



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



2018/19 El Niño

Response Plan for Southern Africa

El Niño conditions in Southern Africa

Farmers and agropastoralists across Southern Africa are facing El Niño conditions for the second time in three years. This is occurring in a region where the most vulnerable are still grappling with the impacts of a strong drought episode in 2015/16, which had already weakened their capacity to produce food. Since then, the knock-on effects of climatic shocks and associated poor harvests, coupled with unfavourable economic conditions such as food price volatility, are expected to leave over 10.5 million people in Crisis and Emergency (IPC Phases 3 and 4) levels of food insecurity in early 2019.

The onset of the 2018/19 main summer cropping season has been influenced by El Niño-induced conditions. This has resulted in delayed planting owing to erratic rainfall, deteriorated livestock conditions owing to slow pasture regrowth, and outbreaks of crop pests (such as fall armyworm) and livestock diseases. Concurrently, farm and livestock grazing lands in some countries have been inundated as a result of heavy rainfall and severe flooding.

With consumption-based coping strategies not as resilient as they once were, the potential compounding effects of up to three consecutively poor harvests in the most at-risk hotspots will be detrimental for agricultural-based livelihoods and continue to drive down the production capacities of rural households. This will exacerbate food insecurity and malnutrition, with ripple effects that will be felt into 2020 and beyond.

The case for early action in Southern Africa

Important lessons were learned from the 2015/16 El Niño, in particular the need to act early on possible early warning signs. FAO has been closely monitoring the El Niño conditions and related weather patterns in Southern Africa, and is gearing up to act early to mitigate some of the effects on vulnerable people and their livelihoods. There is a critical window of opportunity for mitigation in the region, with early actions that ensure enhanced surveillance and control of plant and animal pests and diseases, access to appropriate inputs and use of innovative approaches to increase farmer awareness of climate-smart agricultural practices. These early actions should ideally be implemented by the end of February 2019, before the first effects on food security and nutrition are felt, and followed by implementation of the full FAO El Niño Response Plan for Southern Africa.



to assist
4.9 million people



FAO requires
USD 67.9 million



period
**December 2018
to December 2019**



Over **10.5 million** people
severely food insecure



8 countries

where El Niño-induced climate shocks and stressors will affect agricultural-based livelihoods the most:

- Eswatini
- Lesotho
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

The early action window to mitigate the impact on food security and nutrition is now: early actions must be implemented by the end of February 2019.

2018/19 El Niño Response Plan for Southern Africa

Under the framework of the 2018/19 El Niño Response Plan for Southern Africa, FAO will employ an important lesson learned from the previous El Niño episode: linking early action to medium- and long-term interventions, in order to increase the resilience of agriculture-based livelihoods to future climatic shocks and stressors.

Objective

To protect and restore agricultural production, incomes and assets while enhancing nutritious and diversified diets of the most vulnerable households in times of El Niño-induced climate extremes and stressors.



Output 1

Reduced food gap, restored production capacity and diversified diets



FAO requires
USD 32.9 million



to assist
419 000 families



Output 2

Safeguarding pastoral and agropastoral livelihoods



FAO requires
USD 22.45 million



to assist
365 000 families



Output 3

Enhanced access to and availability of water resources for agricultural use



FAO requires
USD 7.75 million



to assist
200 000 families



Output 4

Improved preparedness and response through food security and nutrition information, analysis and coordination



FAO requires
USD 4.75 million

Increasing the resilience of agriculture-based livelihoods to enhance food security and nutrition in Southern Africa.



A farmer loads up his donkey at the community's only water source, which is located a long way from most homesteads.



In response to the 2015/16 El Niño episode, FAO provided affected agropastoralists with emergency feed, saving key productive animals in their herds.

Contact

Lewis Hove

Resilience Team Leader | Southern Africa
Subregional Office for Southern Africa

Lewis.Hove@fao.org

Dominique Burgeon

Director, Emergency and Resilience Division
and Strategic Programme Leader – Resilience

TCE-Director@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

www.fao.org/emergencies



Some rights reserved. This work is available under a CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO licence