency Services, town planning teams, National Defence, National Committee Against Emerging Illnesses.

4. Organisation :

Gabon's civil defence operates on two levels: prevention and organisation of emergency operations.

4.1 Prevention

The legal instruments for the prevention and reduction of the consequences of disasters are based on the regulations on zoning and construction which deal with the partitioning of land into residential, agricultural and industrial areas, each of which is subject to specific regulations. The Civil Defence Directorate co-operates for this purpose with the bodies mentioned above.

Furthermore a flood warning system has been put in place along the country's major rivers as well as several meteorological stations.

4.2 Organisation of Emergency Assistance

The assistance provided to the victims of disaster is organised as follows:

- Warning procedures
- First aid
- Evacuation of casualties
- Sanitary protection and decontamination
- Post-trauma counselling
- Reconstruction.

Gabon does not have an overall disaster emergency plan (Plan «ORSEC») but does have a national emergency plan to deal with marine pollution and hydrocarbon spillages.

Lastly Gabon has set up a National Solidarity Fund of 9 billion FCFA, managed by the Ministry for Social Affairs, of which over half is earmarked for disaster victims.

5. Personnel :

The firemen play a key role in rescue operations. Numbering 150 they are based in the country's three main cities, and are supported by the armed services and by the Gabon Red Cross which also provides first aid training.

Mr. Roland NGUEMA ENGOUANG

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