

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines how well the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) in Nairobi, Kenya, is prepared to handle an airport disaster in the event that one occurs. In particular the study analyzed the relationship that exists between past disaster preparedness experiences, increasing disaster management complexity at airports and the increasing diversity of new disaster threats. The researcher examined the airport's disaster management policy, its disaster preparedness plans and its existing capacity and emergency response partnership arrangements. The study found that tragedies such as the terrorist attacks that occurred in the United States on September 11, 2001, have elevated the need for organizations to prepare for the unexpected through elaborate disaster management plans. Such plans enable organizations to mitigate risk and minimize the loss of life and property during disasters. The findings of the study illuminate the current disaster preparedness capabilities of JKIA and could contribute to the enhancement of existing mitigation framework strategies at JKIA and other airports in Kenya and beyond. The study established that the JKIA plans, facilities and personnel cannot handle a large-scale disaster. A rapidly increasing traffic of travellers has put a strain on existing capacity at JKIA. Consequently, new hazards have emerged and existing hazards have become difficult to contain. Forecasts of growth have heightened the need for enhanced safety measures and better disaster management plans at JKIA. Through a questionnaire, key informants were interviewed; cross-tabulation was done to show the relationship between variables such as the level of education of airport staff and their involvement in disaster response activities, among others. Data was coded using a codebook that enabled the conversion of measurements and attributes of variables into numerical form. Once coded, the data was entered into a computer and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The study's recommendations are based on an exhaustive analysis of various aspects of the airport establishment. The airport urgently needs to formulate a comprehensive disaster risk reduction framework with particular emphasis on boosting its safety and security facilities and equipment and addressing capacity building in disaster preparedness and management among its staff.