



Humanitarian aid: €7 million for disaster preparedness in Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region

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As natural disasters threaten the most vulnerable people in the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region, the EU is providing €7 million in humanitarian aid to increase the capacity of communities and authorities to prepare for and respond to disasters. This aid is in addition to the approximately €17 million in EU humanitarian assistance given this year to help people hit by cyclones Idai and Kenneth in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Comoros, and people affected by food shortages in Zimbabwe.

"Investing in natural disaster preparedness is an investment to save lives when the next crisis hits. The Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region is particularly vulnerable. Through our new aid package, the EU is also supporting modern technologies such as drones as we increasingly see how they can save lives during emergencies when every minute counts," said Christos **Stylianides**, Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management.

This EU humanitarian aid package will support:

- improving the **preparedness and response capacities** of local civil protection staff and communities at risk of natural disasters. This includes the strengthening of early warning systems, awareness raising about risks, and the preparation of contingency plans;
- using **technology and innovative approaches in disaster preparedness** – such as drones and bulk mobile text messaging – to help communities to respond fast and avert the loss of life and property;
- helping **schools to continue delivering education** when natural disasters strike. In such events, education services in the affected area can come to a halt and children can remain out of school for several months. To minimise this disruption, EU-funded actions include the promotion of safe learning facilities, the training of teachers in early warning, and informing children on how to stay safe.

Since 2014, the European Union has supported the Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region with over €125 million in humanitarian aid for disaster preparedness funding, emergency relief response, and food assistance. The EU fully subscribes to international processes on disaster preparedness and response, including the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) and the [Grand Bargain](#) commitments on early action.

Background

Extreme weather-related disasters, such as cyclones, floods and droughts, are a regular occurrence in the Southern Africa and region. With climate change, their frequency and intensity is on the increase.

In March 2019, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi were severely affected by cyclone Idai and the subsequent floods, causing extensive loss of lives, and widespread destruction of infrastructure and crops. Barely a month later, cyclone Kenneth lashed Mozambique and Comoros.

EU-funded disaster preparedness measures helped the local humanitarian response to cyclones Idai and Kenneth. For example, in Mozambique prior training in the use of drones helped national authorities in their needs assessment and in locating safe areas for people to be evacuated to.

EU response following tropical cyclones Idai and Kenneth

The EU mobilised immediate emergency assistance to the affected countries. In total, around €17 million in **EU humanitarian aid** was mobilised for **Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Comoros**. In Zimbabwe, in addition to helping people affected by floods, EU funding also went towards supporting people suffering from the food insecurity crisis.

The [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) was activated in **Mozambique** following a request by the Government of Mozambique, to help the people affected by the devastating impact of cyclone Idai. Through the Mechanism, EU Member States sent around 60 000 relief items as well as specialist teams from six Member States equipped to conduct search and rescue, communications support, medical and water treatment, supported by a coordination team of EU experts. The European Union financed 75% of the transport costs of these teams and equipment, amounting to more than €4 million in total.

In order to help **Mozambique** get back on its feet after cyclones Idai and Kenneth, on 01 June 2019, the [EU pledged an additional €100 million](#) at the International Donors Pledging Conference in Beira, Mozambique. These funds will contribute towards helping the country in its recovery efforts and in strengthening its resilience.

The EU will, furthermore, provide **Zimbabwe** with an additional €10 million in funding to address humanitarian needs in the country, arising from a combination of weather-related disasters (cyclone Idai and drought) and the deteriorating economic situation. EU support will focus on food assistance, healthcare, water and sanitation, resilience building and support for vulnerable people's livelihoods.

For more information

Factsheets: [Southern Africa and Indian Ocean](#); [Disaster Preparedness](#)

EU response to Cyclone Idai: [March 2019](#), [April 2019](#)

EU response to Cyclone Kenneth: [April 2019](#)

Media material on the EU response to cyclone Idai:

Photos: [Flickr album](#); Videos: [Using drones in disaster response](#), [EU support following cyclone Idai in Mozambique](#)

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 [EU response to cyclone Idai in Mozambique](#)