

# **FLOODING IN FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE – THE WAY FORWARD**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Sierra Leone ranks 138 out of 172 in the World Index of Countries prone to natural disasters. Research by the World Bank suggests that drier dry seasons and wetter wet seasons are only likely to increase in frequency in Coastal cities; this ominous prediction came to pass on September 16<sup>th</sup> 2015 when Sierra Leone's capital city, Freetown, was hit by unprecedented floods caused by torrential rainfall of 600 mm in only 5 hours; the normal average annual rainfall for Freetown is about 2,945 mm and the total for the wettest month, August, averages about 790 mm.

This paper is based on the experiences and effects of those devastating floods to highlight the challenges facing city planners, why and where it happened and lessons learned. The Government's state of preparedness and resilience for such disasters as well as the role of volunteers in communities is also discussed. Recommendations of flood risk management approaches using best practices on flood protection, prevention and mitigation for Freetown is presented.

*Key Words: Flood, preparedness, resilience, risk management, mitigation*