Information bulletin
Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe: Food Insecurity

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Date of disaster: Ongoing and emerging

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Host National Societies: Red Cross Societies of Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Number of people affected: Number of people to be assisted:

Partner National Societies: Eswatini- British and Finnish Red Cross; Malawi- Belgium FL, Danish, Finnish, Netherlands RC and Swiss Red Cross; Namibia- British, German and Spanish Red Cross; Zimbabwe- Belgium, British, Danish and Finnish Red Cross; Zambia- Netherlands Red Cross;

N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation (if available and relevant): Namibia-Government of Germany, Government of Japan, USAID and WFP; Zimbabwe- WFP and ECHO;

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is seeking funding for Zambia Emergency Appeal and considering launching a multi-country Appeal seeking funding to support Lesotho Red Cross as well as to provide technical support to all the countries to respond to the food insecurity crisis.

The situation

According to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) 2019 Synthesis Report, more than 41.2 million people in 13 SADC countries in Southern Africa will be facing food insecurity in the 2019/20 year. Food insecurity has increased by 28 percent in 11 countries in the region - 7.4 percent higher than it was during the severe El Niño-induced drought of 2016/17, which devastated millions in many parts of Africa. The current food
insecurity crisis is further exacerbated by increasing food prices, livestock and crop losses and loss of their income. Communities are increasingly at risk of acute malnutrition and disease. The countries with the most significant increase in levels of food insecurity are Zambia (144%), Zimbabwe (128%), Eswatini (90%), Mozambique (85%) and DRC (80%). Four countries (Botswana, Lesotho; Namibia and Zimbabwe) have already declared the drought an emergency.

The most vulnerable households are expected to exhaust their 2019 crop harvest in less than three months, resulting in significant food consumption gaps, especially during the coming lean season. The worsening food security, nutrition, and vulnerability situation is attributed to frequent and intense climate-related disasters, poor diets, economic hardships, pests and diseases, and conflict, among others.

Furthermore, Regional Interagency Standing Committee Africa (RIASCO) highlights that more than 11 million people now experiencing crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC Phases 3 and 4) in nine Southern African countries¹ due to deepening drought and climate crisis. If urgent humanitarian action is not taken, the number will likely rise in the coming months as highlighted in the SADC synthesis report.

The Joint Call for Action by the FAO, UNICEF and WFP to “Address the Impacts of Climate Change and a Deepening Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa” highlights the need for more resources until mid-2020: FAO seeking is USD 107.75 million to assist 12.4 million people—FAO Southern Africa Emergency Response Plan, UNICEF requires a total of US$ 150.70 million to reach 5.5 million people and WFP is seeking US$ 244.71 million to assist more than 7.2 million people.

**Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

IFRC Southern Africa Cluster office has been coordinating and providing technical support to the National Societies since severe El Niño-induced drought of 2016/17 to prepare and respond to the food insecurity crisis through Emergency Appeal operations. However, with further escalation of the food insecurity situation in the region since 2018, the additional National Societies of Eswatini, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe have been assisting affected communities with the support of Movement Partners namely, American, Belgian, British, Danish, Finnish, German, Netherlands, and Swiss Red Cross. To further support Zambia Red Cross, IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal in November 2019 to assist 57,064 people (please see the details below). With the declaration of drought emergency in Lesotho and considering the worsening food insecurity situation in Southern Africa in the coming months, IFRC is setting up a task team with regional and global surge response teams to support ongoing operations as well as to develop a regional food insecurity response strategy, which may include a multi-country Emergency Appeal to further strengthen the capacities of the National Societies to assist affected communities.

¹ Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe
### Botswana

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| About 38,000 people are projected to Food Insecure for the Peak Lean Season January - March 2020 (Source: SADC) | - As the drought intensify the Botswana Red Cross Society has taken a deliberate move to support and adopt the Government drive to promote horticulture particularly at backyard level.  
- National Society is planning to request for IFRC support to assist in facilitating uptake of the programme and operationalize the three community farms in central district to operate as climate smart and conservation agriculture demonstration farms to provide both learning for famers and produce food the starving communities. |

### Eswatini

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| According to the [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification](#) (IPC) acute food insecurity analysis, between October 2019 and March 2020, around 232,000 people (25% of the rural population) are likely to experience acute food insecurity. | - The Cash Based Intervention (CBI) project implemented by the Eswatini Red Cross and funded by the Finnish and British Red Cross in the Shiselweni District recently came to an end having supported 11,109 people affected by the food insecurity crisis.  
- ECHO recently conducted a needs assessment of the project beneficiaries following the IPC report of increased numbers of food insecure people. |
### Lesotho

**Situation**
According to the IPC acute food insecurity analysis, it is projected that 433,000 people (30% of the rural population) will face acute food insecurity (IPC 3+) from October 2019 to March 2020. The government officially declared the country a drought emergency on 30th October 2019.

**Actions**
After the declaration of drought emergency, the Government of Lesotho launched a rapid assessment. The Lesotho Red Cross is planning to request for an IFRC Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) allocation to assist the affected people with immediate needs and later extended for an Emergency Appeal.

### Namibia

**Situation**
According to the Namibian Vulnerability Assessment Committee Report, over 289,644 people are food insecure and need immediate food assistance with this number expected to rise during the course of the 2019/2020 consumption period.

**Actions**
- Funded by the British, Spanish and German Red Cross Societies as well as the German Government, the Namibia Red Cross assists 1,211 households with cash assistance in the Sibbinda constituency in the Zambezi Region.
- 15 water points in the Kunene Region benefitting 1,500 households are being rehabilitated with funding from USAID.
- 16 additional water points in the Kunene Region benefitting 1,700 households are being rehabilitated with funding from the Japanese Government.
- Food distribution to more than 12,000 households in partnership with the WFP.

### Malawi

**Situation**
Between October 2019 and March 2020, IPC acute food insecurity analysis projected that from October to December 2019 2.3 million people (24% of the rural population) will be facing severe food insecurity (IPC Phase 3). Southern parts of the country are mostly in IPC Phase 3.

**Actions**
As a part of Cyclone Idai recovery, the Malawi Red Cross with funding from the Danish, Netherlands, Belgium, British, American and Swiss Red Cross Consortium and IFRC provides support to approx. 2461 households with focus on livelihoods and Disaster Risk Reduction.

### Zambia

**Situation**
IPC acute food insecurity analysis projected that from October 2019 to March 2020 2.3 million people (24% of the rural population) will be facing severe food insecurity (IPC 3+).

**Actions**
IFRC launched an Emergency Appeal seeking 3.5 million swiss francs to support Zambia Red Cross to assist 57,064 people (9,510 households) in the Pemba, Limulanga and Kalabo Districts for 18 months, with a focus on Livelihoods and Basic Needs, Health, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Protection Gender and Inclusion (PGI), CEA and National Society Capacity Strengthening.

### Zimbabwe

**Situation**
IPC acute food insecurity analysis projected that from October to December 2019 3.58 million people (38% of the rural population) will be facing severe food insecurity (IPC 3+).

**Actions**
- Zimbabwe Red Cross is responding to the crisis with the support from British, Danish, Finnish Red Cross as well as WFP and ECHO targeting over 45,100 households (approx:225,500 people) with a budget of about USD 10 million.
- The Government and UN launched the Revised Humanitarian Appeal in August 2019, targeting multi-sectoral priority humanitarian needs of 3.7 million vulnerable people.
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How we work
All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO’s) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC’s vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC’s work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:
1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.