

SOUTHERN AFRICA: HUMANITARIAN KEY MESSAGES



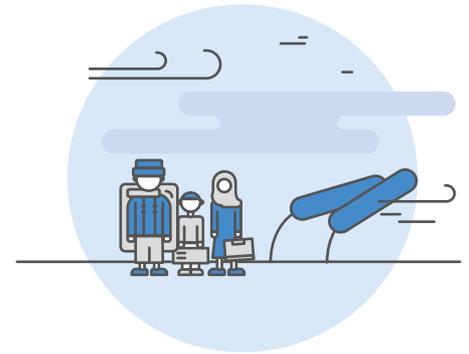
HIGHLIGHTS



Southern Africa is warming at about twice the global rate and has been buffeted by multiple and compounding shocks.



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KEY MESSAGES

- Communities across Southern Africa are on the frontier of the global climate crisis.** The region is warming at about twice the global rate and has been buffeted by multiple and compounding shocks. Millions of families are still recovering from the devastating consequences of Tropical Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, which impacted the Comoros, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe earlier this year. At the same time, many areas are now in the grip of a destructive drought, including in Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Mozambique and Zambia. Namibia and Mozambique have both extended their national drought emergencies to March 2020, while Lesotho declared a new drought emergency in October.
- Humanitarian needs are rapidly rising as the lean season deepens and some 12 million people in nine countries* across the region are experiencing severe food insecurity.** At least 12 districts are projected to face 'Emergency' food insecurity (IPC phase 4) between October and March, including 3 in Zambia (Gwembe, Lunga and Shangómbó) and 9 in Zimbabwe (Binga, Buhera, Chivi, Gokwe North, Kariba, Mbire, Mudzi, Mwenezi and UMP). More than 60 per cent (14 out of 23) of communes assessed in three provinces (Cuando Cubango, Huila and Cunene) of southern Angola are in IPC phase 4.
- Consecutive shocks have exhausted families' resilience and decimated their livelihoods.** In multiple locations, the 2018/2019 season saw total crop failure. Farmers who lost their crops have been forced to rely on markets to access food, while prices keep increasing, especially for maize—the main staple food in the region. Livestock deaths are rising due to limited pasture and water, coupled with recurrent disease outbreaks. In southern Angola alone, more than 27,700 animals have died. The continued presence of

fall armyworm and cassava brown streak disease—a new disease reported for the first time in northern Zambia—also pose ongoing risks to crops, while seasonal jobs are few and far between, as better-off households who would ordinarily provide them have themselves been impacted by drought, floods and economic hardship. Even in the best-case scenario of good rainfall, it could take at least two to three growing seasons for small-scale farms to return to normal production.

4. **Acute malnutrition—rarely seen in Southern Africa—is increasing and heightens the risk of death for the more than one in four children across the region who are already stunted.** More than 1,000 cases of pellagra—Vitamin B3 deficiency—have been reported in the areas of Mozambique hardest-hit by Cyclone Idai. The southern dry areas of Angola, which have been hit by consecutive droughts, have reported increasing admissions of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. In Zimbabwe, eight districts now have global acute malnutrition rates above 5 per cent, signifying a deteriorating situation. In Madagascar, acute malnutrition is expected to remain high, despite improved food insecurity. Across the region, more than 29 per cent of children suffer from stunting. Children who are both stunted (chronically malnourished) and wasted (acutely malnourished) have the highest risk of death.
5. **There are reports across the region of families adopting extreme coping mechanisms, including child labour, child trafficking, early marriage and transactional sex,** with dire consequences for women and girls' sexual and reproductive health. Rising food and nutrition insecurity are increasing the risk of displacement, school drop-outs and gender-based violence, with school-aged girls facing the biggest risk of dropping out or missing class as they search for water, food and firewood for their families. In the face of severe water shortages, women and girls are also struggling to maintain menstrual hygiene, undermining their health and dignity.
6. **Millions of families lack access to clean drinking water, basic healthcare and adequate sanitation, compounding the risk of communicable disease outbreaks.** In 2019, climatic shocks and other underlying challenges have caused outbreaks of cholera (Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia), hepatitis E (Namibia), dengue fever (Mauritius and Tanzania), measles (Angola, Comoros, Lesotho and Madagascar) and vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (Angola and Zambia). At the same time, strikes by healthcare professionals in Eswatini and Zimbabwe have compromised access to care for millions of people.
7. **The region is at serious risk of backsliding in its fight against HIV/AIDS as a result of these shocks.** In several countries, women engaging in transactional sex to help their families survive have reported that men would pay more for sex without a condom. Food insecurity also undermines HIV treatment adherence, retention and success. Adolescent girls face the greatest risk of newly contracting HIV and for every three new HIV infections among young men (aged 15–24 years) in southern Africa, there are seven new infections among young women.
8. **There is a strong likelihood of back-to-back droughts in multiple areas across the region, highlighting the critical importance of early action.** The Indian Ocean Dipole, which is currently in its strongest 'positive' state since 2006 is associated with below-normal rain across Southern Africa and many countries have already experienced a late-onset to the 2019/2020 rainy season. At the same time, there is also the likelihood of strong cyclones hitting some countries, especially in the east part of Southern Africa, foreboding a potential second consecutive poor harvest.
9. **New funding is urgently required to enable humanitarians to respond to the most life-threatening needs across the region.** Humanitarian partners are deploying staff and mobilizing supplies for the countries and areas facing the most acute life-saving needs this lean season. However, despite the generosity of key donors, humanitarian appeals in the region remain seriously underfunded. In Zimbabwe, just 50 per cent of the required amount has been mobilized (US\$236 million out of \$468 million), while in Mozambique, less than 50 per cent of the appeal has been funded (\$291 million out of \$620 million).
10. **In addition to life-saving humanitarian action, investment in longer-term solutions is imperative to address the root causes of rising needs in Southern Africa.** Patience is also necessary. Longer-term objectives—including resilience-building, climate adaptation and leaving no one behind through sustainable development—will take multiple years to accomplish, while the climate crisis is hitting the most vulnerable and marginalized families now. This does not mean that these efforts are, or have been, futile. Rather, it highlights the importance of additionality: ensuring that life-saving humanitarian action buffers families against the most acute shocks; while resilience-building and other longer-term efforts tackle their causes.

*The nine countries included in the severely food insecurity figures are: Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Madagascar, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe.