

A GLOBAL
CALL FOR
SUPPORT
& ACTION:

RESPONDING TO EL NIÑO



Summary

The 2015-2016 El Niño phenomenon is one of the strongest since 1950, and its impact – already affecting over 60 million people and expected to rise – may last for two years. In the face of this critical threat to food security, health and the lives and livelihoods of millions of people across the world, a concerted global effort is required to prevent an even more serious humanitarian disaster in the coming months. Any response must be effective at on two consecutive fronts: supporting immediate food, water, nutrition and health needs, and supporting resilience, including building individual and community capacity to respond to future shocks. With an unprecedented number of simultaneous humanitarian crises ongoing, we need to ensure that the urgent needs of the 60 million affected are not ignored.

It is expected that there will be 52 million food-insecure people in Southern and Eastern Africa; 4.7 million people at risk from adverse weather in the South Pacific; 4.2 million people affected by drought in Central America and millions affected by drought and extreme weather conditions across Asia. El Niño impacts climate sensitive sectors, particularly agriculture and the environment, with cascading effects on the health sector, through an increase in water-borne diseases due to flooding, disease outbreaks, malnutrition, disruption of health services and overall increased mortality.

Vulnerable communities suffer disproportionately from the degradation of ecosystems and natural resources, and the longer they suffer, the more their coping abilities deteriorate, undermining development gains. Children are among those suffering the most from the effects of El Niño, with drought conditions limiting their access to clean water, intake of nutritional food, health status and access to social services, access to education and child-friendly environments and also level of protection. Vulnerable and marginalised children, some without parental care, those with disabilities, from ethnic or religious minorities, or from the poorest segments of society, are likely to feel the effects of drought first. An integrated multi-sectoral response, which also addresses protection and education risks, is urgently required. Interventions that promote resilience must be prioritized, given the long-term consequences for children's development.

Eight countries have currently declared a national state of emergency: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Lesotho, Malawi, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Swaziland and Zimbabwe, with many others declaring regional emergencies or 'red alerts'. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Council of Ministers recommended to Member States to declare a regional drought disaster in the Southern Africa region, acknowledging the severe levels of hunger.

Governments and the international community did prepare for this El Niño event and employed preparedness and response actions, but funding has been limited. Response plans with requests for international assistance have been completed by governments and/or humanitarian partners in 18 countries, with several additional plans being finalized. These 18 countries have requested a total of over **US\$3.6 billion**. The current funding gap stands at over **\$2.2 billion**, of which approximately one third is for Ethiopia. Since mid-2015, CERF has allocated around \$115.2 million to 18 countries. The food security and agriculture sector is the worst affected by El Niño, with funding requests making up almost eighty percent of all current National and Humanitarian Response Plans. Globally the health sector needs approximately \$464 million.

EAST AFRICA

El Niño has triggered drought in Ethiopia, the Somaliland and Puntland regions of northern Somalia, and Sudan as well as in Eritrea, Djibouti and eastern Chad. Due to severe water shortages, most communities in

East Africa have turned to unprotected water sources, increasing the risk of water-borne disease, poor sanitation and hygiene. Shortages of water and pasture damaged livestock production and caused livestock migration and death. Ethiopia's worst drought in 50 years has tripled humanitarian needs since early 2015 and over 10 million people now need emergency food assistance, with this figure likely to be revised upward. 2.5 million malnourished children and pregnant/lactating women require supplementary feeding. Last year's two growing seasons (Belg & Meher) were affected by drought, causing successive crop failures and widespread livestock deaths. Malnutrition rates are staggering, with over one-third of Ethiopia's *woredas* officially classified as facing a food security and nutrition crisis. More than 2.3 million households need immediate agricultural support. People in need of emergency health interventions nearly doubled in three months – from 3.6 million people in December 2015 to 6.8 million in March 2016.

In Somalia, nearly 4.7 million people, 38 percent of the population, are food insecure and will need humanitarian assistance through June 2016. Of these, 1.7 million are in Puntland and Somaliland. In Sudan, 4.6 million people are acutely food insecure. El Niño has significantly affected the 2015 rainy season with delayed rains, below-average rainfall and intermittent dry spells. This has reduced water availability and cultivation areas, delayed planting and resulted in poor pastures. A total of 3.5 million people are affected in 82 localities across the country, including over 1.5 million women and over 680,000 children. Between March and September 2016, more than 4 million people will be in crisis levels (IPC Phase 3) of food insecurity or worse.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Southern Africa is experiencing unprecedented El Niño-related drought. The SADC Council of Ministers recommended a regional drought disaster declaration as some 32 million people - nearly half of the entire current global caseload - are food insecure at present due to El Niño's impact. It has been the driest growing season in 35 years, and the region has already suffered from a drought during the previous growing season. Food security is likely to start deteriorating further by July, reaching its peak between December 2016 and March 2017. The situation is critical. Drought emergencies have been declared in Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe and Mozambique declared a 90 day "red alert" period. Seven of South Africa's nine provinces, which account for almost 90 percent of the country's maize production, have been declared drought disaster areas.

In Malawi, 2.8 million people are predicted to be food insecure and over 47 percent of children under the age of five are currently malnourished. Drought is also severely affecting more than 1.5 million people who rely on subsistence farming in Namibia, with a quarter of the population food insecure. In Mozambique, the Government estimates that the population affected by food insecurity could reach 1.8 million in 2016, while in Zambia 800,000 people cannot meet their basic food needs. In addition to the increased malnutrition and disease risks, there are increasing concerns about the interruption to anti-retroviral therapy for people with HIV (360,000 in Lesotho). People living with HIV are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, their situation compounded by lack of access to treatment and other health services. There is a correlation between El Niño-induced drought and HIV prevalence, as infection rates in HIV-endemic rural areas increase by 11 percent with every drought.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The Dry Corridor countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua are experiencing the worst drought in decades. More than 3.5 million people are food insecure and in need of health care, livelihood recovery and activities that increase resilience. 2016 maize losses range from 50-100 percent in several areas. Households most affected by drought have already spent two or three years in crisis conditions and most have only one harvest per year. Without sufficient emergency assistance, food shortfalls at household level will continue at least until September 2016. In Haiti, one-third of the population (3.6 million people) is currently food insecure. Of this, 1.5 million are severely food insecure, double the figure of six months ago. The main harvest for 2015 fell below average with losses of up to 70 percent in some areas. A third consecutive year of drought has resulted in a drastic deterioration of the food security situation. Above-average rainfall caused by El Niño in parts of South America has caused floods and increased diseases spread by mosquitoes, including malaria, dengue, chikungunya and the Zika virus. Ecuador, Peru and Chile continue to suffer floods

in low-lying areas and drought in mountain regions. Uruguay, Paraguay and Argentina are seeing more intense rainfall. Flooding in Paraguay in December 2015 displaced over 160,000 people.

PACIFIC REGION

For the past year, islands across the Pacific have been coping with the impacts of changed El Niño weather patterns which have caused drought and a longer, more intense cyclone season. Many countries were able to mitigate the most serious impacts before most situations reached crisis point. Five countries in the region are experiencing serious El Niño impacts. In the North Pacific, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Palau and RMI are all grappling with El Niño-induced droughts that are threatening water supplies and food supplies. On 2 February, RMI became the first country in the Pacific to declare a State of Emergency with 21,000 people severely affected by the drought. A nine-month Drought Response Plan was developed seeking US\$8.9 million. In FSM, States of Emergency have been declared in all four states as a result of drought. Lack of rainfall has resulted in a critical shortage of drinking water. In Palau, a State of Emergency has been declared and a \$3.2 million Immediate and Near-term Drought Response Plan issued.

In the South Pacific, damage from Category 5 cyclones is combining with unusual rainfall patterns to intensify food security risks in Fiji and Vanuatu. Vanuatu has been grappling with drought since mid-2015. Recent rain has eased water concerns but food gardens may not be able to supply sufficient produce this year. In Fiji, El Niño-warmed Pacific waters helped fuel Tropical Cyclone Winston which hit the country at Category 5 strength on February 20 and 21. Many of the areas hit hardest by the Cyclone are those which had previously been struggling with El Niño-related water shortages. The economically critical sugar cane industry in Fiji's West was hit particularly hard by the El Niño dry spell and the industry has now suffered significant destruction with serious implications for local livelihoods.

ASIA

In Asia, extended water shortages and prolonged lean seasons due to drought, coupled with poor nutrition outcomes and widespread poverty, warrant immediate interventions in several countries. In Timor-Leste, it has rained up to 68 per cent less from October 2015 to January 2016, compared to last year. This has led to delayed or stressed crop planting, no or reduced yield, reduced water access and insufficient food. In Vietnam, 2 million people are at risk of drought-induced water shortages. About 35 per cent of the country is drought-affected. Some 429,500 ha of crops have been damaged or remain un-planted. In the Philippines, at least 42 per cent of the country was affected by drought and dry spells, mostly in Mindanao. Around 181,700 farmers and 224,800 ha of agricultural land have been affected since January. Rainfall for March was well below normal for most of the country. As of 15 April, 39 provinces, cities, municipalities and villages have declared a state of calamity.

In Mongolia, seasonal blizzards are expected in some parts of the country which may increase livestock death, reducing livelihoods of many herder households. 41 per cent of Mongolia's total herder population (225,800 people) has been affected by the harsh 2015/16 winter. In Papua New Guinea, drought and frost have highly or severely impacted the food security of nearly 1.5 million people. Over 180,000 people are facing extreme food shortages in four locations. In Indonesia, an estimated 3 million people live below the poverty line in severely drought-impacted districts, with 1.2 million of these reliant on rainfall for their food production. The 2015 fires, intensified by El Niño, burnt 2.6 million hectares of forest and agricultural land.

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

El Niño is an example of climate variability that recurs on a more or less predictable basis, meaning that a resilience-building approach is required for more effective climate risk management; including prevention, preparedness, early warning, timely response and early recovery. A key element of future adaptive capacity is for people and communities to have a range of options available to them to reduce risks to their health, economic, social, environmental and cultural assets and to sustain their lives and livelihoods under different conditions. Therefore, strengthening country capacities and systems within and across agriculture, environment, health and other sectors, including diversification of livelihoods, are key risk management strategies everywhere affected by El Niño.

El Niño – Current Funding Status¹ (in million US\$)

Government Plans

	Requirements \$ M	% Funding needs met	Funding available	Funding Gap
Lesotho	36	28	10	26
Malawi	146	49	71	75
Marshall Islands	8.9	50	4.5 ²	4.4
Mozambique	265	7	18.1	246.9
Palau	3.2	0	0	3.2
Swaziland ³	45	21	9.7	35.3
Zimbabwe ⁴	600	33	200	400
	1104.1		313.3	790.8

Joint Government and HCT Plans

	Requirements \$ M	% Funding needs met	Funding available	Funding Gap
El Salvador	44.6	9	4.2	40.4
Ethiopia ⁵	1400	54	798	602
Sudan	82	0	25.3	56.7
Timor Leste	25	0	0	25
Madagascar ⁶	69.9	12.5	8.8	61
Vietnam	48.5	16	7.8	40.7
	1670		844.1	825.8

HCT Plans

	Requirements \$ M	% Funding needs met	Funding available	Funding Gap
Guatemala	57	23	13.2	43.8
Haiti	105.5	10	10.1	95.4
Honduras	44.2	25	10.9	33.3
Lesotho	59	20	11.8	47.2
Papua New Guinea	37.57	23	8.75	28.81
Mongolia	14.3	43	6.36	7.94
Mozambique	60	0	0	60
Somalia	127	29	23	104
Zimbabwe	359	33.4	120	239
	863.6		204.2	659.4
GLOBAL TOTAL	\$ 3638 M		\$ 1362 M	\$ 2276 M

¹ Funding status derived from a combination Financial Tracking Service plus country and regional direct reporting

² This includes US funding expected but not yet received.

³ \$45m for immediate response (total \$80m for 15 months)

⁴ \$600m for immediate response (total \$1.6 billion)

⁵ The HRD will likely be revised in May, these figures refer to HRD 2016 released in Dec 2015.

⁶ Under development – Mar 2016 – Apr 2017