

El Niño: Snapshot of Impact and Projected Humanitarian Needs

as of 22 December 2015

30 million

FOOD INSECURE PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

22 million

PEOPLE LIKELY TO SUFFER FROM FOOD INSECURITY IN EASTERN AFRICA

4.7 million

PEOPLE AT RISK FROM ADVERSE WEATHER ASSOCIATED WITH EL NIÑO IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

4.2 million

PEOPLE ALREADY AFFECTED BY EL NIÑO-RELATED DROUGHT IN CENTRAL AMERICA

El Niño and Rainfall

El Niño conditions in the tropical Pacific are known to shift rainfall patterns in many different parts of the world. Although they vary somewhat from one El Niño to the next, the strongest shifts remain fairly consistent in the regions and seasons shown on the map below.

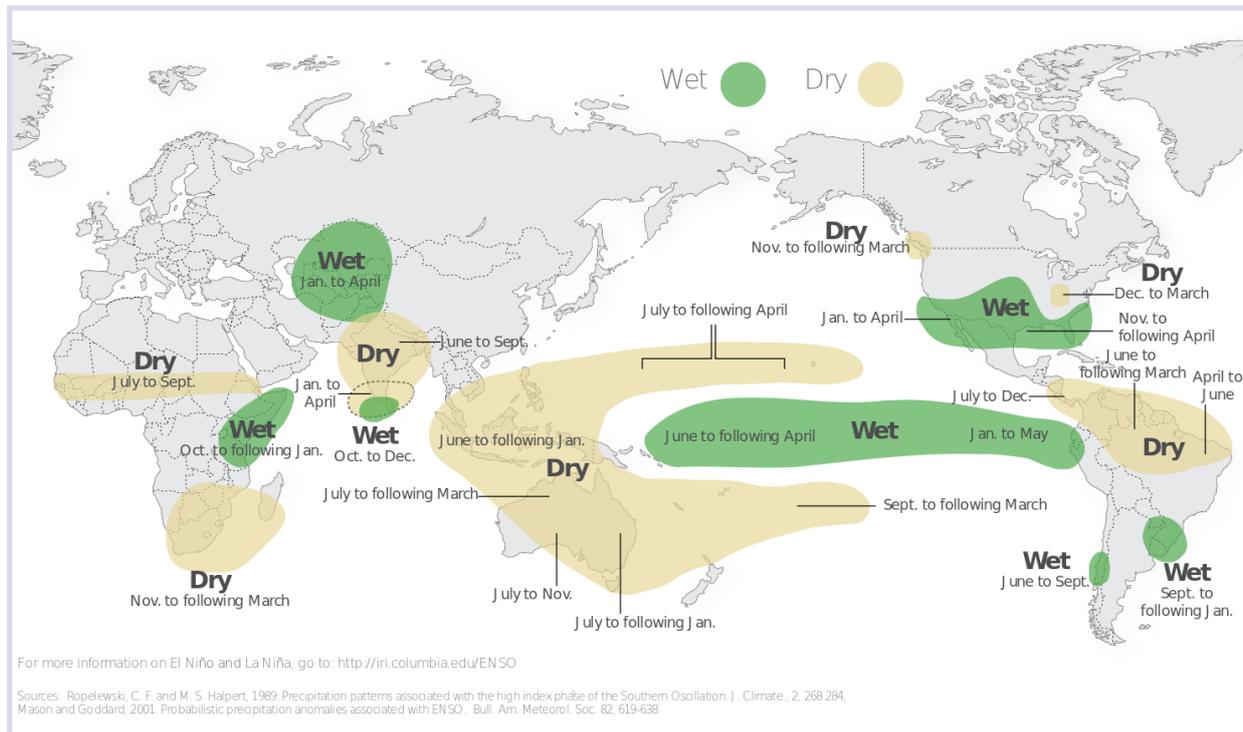


Figure. Typical rainfall patterns during El Niño events. Such teleconnections are likely, but not certain, during El Niño events. Map by IRI.

Summary

The 2015-2016 El Niño phenomenon is one of the three strongest since 1950 and models suggest that it may surpass the strength of the 1997-1998 event, which was the strongest on record. El Niño is likely to decline in strength in January 2016, but it will continue to affect different parts of the world at different times with a mix of above- or below-average rainfall. The impacts, especially on food insecurity, may last as long as two years. East Africa, Southern Africa, the Pacific Islands, South East Asia and Central America have the greatest risk of adverse weather affecting their upcoming rainy seasons.

El Niño is likely to decline in strength in January 2016, but will continue to affect different parts of the world over the coming months.

Impact

Millions of people have been affected since El Niño was confirmed in May 2015. Across Eastern Africa, below-average rainfall observed from June through August resulted in drought-like conditions in the northern parts of the region, mostly in Ethiopia, Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea. In Ethiopia, which is experiencing the worst drought in over 50 years, the number of food insecure people jumped from 2 million at the beginning of the year to 8.2 million in October, to 10.2 million in December 2015, as announced by the Government. Throughout Central America, Colombia and Haiti, rainfall deficits continued to grow, negatively affecting both of the main growing seasons and access to water. Up to 80 per cent of crops have been lost in the “dry corridor” of Central America, a drought-prone region shared by Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador. Drought conditions have affected more than

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4.2 million people in Central America. Typical El Niño conditions were also observed in the South Pacific Islands. In Papua New Guinea, 2.4 million people – one third of the country's total population – are affected by drought and frost. Drier conditions have increased not only food insecurity and acute malnutrition but also health concerns and water shortages. Between September and November, other parts of Eastern Africa, South America and Central Asia experienced a wetter-than-normal season, while drought conditions continued to affect Indonesia, the Philippines and the South Pacific Islands. Since October, about 60,000 people have been displaced by flash floods in Kenya, while drought conditions have driven more than 186,000 internal displacements in Ethiopia since 1 September.

Projections

Between December and February, increased precipitation is forecast for the Pacific Islands near the equator, northern Papua New Guinea and northern Indonesia. In past years, this transition from drought to rainfall has led to flooding, crop pests and waterborne diseases. Flooding and intense rainfall (including cyclones) may also cause population displacement and damage health and sanitation infrastructure. Conversely, as Southern Africa enters into the main part of its growing season (Dec-Apr), well-below-average rainfall is forecast. Coupled with the poor 2015 harvests, it will likely see a significant number of new beneficiaries in 2016. In the coming months, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the South Pacific are the regions most likely to see an increase in humanitarian needs.

In 2016, an estimated 22 million people may suffer from food insecurity in Eastern Africa, and 4.7 million people in the South Pacific may be at risk from adverse weather associated with El Niño. In Southern Africa, where 30 million people are already food insecure after a ruinous 2015, the situation will only worsen throughout 2016 due to El Niño and relief might only come with the 2017 harvest. People most vulnerable, including children, the elderly and women, are at greatest risk. Currently, over half a billion children are living in areas with extremely high levels of flood occurrence, and nearly 160 million people live in areas of high or extremely high drought severity. Children are also far more vulnerable to disease than adults.

Excessive rainfall could trigger and exacerbate outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid as well as vector-borne diseases such as malaria, which will affect millions of people. There could also be an increased impact on livestock such as through Rift Valley Fever outbreaks can also infect humans. In the 1997-98 El Niño event, unprecedented outbreaks of Rift Valley Fever occurred in Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania, with nearly 90,000 people infected and 500 deaths. Although the climate impacts of El Niño on seasonal rainfall are expected to end before mid-2016, the health effects are likely to continue until the third quarter of 2016 or to the new harvest season.

La Niña

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. For example, the 1999 La Niña-related drought affected 31.5 million people, nearly double the number of people affected by floods in 2008-09, which was the second highest figure between 1975 and 2015. The 2011 drought, which affected nearly 14 million people in the Horn of Africa, was also associated with 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 impacts.

If a La Niña event develops, it will more likely be in late 2016 or early 2017. However, there is also a risk of a rapid transition to La Niña. Ocean temperatures around March will be key to judge the risk of a strong La Niña.

Action

Humanitarian partners continue to step up El Niño-related preparedness and response work, depending on the country's needs, scaling up operational capacity and raising the alarm with donors. Partners are seeking to pre-position stocks, strengthen local response capacity, reinforce river embankments and undertake resilience programmes in areas likely to be affected by El Niño.

Despite these efforts, the response is insufficient and donors are not yet investing at the levels required to enable a timely and effective response. The current funding shortfall has affected the ability of humanitarian partners on the ground to respond to urgent needs, let alone pre-position stocks and support preparedness. There is a patchwork of donor interest, with low interest in regions other than Eastern Africa.

Beyond ensuring adequate funding for early humanitarian action, additional efforts are required to ensure that investments in longer-term risk and vulnerability reduction are stepped up and frontloaded now in the countries most at risk. This will have enormous return for the current El Niño and the possible La Niña.

Concerted action by governments, development and humanitarian actors – now and in the coming months – can mitigate the impact of El Niño, save lives and reduce the need for a larger humanitarian response at a later stage. Affected governments and humanitarian partners should be supported to protect livelihoods and health, pre-position supplies and strengthen the capacity of at-risk communities and local partners to prepare for and respond to the projected impacts. Meanwhile, national and development partners should be supported to scale up disaster risk reduction efforts in the most at-risk areas, increase investments in projects supporting resilience and expand existing social safety net programmes.

Robust financial support to these efforts is urgently needed to mitigate the effects of El Niño before it turns into a global humanitarian emergency. In 2015, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has been one of the quickest supporters of early humanitarian action in response to the El Niño phenomenon. To date, it has provided some US\$59 million to aid agencies to respond to drought, drought-like situations and floods that can likely be linked to the El Niño phenomenon. An additional \$17 million has been allocated to countries with extreme weather conditions, bringing the total to \$76 million for climate-related allocations. Some other donors have also pledged or allocated money towards El Niño preparedness. Donors are requested to review funding decisions based on early warning signs and forecasting, and to expand flexibility of development and humanitarian financing to adapt to the changing risks.

“Delayed response has been the defining characteristic of food emergencies over the last three decades in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. The humanitarian community has vowed to learn from its mistakes, but has yet to prove its ability and will to react swiftly and at scale to warning signs. There is a window of opportunity for early response to this El Niño, to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, but this is closing fast.” Oxfam briefing note, “El Niño: The Case for Urgent Action”, December 2015

Key messages

1. An urgent response is required to address the humanitarian needs that El Niño has already caused. Millions of people have been affected, but there are significant funding gaps in existing response plans. Early action is critical to help reduce vulnerability and the need for humanitarian assistance.
2. Investments in longer-term risk and vulnerability reduction should be increased in countries most at risk of being affected by El Niño. El Niño is already upon us, but it will be a rolling disaster that will continue over the coming months. Investments made now will also have an enormous return in human and financial terms ahead of the possible La Niña, which historical patterns show sometimes follows an El Niño and has an even greater overall humanitarian impact on average.

For more information, please visit: www.unocha.org/el-nino.

Impact and projected humanitarian needs by region

The following sections provide general information about the impact and humanitarian needs in each region likely to be most affected, as well as the countries of greatest concern due to high risk and vulnerability combined with low preparedness and capacity.

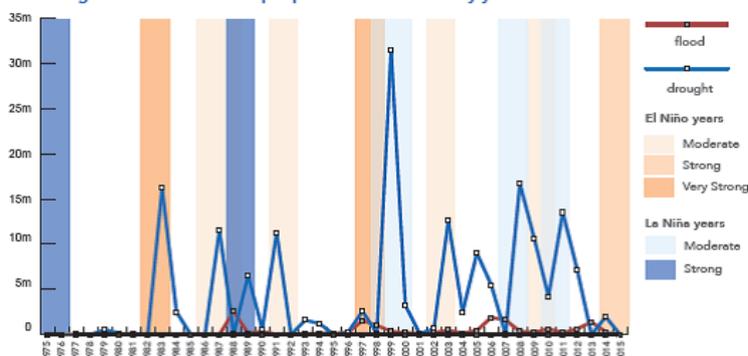
East Africa

El Niño has significantly affected the Eastern Africa region since June and is predicted to continue to have a serious impact through January 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. Wetter

conditions and excessive rainfall have been observed during the short rainy season in equatorial East Africa and are expected to continue through January 2016. This could cause flooding across southern Ethiopia, south central Somalia, Kenya and Uganda. By early 2016, floods could affect between 2.7 million and 3.5 million people. There is also a potential for increased water- and vector-borne diseases due to shortages of water and poor sanitation and hygiene conditions combined with malnutrition and population

displacement, with specific concern regarding the resurgence of Rift Valley Fever in Somalia, Kenya and Tanzania.

Drought and flood affected people in Eastern Africa by year^{2,3}



In **Ethiopia**, the impact of the failed spring *belg* rains was compounded by the arrival of El Niño weather conditions that weakened the main *kiremt* (June–Sept) rains that feed 80 to 85 per cent of the country. This greatly expanded food insecurity and malnutrition and devastated livelihoods. The number of food-aid beneficiaries has increased from 2.9 million in January 2015 to 8.2 million in October and 10.2 million in December. This number may increase further in 2016. As of August 2015, the nutrition situation in selected *woredas* (localities) had surpassed the level seen during the 2011 Horn of Africa La Niña drought. Close to 400,000 children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition. This number is expected to rise, with potentially 100,000 new cases. From September through November, El Niño's impacts led more than 180,000 people into displacement. A well-coordinated response is already under way and expanding rapidly, but the scale of the developing emergency exceeds resources available to date. Sub-national preparedness plans are in place for every region. On 11 December, the Government launched the 2016 Humanitarian Requirements Document, which appeals for \$1.4 billion to support the drought response primarily. In addition to the humanitarian response, the Government's safety net programme will provide over 7.9 million chronically poor Ethiopians with predictable food and cash transfers from January to June 2015.

In **Somalia**, floods have affected an estimated 145,000 people - including more than 60,000 displaced people - since the rainy season began in October. The flooding has also led to disease outbreaks, such as acute watery diarrhoea and cholera, and loss of crops and property in parts of South and Central Somalia and Puntland. Nearly 215,000 children under age 5 are acutely malnourished, of whom almost 40,000 are severely malnourished. The northern parts of the country are already experiencing El Niño-related drought conditions, and the situation could deteriorate in early

2016. The number of people in severe food insecurity may increase by over 400,000. The Federal Government has established a Ministerial Committee to oversee the El Niño response, of which the UN is a part. The Humanitarian Country Team's El Niño Contingency Plan, which seeks \$30 million for preparedness and immediate response activities, has received half of its requirements. Partners scaled up El Niño preparedness and response activities, including pre-positioning supplies in areas most likely to be affected, working with local authorities and community leadership to strengthen local response capacity, reinforce river embankments and raise sanitation and hygiene awareness in flood-risk areas. To enhance people's resilience, partners are carrying out integrated nutrition activities, providing seasonal inputs and carrying out livestock vaccination and treatment.

In **Kenya**, more than 80 people have died since October due to floods and land/mudslides, while 76,000 others were displaced, according to the National Disaster Operations Center. Overall, an estimated 800,000 people may be displaced by floods and 2.5 million may be affected by El Niño. A national El Niño preparedness and response plan and county-level contingency plans are in place in most of the at-risk counties. The national plan is budgeted at \$157 million, and county and national budgets have reportedly committed \$123 million, but funds have yet to be released. A National El Niño Task Force was established to operationalize the contingency plan. The Government-led Hunger Safety Net Programme has scaled up to support over 190,000 additional vulnerable families as a preventive measure. The Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) has the capacity to respond to up to 150,000 flood-displaced people. A national mass communications plan is in place and operational pre-positioning is ongoing. Partners including KRCS, county governments and national government departments, NGOs and the UN are providing food and non-food items, health support, and water and sanitation to people displaced so far.

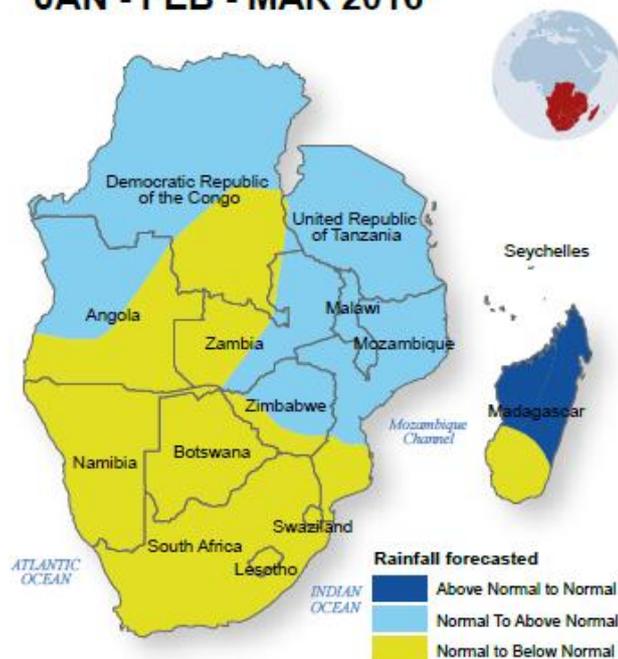
In **Sudan**, reduced crop yields due to below-average rains are expected to have a significant impact on food security and result in the 2016 lean season starting in March, two months earlier than usual. Shortages of water and pasture in Darfur are also likely to aggravate intercommunal conflicts, which have emerged as a key driver of displacement and humanitarian need in recent years. Humanitarian organizations in Sudan are developing a three-month response plan to mitigate impacts in the most affected areas.

CERF has allocated \$32.9 million to Ethiopia (\$25.5 million, including \$17 million from the rapid response window), Somalia (\$4.9 million) and Eritrea (\$2.5 million) for El Niño efforts.

Southern Africa

Drought conditions have continued throughout the first half of the rainfall season (Oct-Dec). They have already severely reduced water availability, in turn negatively affecting cropping and pastoral activities over many areas. Poor harvests and significant increases in food insecurity are a foregone conclusion. The region is particularly at risk following a ruinous 2015, during which abnormal rainfall patterns have contributed to a spike in food and livelihood insecurity, which is already affecting a staggering 28 million people across the region. El Niño is affecting many of the same countries that are currently struggling through a season of drought, including Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Relief might only come with the 2017 harvest, meaning the situation will only worsen throughout 2016. In addition, during the second half of the rainfall season (January to March 2016), floods are likely to occur in Madagascar, Malawi (where 230,000 people were displaced by floods in January 2015), Mozambique and Tanzania. There is also a high chance that a cyclone will hit Madagascar. All countries listed above need assistance, and many of the countries in the region are ill prepared. Regional humanitarian partners have prioritized Malawi, Zimbabwe and Madagascar given the combination of high-risk levels with low preparedness and capacity of the national governments and IASC partners. Angola and Lesotho are now on watch.

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In **Malawi**, approximately 2.8 million people face acute food insecurity, and this figure is expected to increase throughout 2016 as the full impact of El Niño becomes clear. A National Food Insecurity Response Plan is already being implemented, requiring \$80 million, of which \$40 million has been received.

However, this plan only covers needs up until March 2016. This is when harvests usually take place, but due to El Niño, there may hardly be any harvest. Malawi is preparing a Multi-Sectoral Contingency Plan. Based on the worst-case scenario, an estimated 192,000 people may be affected by flooding. The Government has taken a number of steps to enhance preparedness. It has submitted a budget to fund preparedness and response activities, prepositioned contingency stocks in key warehouses and organized a national training workshop to build capacity in preparedness planning and managing emergency operations centres. However, the country lacks sufficient emergency shelters and evacuation centres for the estimated number of affected people.

Zimbabwe is experiencing a food insecurity emergency brought about by poor rainfall in 2014/2015 (16 per cent of the rural population is likely to be food insecure by early 2016 – nearly 1.5 million people). Another poor rainfall season could therefore be catastrophic, given the country's high level of vulnerability. Chronic malnutrition and stunting rates are already high and are likely to rise with an increase in food insecurity. Support is being provided to affected people, based on the Food Insecurity Response Plan developed by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in September 2015. However, only 35 per cent of the \$132 million plan has been funded, leaving a shortfall of \$86 million. Zimbabwe has a draft 2015 contingency plan awaiting Government approval. The plan notes that up to 5.4 million people could require food assistance, with 85,000 people potentially affected by floods later in the rainfall season. Zimbabwe is likely to require support to improve early warning systems, disaster risk management trainings and simulations and non-food items for pre-positioning in remote areas that are hard to reach during flooding. The HCT is developing an El Niño-specific inter-agency contingency plan that will be aligned with the Government's contingency plan.

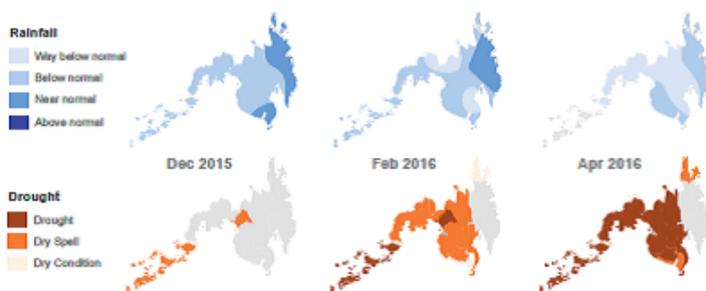
Madagascar is facing a food insecurity crisis affecting 1.9 million people due to prolonged drought conditions and a locust plague. El Niño is expected to contribute to below-average rainfall in the south of the country, which is the region that has already been affected by drought conditions. Normal to above-normal rains are expected over the remainder of the country between December 2015 and February 2016. The national multi-hazard contingency plan (drought, cyclone and epidemics) was updated in November 2015. It estimates that between 350,000 and 1 million people may be affected by cyclones in the whole country and by dry spells in the great south. Based on previous scenarios and predictions, 2 million people could be affected by a cyclone, of whom 300,000 could be displaced. Partners are prepositioning stocks in critical areas. Madagascar has response mechanisms in place in preparation for

the coming months. However, funding is the main issue. The Government also requires support in restarting its early warning system, training in the management of emergency operating centres and the rehabilitation of the dikes surrounding cities.

Asia and the Pacific

A weak monsoon season and associated drought is 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. In the Philippines, an estimated 85 per cent of the country could be affected by May 2016 (see image below). Locally, 40 per cent of crops have been affected which could lessen annual crop production. Below-average rainfall has exacerbated the risk of wildfires and severely affected subsistence farming families. Haze from forest fires has affected over 50 million people in Indonesia and neighbouring countries, causing a dramatic increase in respiratory infections. In India, several areas experienced heavy rains that triggered the heaviest floods recorded in recent history. Local sources estimate that these floods affected up to 70 million people.

Rainfall and Drought Outlook - Dec 2015 to Apr 2016



In the **Pacific**, a lack of rainfall is already starting to have visible impacts on agriculture and food security, especially in parts of Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. The Pacific Humanitarian Team currently estimates that as many as 4.7 million people in 13 Pacific countries (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu) are at risk of adverse impacts including drought, cyclones and increased rainfall. This includes approximately 2.4 million people in PNG as well as the total populations of all other affected Pacific countries. No government has yet declared a disaster. However, drought warnings remain in force for PNG, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa; a drought watch is in place in the Solomon Islands; and drought alerts have been issued for Vanuatu and

CERF has allocated \$18 million under its rapid response window to Malawi (\$9.9 million) and Zimbabwe (\$8.1 million).

Palau. Below-normal rainfall is forecast to continue through to March 2016 in most Pacific Islands, except for Kiribati, Tuvalu and Tokelau, where above-normal rainfall is forecast. Meteorologists predict that the dry spell will peak in early 2016, but that its impacts are likely to stretch well beyond the end of the El Niño event. If no wet season arrives in the Pacific over the coming months, many countries' water supplies will not be replenished until the following wet season at the end of 2016 or even the beginning of 2017.

El Niño patterns also see more frequent and intense cyclones forming over a larger part of the Pacific for a longer period. The cyclone season usually runs from November to April but may extend beyond this during an El Niño year. The Fiji Meteorological Service predicts that 10 to 14 tropical cyclones will occur in the region during this season, compared with a usual average of 10 to 12, of which three to seven are expected to reach category 4 or 5 status. The tropical cyclone risk is highly elevated for the Solomon Islands, Wallis & Futuna, Tokelau, Samoa, northern Cook Islands and French Polynesia; and it is elevated for Vanuatu, Fiji, Niue and the southern Cook Islands. The Fiji Met Service also predicts an increased risk of more severe tropical cyclones affecting the region this season compared with last year. Four countries in Asia Pacific are of greatest concern: Vanuatu, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

In **Vanuatu**, areas worst hit by Tropical Cyclone Pam appear to be suffering the most under the impact of El Niño-induced drought. Rapid assessments are now being completed in drought- and cyclone-affected provinces to determine the scale of water and food shortages and health concerns. The outcomes will shape the Government's response plan. Partners have warned of a looming water crisis in the country over the coming months. Emergency food deliveries have already targeted 90,000 people. Vanuatu has activated its provincial and national response centres. Recent political instability is complicating the country's El Niño response.

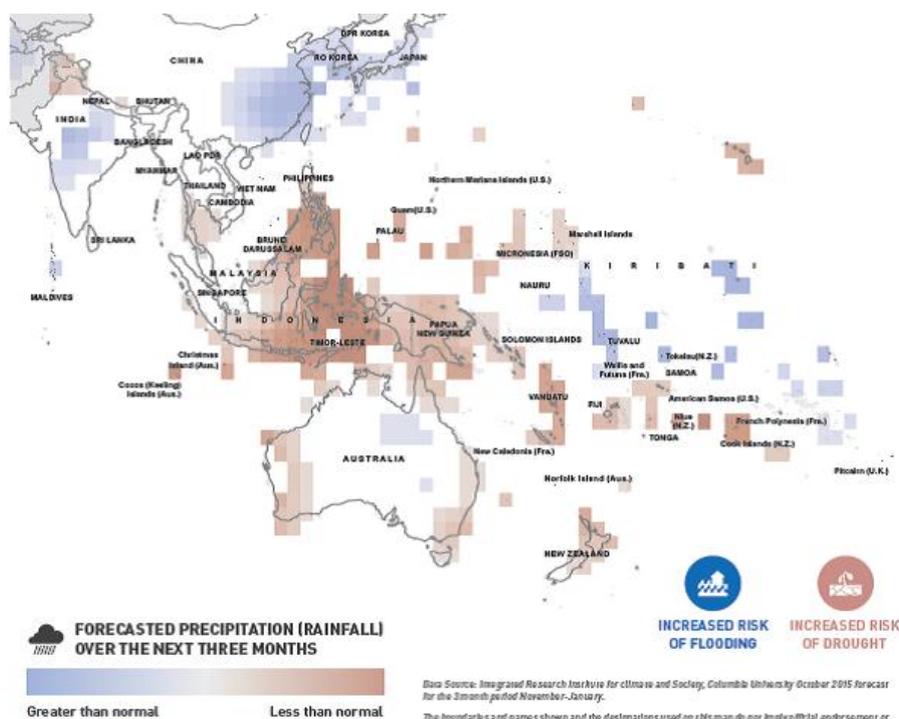
In **Fiji**, the Government estimates that more than 67,000 people (approximately 13 per cent of the population) are now affected by the El Niño-related drought. The Government is well advanced in its planning for the drought, which has been slowly building for a year. The Food Security Cluster is conducting assessments, but it is warning of likely vegetable shortages in the first quarter of 2016 if

current conditions continue. Water trucking has been stepped-up to cover the increasing needs of people, agriculture and livestock. Fiji is particularly vulnerable to dengue outbreaks – in 2013-14 already it experienced one of the largest outbreaks recorded in the Pacific in recent years. The Government can cover the cost of water deliveries, but this may not be the case in the long term, and it is possible that donor assistance may be requested.

In **Papua New Guinea**, 2.4 million people (34 per cent of the population) are affected by the drought, of whom 1 million people live in the most severely affected regions. The current situation will become devastating if the drought continues for another three to four months. In addition to food, key needs include the provision of drinking water and purifying tablets. The Government continues to provide food assistance to affected communities. Humanitarian partners are working with the Government to address humanitarian needs and developing drought response guidelines.

In the **Solomon Islands**, El Niño has been affecting water, food supplies and livelihoods. However, recent rains have brought some relief, especially on the island of Bellona where the situation has been critical. In some areas, food gardens have been struggling due to a lack of water and insect infestations associated with the dry weather. The National Emergency Operations Centre has been activated to assist with monitoring, and assessments are under way to identify the scope of the drought and priorities for humanitarian intervention. Partners are supporting the collection, collation and analysis of assessment data.

A regional overview of needs and gaps is being produced. CERF has allocated \$16.8 million to the drought in DPRK (\$6.3 million) and severe flooding in Myanmar (\$10.5 million). While these allocations were not associated with El Niño, the extreme weather conditions were extraordinary events in the countries.



Latin America and the Caribbean

The primary impact of El Niño has been insufficient and erratic rainfall since March 2015, resulting in drought conditions for areas of Central America, the Caribbean and highland areas in South America. The drought has decreased access and availability of water and crop production, which in turn has caused losses in livelihoods and created food insecurity.

South American countries are preparing for above-average rainfall for early 2016, with resulting floods

and mudslides. Governments of several countries, especially those with a Pacific coastline (Ecuador and Peru), have activated their contingency plans. Forecasts indicate that El Niño will remain until March to May 2016, which will negatively affect the new agricultural, or *primera* season. This will further undermine food security throughout the region.

In the **Caribbean**, forecasts indicate below-average rainfall and warmer temperatures over the El Niño

period, causing potential droughts and a decrease in crop productivity. Drought conditions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic have already increased the number of people who need food assistance in 2016. In Cuba, 1 million people are severely affected by the decrease in potable water.

In **Central America**, El Niño conditions have exacerbated a second consecutive year of drought, creating one of the most severe droughts in the sub-region's history. This extreme climatic event has triggered a chain of effects including extensive damage to coffee plantations, severe loss of maize and bean harvests in poor and vulnerable families, loss of daily wages for small-scale seasonal farmers and the dramatic reduction of food reserves. In a complex scenario of extreme poverty, inequality and underdevelopment, these concurrent events have inflicted significant damage on the most vulnerable people.

In the Central American “dry corridor” area of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, more than 3.5 million people are food insecure. At least 2.8 million people need immediate food assistance, health care, livelihood recovery and activities that increase resilience.



In **Guatemala**, 1.5 million people (10 per cent of the population) in 108 municipalities are affected by the drought and are at risk. Some 500,000 people will experience critical consequences, including moderate-to-severe food insecurity, with the next harvest expected only in August 2016. On 1 October, Guatemala declared a state of emergency due to drought and food insecurity. The under registration of malnutrition cases in remote rural areas is hindering the ability to estimate who needs assistance. Guatemala is experiencing its worst political and financial crisis in recent history, with serious implications for the State's capacity to deliver services.

Honduras is facing one of its most severe droughts in history, affecting more than 1.3 million people (15 per cent of the population) in 146 municipalities. Over 250,000 people are reported to be in immediate need of food assistance. The Government declared a state of emergency in July 2015 and is implementing a Drought National Action Plan. Priorities are food security, water and sanitation and nutrition. Drought is affecting 98 per cent of small-scale producers, representing an average loss in agricultural production of 81 per cent. In affected areas, the acute malnutrition rate for children under age 5 is three times the national average (1.3 per cent), with 48 per cent of children in these areas suffering from serious levels of chronic malnutrition. Water scarcity is leading to a deterioration of sanitary conditions and water quality with possible increase in skin diseases and water-borne diseases.

In **El Salvador**, the El Niño phenomenon has triggered one of the worst droughts on record, causing irreversible damage to the agricultural production for thousands of subsistence farmers. As of October, 152,000 subsistence farmers had lost 75 to 100 per cent of their crops. Harvest losses resulted in the depletion of food reserves, which increased acute and severe malnutrition cases and food insecurity levels. The HCT estimates that about 192,000 people need humanitarian assistance in the country's eastern departments, which are those that have suffered the greatest impact due to the drought. The Government has not declared a state of emergency as a result of the drought, but it has joined a declaration of Regional Agriculture Ministers declaring a regional state of agricultural alert. It also continues efforts to respond to the emergency, despite lacking sufficient funds to help the entire population.

In **Colombia**, the precipitation deficit in September was over 70 per cent above historical averages for the period. About 285 municipalities (out of 1,032) have faced water shortages due to El Niño. As of November 2015, more than 200,000 hectares of agricultural land had been damaged or lost as well as 67,000 animals. About 200,000 Wayuu indigenous people living in the northern part of the Guajira peninsula are now in a critical situation due to the prolonged drought exacerbated by El Niño and expected to last until March 2016.

A sub-regional Humanitarian Response Plan for \$101.8 million will be launched for Guatemala and Honduras to ensure the delivery of coordinated and integrated life-saving assistance to drought-affected people, while providing a tailored response to address chronic vulnerabilities. CERF has allocated \$8.3 million to Haiti (\$3 million), El Salvador (\$3 million) and Honduras (\$2.3 million) in response to drought needs linked to El Niño, while an application from Guatemala is expected in January 2016.

Guide to Giving

Contributing to El Niño Preparedness and Response Efforts

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

[Ethiopia 2016 Humanitarian Requirements Document](#),

www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/system/files/documents/files/ethiopia_hrd_2016.pdf

[Somalia 2015-16 El Niño Contingency Plan](#), <http://tinyurl.com/SomaliaElNino>

[Zimbabwe 2015 Food Insecurity Response Plan](#), <http://tinyurl.com/ZimbabweElNino>

[Honduras and Guatemala 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan](#), published shortly on www.unocha.org/el-nino-latin-america-caribbean

Additional country and regional plans are being finalized.

Contributing through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)

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>.