



## EU mobilises €125 million for countries affected by 'El Niño'

Brussels, 2 December 2015

### **The current El Niño is expected to be the strongest on record, surpassing the 1997/1998 El Niño.**

The European Union is today announcing a contribution of €125 million to finance emergency actions in countries affected by the extreme weather phenomenon 'El Niño' in Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America.

The support, €119 million of which comes from the European Development Fund reserves, and a further €6 million from the humanitarian budget, will contribute to the joint effort of bringing life-saving emergency assistance and increasing resilience in the affected countries.

At the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP21), European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos **Stylianides** said: "EU aid will help meet the urgent needs of the affected populations, but it will also support resilience efforts, making them better equipped to face natural disasters in the future. At present, El Niño is already affecting millions of people in many vulnerable regions especially in Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, and is expected to continue to do so in the next months. "

European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: "We need to react now so El Niño does not undermine the efforts in poverty alleviation in many countries in the world that we have fought so hard to achieve. Today the EU is boosting its efforts to prevent a crisis that could cause instability in the longer term."

### **What EU aid will do:**

The EU's support will combine humanitarian and development assistance, to address immediate needs of nutrition, water and sanitation, health and shelter. It will provide support to health structures, provision of food and safe drinking water, supplementary food for pregnant women and children. It will also help build resilience in the most exposed countries by enhancing disaster preparedness, early response mechanisms, and supporting long-term development solutions.

### **What is El Niño and which parts of the world are affected:**

The 'El Niño' phenomenon is characterised by rising temperatures of surface sea water, which interact with the atmosphere and cause different extreme events, from floods to droughts.

It is already affecting large regions of Africa – Central Africa, Greater Horn of Africa, and Southern Africa – with both floods and droughts. These are having consequences mainly on food security, but also on health, access to water and hygiene conditions of millions of people living in already vulnerable regions. The worst-hit country so far is Ethiopia, reporting an increase in the number of food insecure people due to drought from 2.9 million in January 2015 to 8.2 million in October 2015.

Central America and the Caribbean region are also being severely affected, in particular Guatemala and Haiti. More than 6 million people are estimated to be suffering from the current drought, which is considered to be the most severe in the region in more than 100 years and expected still to worsen. The lack of water has an enormous impact on crops, livestock, reservoirs and the livelihoods of a substantial proportion of the population.

With about 34 million people affected worldwide, and the most virulent impact ever expected to take place, the phenomenon demands a coordinated global response.

### **Breakdown of EU aid:**

<b>Region affected</b>	<b>Countries presently most affected</b>	<b>Amount (€)</b>	<b>Estimated number of people affected</b>
Caribbean	Haiti, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Saint Lucia	9 million	3.5 million

Central Africa	Chad, Cameroon, CAR	20 million	5.3 million
Greater Horn of Africa	Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Sudan	79 million	14.4 million
Southern Africa	Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Madagascar, Zimbabwe	12 million	7.8 million
Central and South America	Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia	5 million	3 million
<b>Total</b>		<b>125 million</b>	<b>34 million</b>

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 [Hearing of Neven Mimica, Member designate of the EC, at the EP](#)

 [Press conference by Johannes Hahn and Christos Stylianides](#)