

El Niño: Overview of Impact, Projected Humanitarian Needs and Response

As of 29 January 2016



> 60 million

PEOPLE WILL BE AFFECTED BY EL NIÑO IN THE FOUR MOST AFFECTED REGIONS

2.8 million

PEOPLE REQUIRE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS

10.2 million

PEOPLE IN NEED OF EMERGENCY FOOD IN ETHIOPIA

14 million

FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA – EXCLUDING SOUTH AFRICA

Forecast for Feb-Apr 2016, Forecast Issued Jan 2016

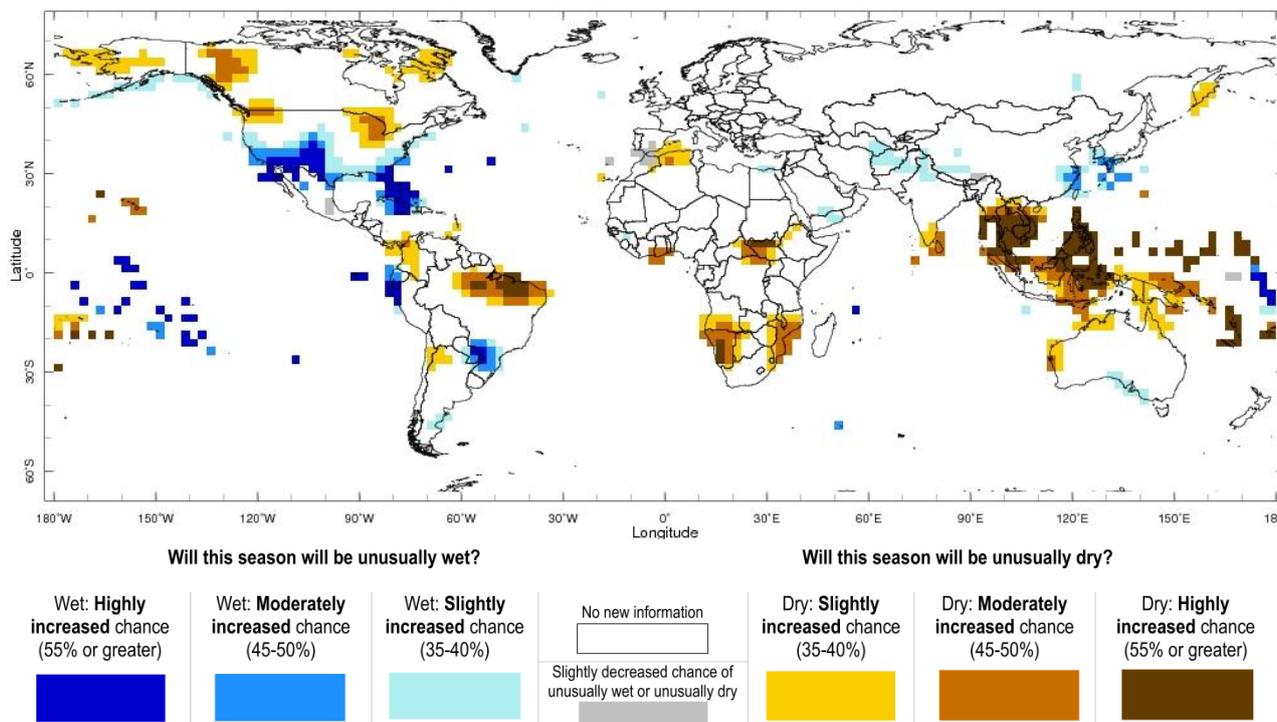


Figure 1. Source: International Research Institute (IRI)

El Niño status

A strong El Niño persists, but ocean temperatures in the tropical Pacific are showing a gradual cooling. Climate models suggest El Niño will decay over the coming months, with a likely return to neutral conditions in the second quarter of 2016. However, recent tropical cyclone activity in the central tropical Pacific has produced strong westerly winds along the equator which may temporarily slow the decline of El Niño. The 2015-2016 El Niño phenomenon is one of the three strongest since 1950. The current El Niño has already affected millions of people in countries in Africa, the Pacific, Asia, and Central and South America.

Countries globally continue to feel the effects of El Niño which include below average precipitation during the rainy season, more intense cyclones in the North-Western Pacific and potentially more frequent cyclones in the South Pacific over the coming weeks. Droughts in Southern and Eastern Africa continue to contribute to a declining food security, nutrition and health situation. El Niño's protracted effects and the possibility of a severe La Niña event mean millions more are at risk of hunger, disease and water shortages in the months ahead.

Although El Niño has started to decline in strength, this does not mean that the danger has passed. The ongoing impact of El Niño and the possibility of a subsequent La Niña may continue to affect different parts of the world, especially health and food insecurity, for as long as two years. In Southern Africa, El Niño has led to severe drought conditions, which is expected to

La Niña

La Niña is associated with cooler-than-normal water temperatures in the Equatorial Pacific Ocean, unlike El Niño, which is associated with warmer-than-normal water temperatures. Global climate La Niña impacts tend to be opposite to those of El Niño. Historical patterns show that a La Niña sometimes follows an El Niño and that it has an even greater overall humanitarian impact on average, as coping capacities are eroded. Neutral and La Niña states are about equally likely for the second half of 2016.

significantly affected the April 2016 harvest and have a devastating impact on food security over the coming 12 months. East Africa, Southern Africa, the Pacific Islands, South East Asia and Central America have the greatest risk of adverse weather affecting their rainy seasons.

First Quarter Precipitation Overview		
AMERICAS	AFRICA	ASIA-PACIFIC
Drought conditions persist in Central America, the Caribbean and parts of South America.	Drought conditions persist in southern Africa.	Drought conditions persist in the northern and western Pacific, Indonesia and Philippines.
Wetter conditions in southern Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay and Peru.	Extended wet conditions in the southern Horn and eastern equatorial Africa.	Wetter conditions in eastern China and central Pacific.

WHO releases a Global Overview on El Niño and Health Impacts – 22 January

Severe drought, flooding, heavy rains and temperature rises can lead to food insecurity and malnutrition, disease outbreaks, acute water shortages, and disruption of health services. The health implications are usually more intense in developing countries with fewer capacities to reduce the health consequences. Thus far, requests for financial support by seven high-risk countries (Ethiopia, Lesotho, Kenya, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda) facing the health costs of El Niño have reached US\$76 million. In the Horn of Africa, the devastating drought has been followed by unusually heavy rains causing a high risk of vector-borne disease and communicable disease outbreaks, especially among displaced populations and those with high levels of malnutrition. El Niño caused heavy rains and flooding in eastern Africa which could cause cholera outbreaks in Tanzania, Mozambique, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda to spread, and other countries may experience cholera outbreaks.

HEIGHTENED EL NIÑO-RELATED HEALTH RISKS



Figure 2. Wetter and drier than normal conditions caused by El Niño bring about a variety of health risks. Source: WHO.

Impact and response by region

East Africa

Regional overview

El Niño has significantly affected the Eastern Africa region since June 2015 and is predicted to continue to have a serious impact through early 2016. Drier-than-normal conditions in the Greater Horn have resulted in a serious increase in the number of food insecure people and high levels of malnutrition that are expected to continue over the coming months. Due to El Niño conditions, 22 million people are expected to be food insecure across Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti and South Sudan. There is also an increased risk for water- and vector-borne diseases due to a combination of water shortages, poor sanitation and hygiene conditions, high malnutrition levels and population displacement. The resurgence of Rift Valley Fever in Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania is a particular concern.

In **Ethiopia**, El Niño led to failed spring rains which has increased levels of food insecurity, malnutrition and water shortages in affected areas of the country. Drier conditions are expected to continue in the northern part of the country, although humanitarian planning is based on the assumption that the upcoming spring 2016 *belg* rains will not fail; meaning that at least 10 per cent of those targeted for emergency food aid will be self-sufficient from the end of July. Crop and livestock production has dropped by 50 to 90 per cent in some areas and failed completely in others. Seed reserves are severely depleted following unsuccessful planting and re-planting (50 per cent increase in identified seed requirements for nearly 838,000 households). High livestock mortality rates, worsening animal body conditions and declining milk productivity. Current estimates indicate 869,000 households require animal feed support.

FEWSNET predicts Ethiopia to remain at Phase 4 Emergency Food Insecurity 'critical' until July 2016. This is one step short of famine. The number of people in need of food assistance is expected to increase from over 10 million currently to 18 million by the end of 2016. More than 2 million people have no access to safe water. 180,000 people are already displaced due to drought and floods in the south of the country.

The international humanitarian community of over 66 partners supported the Government of Ethiopia in developing the Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD) for 2016, requesting \$1.4 billion to help some 10.2 million people focusing on saving lives, and protecting and restoring livelihoods. The aim is to help people recover quickly from shock, and to prevent further deterioration.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has launched an emergency appeal worth \$2.2 million to enable the Ethiopian Red Cross to support more than 35,000 people struggling with severe drought aggravated by El Niño. The support focuses on health, water and sanitation, food security and livelihoods.

FAO has launched a \$50 million El Niño response plan for Ethiopia which aims to assist 1.8 million farmers and livestock keepers in 2016. FAO plans to help 131,500 households plant with a mix of emergency seed distribution, small-scale irrigation projects, and backyard gardening initiatives.

WHO deployed expert surge capacity to assist the Ethiopia Country Office and Ministry of Health in scaling-up immediate health assistance. WHO is also deploying 20 Early Warning and Response System (EWARS) in a Box kits which provide durable, field-ready equipment needed to establish and manage disease and nutrition surveillance, alert and response activities for roughly 1,000 health centres and serving as many as 10 million people.

Most areas of **Kenya** received above-average short rains, driven in part by the ongoing El Niño. Localized flooding and mudslides/landslides were reported. Although less extensive than previously expected, the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) reported that the heavy rains resulted in a cumulative loss of 130 lives and 73-recorded injuries, 40,121 households (HHs) (approximately 240,726 people) were affected, and 17,254 HHs (approximately 103,524 people) were displaced. In Tana River County, 44 camps for internally displaced people (IDPs) were established, hosting 3,881 HHs (of which 1,700 are still at the IDP camps as of January 27 according to KRCS). In pastoral areas, the short rains have led to the seasonal recovery of rangeland, increasing livestock productivity and improving food security. As a result, some pastoral households have improved to 'None' (IPC Phase 1) in December. Further improvements are expected through March, with more households moving to 'None' (IPC Phase 1), although many will remain 'Stressed' (IPC Phase 2).

The long rains harvest in Western and Rift Valley was average and the February to March short rains harvest in southeastern and coastal marginal agricultural areas is expected to be average to above-average. Most households have improved to 'None' (IPC Phase 1) and will remain in 'None' (IPC Phase 1) through March.

Other effects of the rains countrywide included varied damage to at least 16 schools, loss of thousands of heads of livestock; infrastructural damages were also reported. The country is currently experiencing a

cholera outbreak that is now affecting 21 counties and is expected to worsen and spread to more locations due to floods. There is increased potential for vector-borne diseases outbreaks such as malaria, dengue, Rift Valley Fever and water-borne diseases such as acute watery diarrhoea, typhoid and dysentery.

The Government has taken the lead in El Niño contingency planning, with a national El Niño preparedness and response plan and county-level contingency plans budgeted at \$157 million.

In **Somalia**, El Niño continues to aggravate drought conditions, and impact on food security and health. The effects of drought in north western Somalia could extend several months into 2016 where about 380,000 people are already facing severe water shortages. 2.3 million people, more than two-thirds being internally displaced, are in food-stressed situations and the number of people in severe food insecurity may increase by over 400,000. Farmers and herders are the most affected by El Niño, since it came on the heels of a poor 2015 *Gu* season cereal harvest (25 per cent below the last five-year average). In the north-west, many communities face a fourth consecutive season of poor rains. Cereal production in these areas was even lower (63 per cent below the last four-year average) and livestock herds have diminished.

Nearly 308,000 children under five are acutely malnourished, of whom almost 56,000 are severely malnourished and face a high risk of disease and death. In settlements for internally displaced people, global acute malnutrition rates were found to be consistently above the emergency threshold of 15 per cent. About 980 cases of acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) in the past two months in Kismayo and Baidoa. Around 3,300 suspected measles cases have been reported so far.

Southern Africa

Regional overview

FEWSNET reports that the October to December 2015 period was the driest in at least 35 years in several southern parts of the region. Large decreases in planted area are expected in some areas, as planting windows close. The number of people without enough food could rise significantly over coming months as the region moves deeper into the lean period before the April harvest when food and cash stocks become increasingly depleted. Pre-existing drought and poor harvests have been exacerbated by the current El Niño conditions.

WFP's food security assessment analysts estimate that more than 40 million rural and 9 million urban dwellers in the southern Africa region live in geographic zones that are highly exposed to potential fall-out from El Niño. The Southern African Development community (SADC) reports that 28

A key priority of the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is to implement life-saving interventions in regions most affected by flooding and drought as a result of El Niño. The Humanitarian Country Team is currently working on a CERF request for the drought in Somaliland and Puntland, and plan to provide complimentary funding directly to NGOs. The planned amount could be up to \$1 million. Country clusters are working with the Humanitarian Financing team to finalize the plan.

In **South Sudan**, drier-than-normal conditions are expected to continue to affect the vast majority of the central and eastern parts of the country. The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET) predicts that South Sudan will remain at Phase 4 Emergency Food Insecurity to July 2016.

In **Sudan**, the already unstable food security situation is expected to further deteriorate, which could affect up to 4.2 million people in the coming months. FEWSNET predicts Sudan to remain at Phase 4 Emergency Food Insecurity to July 2016. Due to drought, a significant fall in food availability and rise in food insecurity and malnutrition is expected for vulnerable populations, especially among small-scale farmers and pastoralists, who comprise the bulk of Sudan's rural poor. Communities have seen water sources drying up at an alarming rate, increasing exposure to contaminated sources, as well as related risks of water-borne disease and malnutrition.

Humanitarian organizations in Sudan are finalizing a multi-sectoral El Niño Mitigation and Preparedness Plan seeking \$90 million to provide immediate support to 3.5 million people in the worst-affected areas over a three-month period.

For the most updated information, please visit: <http://www.unocha.org/el-nino-east-africa>

million people are food insecure in Southern Africa, including 14 million in South Africa (although all these will be supported by the government). Other countries badly affected in the region by last year's poor rains are Malawi (2.8 million people), Madagascar (nearly 1.9 million) and Zimbabwe (1.5 million) where last year's harvest was reduced by half compared to the previous year because of massive crop failure. Of particular concern also are Lesotho, Angola, Mozambique and Swaziland.

Food prices across Southern Africa have been rising due to reduced production and availability. In South Africa, prices of yellow and white maize climbed further in January reaching new record highs. South Africa will need to import 5 to 6 million tons of maize to mitigate the effects the drought has had on crop production in the country. At least 2 million tons of wheat will also have to be imported, as well as soya beans. This will further complicate the food security

situation of neighbouring countries that traditionally rely upon South Africa for food imports to cover their deficits. Swaziland, Malawi and Zimbabwe are likely to be particularly affected. The price of is 73 per cent higher in Malawi than the three-year average for this time of year.

Southern Africa - Evapotranspiration

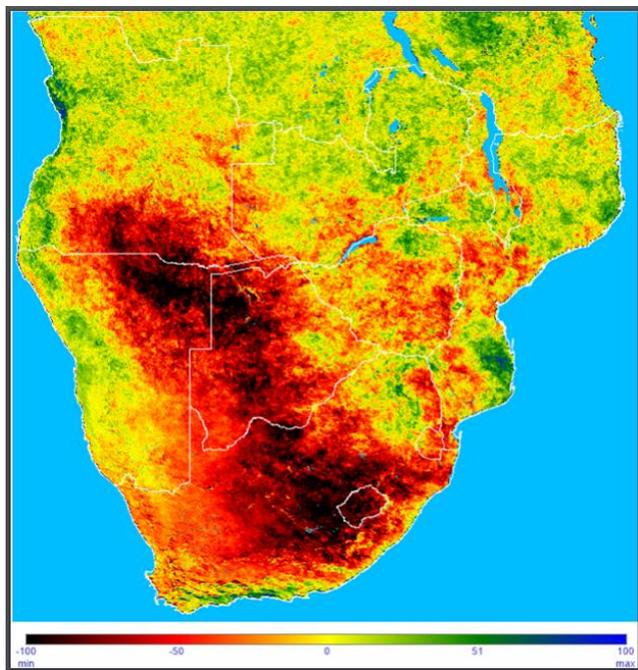


Figure 3: Source; *Environmental Analysis and Remote Sensing (EARS)*. Red and black colors point to crop water shortages of 50-100 mm, leading to crop production losses of 30% and more.

In **Lesotho**, the predicted weather outlook is expected to result in further water scarcity, crop failure, pest infestation, water-borne diseases such as cholera and dysentery, animal diseases and malnutrition. Close to 300,000 people in 276 communities (15 per cent of the population) are experiencing acute shortages of water. It is estimated that up to 500,000 people will become food insecure in 2016 (33 per cent of the population), with associated increased malnutrition. An Inter-Ministerial Task Force was established to oversee the response. The Government has developed a National Response Plan and has issued an appeal, budgeted at \$36.5 million, of which approximately \$9.7 million will be provided by Government, leaving a gap of \$26.8 million. In the coming weeks, the UN, NGOs and Red Cross will support the Government to conduct a rapid assessment to inform the response.

In **Madagascar**, the 2015/16 agricultural season is ongoing throughout the country. While rainfall has generally been sufficient to meet crop needs, certain seasonal forecasts suggest an increased probability that southern regions will receive normal to below-normal rainfall during the remainder of the season due to the effects of El Niño. Additionally, unusual high migration rates have been observed in Androy, Atsimo, Andrefana and parts of Anosy regions, which

could negatively affect labor availability and the area planted in crops this year in these regions. In these areas, poor households are struggling to meet their minimum food needs and are engaged in the accelerated depletion of livelihood assets, such as livestock sales. As a result, households are currently facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes. In other areas of the country, Minimal (IPC Phase 1) acute food insecurity is expected. Joint assessments are currently ongoing in the drought-affected southern regions, where 1.8 million people were earlier identified as food insecure of which 460,000 are severely so.

In **Malawi**, below-normal rainfall is expected in some areas until the end of February 2016. Malawi is currently experiencing the worst food insecurity in over a decade, with nearly 3 million people who will require food assistance up to March 2016. The country is still recovering from floods that occurred earlier this year resulting in displacement of 230,000 people. There are concerns of possible increased malnutrition rates, with 47 per cent of children already undernourished.

A National Food Insecurity Response Plan has been developed to cover needs up to March 2016, and the Department of Disaster Management Affairs is currently preparing a national multi-sectoral Contingency Plan including floods, dry spells and disease outbreaks (mainly cholera). Currently, the National Nutrition Response Plan is 48 per cent funded. However, there is a funding gap for a preventive Supplementary Feeding Program (SFP) which could result in up to 60 per cent of the targeted vulnerable women and children not receiving SFP support.

While rains have finally started to fall across **Mozambique** (with associated flood risks), an estimated 167,000 people require immediate food assistance due to drought, which have affected 428,000 ha of croplands and 202,500 farmers, with 361,000 cattle at risk. Food security partners and government actors are finalizing a plan of action to address the needs of the affected, while reassessing the existing contingency plan for the possibility of further droughts.

In **Swaziland**, the Government has projected that the number of people affected by El Niño will increase from 200,000 to 350,000 (one third of the population) and will need assistance until April 2017. Rationing of water is already under way in most (4 days per week). The Government has drafted a response plan which will be tabled in Parliament on 11 February. So far, the Government has provided food assistance to 75,000 affected people and supplied water to local populations, including in urban areas. Rapid assessments will take place from 15 February to ensure better targeting.

The **Zimbabwe** Vulnerability Assessment Committee's 2015 evaluation indicates that nearly 1.5

million people will be food insecure during the peak hunger period of January to March 2016. The Government draft contingency plan notes that up to 5.4 million people could require food assistance. WFP plans to reach about 822,000 people in 38 districts during the peak of the lean season (January-March), jointly with the Government. Only 281,000 people received assistance in December. An OCHA

Asia and the Pacific

Regional overview

A weak monsoon season and associated drought are the dominant impact of El Niño across South and South-East Asia, causing severe heat waves and droughts in countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, with particular effects on agriculture, food security and water resources. Haze from forest fires has affected over 50 million people in Indonesia and neighbouring countries, causing a dramatic increase in respiratory infections. South East Asia, the Philippines and Micronesia continue to receive less-than-average rain. Food security remains a major issue in many of these countries, with key regional food producers such as Indonesia and the Philippines suffering from El Niño. Dry conditions are also predicted for Sri Lanka.

In the Pacific, a lack of rainfall has had a severe impact on agriculture and food security, especially in parts of Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Up to 4.7 million people in 13 Pacific countries (the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu) remain at risk of adverse impacts including drought, cyclones and increased rainfall. Heavy rain associated with more intense cyclone activity over the region has recently brought temporary relief to many El Niño drought-affected Pacific countries. However, after months of drought the rainfall is unlikely to replenish groundwater reserves in preparation for the dry season (May-Oct.). Tonga and Samoa have drought warnings in place with below normal rainfall expected over the next three months and a higher risk of cyclones.

In **Fiji**, 67,000 people have been relying on water deliveries prior to recent rains. These are likely to be resumed. Water trucking was stepped-up to cover the increasing needs of people, agriculture and livestock. The Food Security Cluster is conducting assessments, but it is warning of likely vegetable shortages in the first quarter of 2016 if current conditions continue. Fiji is particularly vulnerable to dengue outbreaks – in 2013-14, it experienced one of the largest outbreaks recorded in the Pacific in recent years.

In **Indonesia**, drought conditions linked to El Niño over large parts of the country resulted in major delays in planting of the main season crops for six to eight weeks. This will delay harvests and lead to

mission to Harare agreed to continue assistance to the Resident Coordinator and HCT to develop a Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) by the end of February to inform the revision of the Zimbabwe HRP.

For the most updated information, please visit: <http://www.unocha.org/el-nino-southern-africa>

much lower than usual production levels of rice and maize in February and March 2016, putting further pressure on already rising rice prices.

The Indonesian Government has put in place drought mitigation measures such as irrigation channels, new reservoirs and wells, and water pumps for distribution. The Government has also allocated \$258 million to improve rice state reserves and stabilize the prices of staple foods. The **UN Focus Group** on El Niño, together with key government ministries, agencies and NGOs, will work on a humanitarian scenario development exercise to be conducted in mid-February 2016.

Many parts of **Micronesia** are entering a period of moderate to severe drought. Lower-than-normal rainfall during the coming months is likely in the Mariana Islands and parts of Chuuk state. Drought is already affecting Palau and Yap states.

As of 20 January, **97 districts in 18 provinces in Mongolia** are experiencing white dzud, which is a colder and snowier winter than usual. Another 111 districts in 20 provinces are experiencing near-dzud conditions. FAO has included Mongolia in the list of high-priority countries for early action related to El Niño.

In **Papua New Guinea**, 2.7 million people have been affected by drought and severe frost. This includes 522,000 people in the most severely affected districts. Priority needs include food, water and agricultural recovery support. With many affected communities living in remote areas, access remains a key issue. The drought also limited electricity generation and supply in affected areas. Some previously affected areas in the Highlands and Momase regions have now received intermittent rains. While the water shortage situation has recently eased somewhat with rain falling in many parts of the country, a key issue remains around food security/delivery. Other areas along the southern coastal provinces and islands continue to experience lower than average rainfall. Health care services were facing challenges prior to the onset of El Niño, affecting their outreach and functions and are now further weakened by the crisis.

The Government activated the National Disaster Centre and has allocated over \$66.5 million for the response. The Government is most concerned about delivering aid to remote locations in Western Province, inland Gulf, and the Highlands.

The Government of the **Philippines** forecasts significantly below-normal rainfall in most parts of the country from January to April. FAO estimated in December that severe damage to farms, fisheries and forests may directly affect more than 12 million Filipinos relying on agriculture as a primary source of livelihood. Southern Mindanao and Zamboanga, the “breadbasket of Mindanao” are particularly affected. The Philippines approved \$404.1 million in spending to counter the effects of El Niño. The Department of Agriculture released drought-tolerant rice varieties and improved small-scale irrigation systems across the nation.

Projected food insecurity in Mindanao

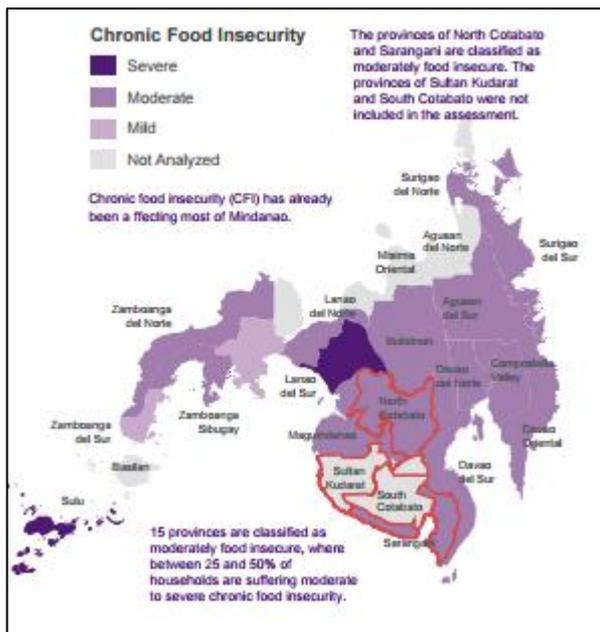


Figure 4: Source: OCHA

The **Solomon Islands** has cancelled its drought alert after receiving significant recent rain. However, food security concerns remain after crop failures as a result of cyclones, floods and drought conditions in 2015. Some 3,660 cases of diarrhoeal disease have been identified in the Solomon Islands since last November, however the number of new cases being detected has decreased in recent weeks.

The National Emergency Operations Centre has activated an internal mechanism to monitor the impacts of drought and is in contact with all the provincial health authorities. Investigations are underway into 17 deaths suspected of connection

Latin America and the Caribbean

Regional overview

Insufficient and erratic rainfall since March 2015 has resulted in drought conditions and deepening food insecurity for areas of Central America, the Caribbean and highland areas in South America. In Central America, El Niño conditions have led to a second consecutive year of drought – one of the

with a rotavirus outbreak which now appears to be passing its peak. The country’s Ministry of Health and Medical Services has been working to curb the spread of the virus through a Diarrhoea Outbreak Response Action Plan with support from partners including WHO, UNICEF and the Red Cross. Health authorities agree that it is too early to scale down the response, despite a recent sign of improvement. They will be closely monitoring the epidemic to confirm the downward trend and identify any potential problems in affected provinces. The Ministry of Health is developing its key health messages on drought-related health effects.

In **Timor-Leste**, El Niño climatic effects will continue and the next three months are projected to remain as dry as October to December 2015. This coincides with the harvest times for main food crops such as maize and rice. Up to 220,000 people may be affected by February/March 2016, should El Niño effects emerge as predicted and the harvests fail. Oecusse, Atauro and Metinaro districts in the northern part of the country are likely to be most affected. Based on historical data as well as current climatic projections, humanitarian partners in country estimate that up to 50 per cent of the area of Timor-Leste could potentially become food and water insecure by the second quarter of 2016. Further analysis and assessments are needed at a more detailed level. The Government is stockpiling 7,000 MT of rice and sensitizing farmers and rural population on the potential impact through key messages.

In **Vanuatu**, El Niño-related water shortages and a lack of sanitation are creating concerning food, nutrition and health conditions especially in communities affected by cyclone Pam in 2015. An increase in the number of cases of diarrhoeal diseases has been recorded recently.

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) Health and Nutrition Cluster is preparing a short survey about national health responses across the region on El Niño. The survey results will be published together with the public health risk assessment in February 2016. The common strategy in the Pacific is to strengthen mitigation measures.

For the most updated information, please visit:

<http://www.unocha.org/el-nino-pacific>

<http://www.unocha.org/el-nino-asia-pacific>

most severe droughts in the sub-region’s history. As of mid-January, some 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have reported cases of Zika. Previously flowing waterways reduced to still pools by drought allow mosquitoes – in this case *Aedes aegypti*, the main Zika vector – to breed.

WHO FAQ: Can El Niño have an effect on Zika?

The *Aedes aegypti* mosquito breeds in standing water. We could expect more mosquito vectors which can spread the Zika virus because of expanding and favourable breeding sites. Steps can be taken to prevent and reduce the health effects of El Niño, in particular by reducing the mosquito populations that spread Zika virus.

Wetter conditions are expected in Peru, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and southern Brazil, with increased risk of vector-borne diseases, respiratory infections and damage to health facilities. The severe rains caused by El Niño have affected close to 51,000 people (10,186 families) in 14 provinces across Argentina. In Bolivia, 7 municipalities in the department of La Paz have declared a state of emergency due to rainfall that has led to rivers overflowing.

Northern Central America countries have been facing chronic drought and dry spells for three consecutive years, which continue to create crop failures. Communities in the Central American “dry corridor” of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador are facing one of the worst droughts in decades, with an estimated 3.5 million people having serious difficulties in accessing food. The poorest households most affected by the drought are expected to be severely food insecure with increased acute and severe malnutrition, until the next harvest in August 2016. In a complex scenario of extreme poverty, inequality and underdevelopment, these concurrent events have inflicted significant damage on the most vulnerable people. In Colombia, high temperatures and drought are still severely affecting the country. More than 150 municipalities remain on red alert and public calamity for the risk of forest fires and shortage of water.

In **El Salvador**, El Niño has triggered one of the worst droughts on record, causing irreversible damage to the agricultural production for thousands of subsistence farmers. Harvest losses resulted in the depletion of food reserves, which increased acute and severe malnutrition cases and food insecurity levels. About 700,000 people (11 per cent of the population) are food insecure and in need of humanitarian assistance.

In **Guatemala**, 1.5 million people (10 per cent of the population) are affected by the El Niño-induced drought and are in need of humanitarian assistance. Some 500,000 people will experience critical consequences, including moderate-to-severe food insecurity, with the next harvest expected only in August 2016.

Honduras is facing one of its most severe droughts in history, affecting more than 1.3 million people (15

per cent of the population). Over 250,000 people are reported to be in immediate need of food assistance.

A sub-regional Humanitarian Response Plan for \$101.8 million has been launched for Guatemala and Honduras to ensure the delivery of coordinated and integrated life-saving assistance to drought-affected people, and building stronger resilience to shocks.

El Niño continues to seriously impact the food security situation in **Haiti**. On 22 January, the Haitian Prime Minister expressed his concern about the drought affecting agricultural areas in the country. He declared that more than 3.5 million people are food insecure and that Haitians in 40 communes are affected by the drought.

WFP is currently finalizing an Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) in partnership with FAO. The EFSA will collect essential information to better evaluate the impact of the drought on households' food security and livelihoods, estimate the number of moderately and severely food insecure households and evaluate the evolution of the situation in the next 3-6 months. Results are tentatively scheduled for release on 28 January and will be included in the Humanitarian Needs Overview.

For the most updated information, please visit: <http://www.unocha.org/el-nino-latin-america-caribbean>

Feb-Apr 2016 IRI Seasonal Precipitation Forecast issued Jan 2016

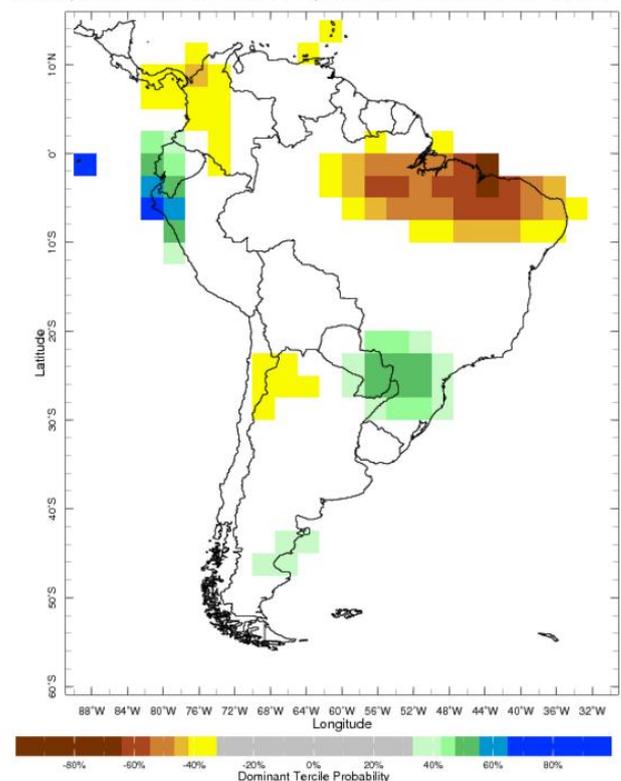


Figure 5: LAC precipitation forecast Q1 2016. Source IRI

Central and West Africa

In **Burundi**, the Burundi Red Cross has established an El Niño contingency plan to mitigate the effects of these events. At least 14 provinces have been identified as being at risk.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, heavy rainfall caused by El Niño since October 2015 has led to flooding in many parts of the country, particularly along the Congo River, affecting 11 out of DRC's 26 provinces. The flooding has caused loss of life (at least 74) and the deterioration of livelihoods of an estimated 555,000 people (as of January 2016), as well as the destruction of 65,000 dwellings and public infrastructure and of 4,800 hectares of land. Two provinces – Tshopo (383,000 affected people) and Mongala (56,000 affected) – have been particularly affected.

The Government in DRC has created a National Crisis Committee in charge of developing a contingency plan related to the floods. The

humanitarian presence in areas affected by floods remains limited; however the DRC Red Cross, UNDP and the Ministry of the Interior are already involved in the response and several international humanitarian actors including UNICEF, WFP, COOPI and MSF have the necessary response capacity.

In **Uganda**, El Niño is likely to result in above-average rainfall up to February 2016. An estimated 800,000 people will be at risk of landslides and floods with humanitarian consequences that could last until mid-2016. Wet conditions may increase the incidence of infectious diseases such as malaria, cholera and dysentery. Acute respiratory infections may rise to outbreak levels in 30 of 112 districts. In October, the Government and partners produced a National El Niño Preparedness and Contingency Plan requiring \$1.4 million.

For the most updated information, please visit: <http://www.unocha.org/el-nino-west-central-africa>

Guide to Giving

Contributing to El Niño Preparedness and Response Efforts

Many of the response plans in affected countries are seriously underfunded. In Ethiopia, donors have given some \$680 million for a drought response requiring \$1.4 billion (46 per cent of requirements). Only 44 per cent of the \$132 million plan developed by the humanitarian country team (HCT) for Zimbabwe has been funded, leaving a gap of \$73 million. In Malawi, \$71 million have been mobilized against a \$146 million National Food Insecurity Response Plan.

To find out about existing HCT El Niño-related preparedness and response plans, please visit the following links:

- [Ethiopia 2016 Humanitarian Requirements Document](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/ethiopia_hrd_2016.pdf), www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/ethiopia_hrd_2016.pdf
- [Somalia 2015-16 El Niño Contingency Plan](http://tinyurl.com/SomaliaElNino), <http://tinyurl.com/SomaliaElNino>
- [Zimbabwe 2015 Food Insecurity Response Plan](http://tinyurl.com/ZimbabweElNino), <http://tinyurl.com/ZimbabweElNino>
- [Honduras and Guatemala 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/hrp_ca_final_web-2016.pdf), https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/hrp_ca_final_web-2016.pdf

Additional country and regional plans are being finalized.

Contributing through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocated more than US\$59 million in 2015 to respond to El Niño-related impacts in El Salvador (\$3 million), Eritrea (\$2.5 million), Ethiopia (\$25.5 million), Haiti (\$3 million), Honduras (\$2.3 million), Malawi (\$9.9 million), Somalia (\$4.9 million) and Zimbabwe (\$8.1 million). Details on CERF's El Niño-related allocations are available here:

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CERF_El-Nino_20151201_post.pdf

CERF is one of the fastest and most effective ways to support rapid humanitarian response. The Fund provides immediate funding for life-saving humanitarian action at the onset of emergencies and for crises that have not attracted significant funding. Contributions are received year-round, mainly from governments, but also from private companies, foundations, charities and individuals. More information about CERF and how to contribute can be found at www.unocha.org/cerf/donate

Donating through Country-Based Pooled Funds

Country-based pooled funds (CBPFs) are multi-donor humanitarian financing instruments. Donor contributions to each CBPF are un-earmarked and allocated by the Humanitarian Coordinator through an in-country consultative process. Allocations are channeled through OCHA to UN agencies, national and international non-governmental organizations and Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations. As of 2015, CBPFs operate in 18 countries: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Myanmar, occupied Palestinian territory, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Turkey and Yemen. Find out more about CBPFs and how to donate at: www.unocha.org/what-we-do/humanitarian-financing/how-to-give

In-kind Relief Aid

The United Nations urges donors to make cash rather than in-kind donations for maximum speed and flexibility, and to ensure that the most needed type of aid is delivered. If you can only make in-kind contributions in response to disasters and emergencies, please contact: logik@un.org.

Registering and Recognizing your Contributions

OCHA manages the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), which records all reported humanitarian contributions to emergencies (cash, in-kind, multilateral and bilateral). Its aim is to give credit and visibility to donors for their generosity and to show the total amount of funding and resource gaps for each emergency. Please report your contributions to FTS, either by email to fts@un.org or through the on-line contribution report form at <http://fts.unocha.org>.