



# Ready to Respond

## WFP preparedness work in Madagascar

*Following poor rainy seasons over the past years, the south of Madagascar is currently facing a major drought crisis, with the El Nino phenomenon worsening the situation. About 1.2 million Malagasy are enduring food insecurity today, of whom 900,000 are in urgent need of assistance - the highest number in a decade.*

Disasters are part of the daily life in Madagascar, not only does a large part of the population face food insecurity, natural hazards such as cyclones also affect the country on a regular basis. This is why the country was selected during 2014 and 2015 to be part of the 'Ready to Respond' Project, a preparedness initiative supported by DFID in several disaster-prone countries. Today, preparedness actions funded through the initiative are paying off in the response to the current drought.

In November 2016, WFP reached 800,000 people with food assistance, cash-based transfers and nutritional support - **all this in a timely and appropriate manner thanks to the Project preparedness investments.**

### A faster and better response to the drought thanks to preparedness actions

When asked which of the preparedness activities had been the most useful in responding to the drought, the WFP Country Office mentioned the capacity strengthening work done with partners and the local government. Together with WFP, key actors defined who should be doing what when a new disaster strikes, and agreed on roles and responsibilities from the national to the village levels. They also received trainings on how to best respond to a disaster, how to coordinate with other actors and share crucial information during a crisis.

Soloarisoa Raharinjatovo, WFP Programme Officer says:

*'We now see how this is being put in practice: while some of the information used to be late and inaccurate in reflecting people's needs, today it's on time, more reliable and therefore enables humanitarian actors to ensure coordination and make timely decisions on resources mobilization for assistance.'*

At the same time WFP, as the lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster, reinforced connectivity in very remote areas of the country that are barely accessible by road, let alone phone or internet. IT equipment kits purchased and prepositioned in the capital were deployed to two field offices in the South, which allowed to set up relief operations with more reliable communications and reinforce WFP's presence in those hard-to-reach areas.



*Registration of beneficiaries using SCOPE for the drought response in South Madagascar*

A further step towards readiness was the set-up of the SCOPE platform across the country that supported the expansion of cash-based assistance throughout Madagascar.

(SCOPE is the WFP registration system that supports all assistance modalities based on transfer, either in-kind commodity vouchers or cash-based transfers. It centralises all information on people receiving this assistance, their identities and entitlements, and allows to better track their specific food needs.)

The SCOPE system relies on equipment for biometric registration, such as webcams, finger print, laptop, solar kit, and can work with or without connectivity. The platform is now used to register all WFP beneficiaries in Madagascar.

The WFP teams reported that **the system really helped saving significant amount of time and avoiding problems during the distribution** (such as double targeting of beneficiaries or duplication in general).

The SCOPE system is also used to setup a new e-voucher project for the drought response: 18,000 households will receive a card in early 2017 (when the drought is expected to reach its peak) so they can cash money or buy food in selected shops.

### Ready for the cyclonic and floods season

On top of the drought in the South, the North-East of Madagascar has entered its cyclonic and floods season in November which is expected to be particularly bad this year due to La Nina phenomenon.

However communities and local authorities say they feel better prepared this year: they were provided with early warning kits (containing a mobile phone, megaphone, warning flags and solar radios) and were trained on how to react from the first signs of natural hazards using their kits. Relief equipment (two portable warehouses and motorized boats) was also prepositioned with the Civil Protection Body and can be deployed as soon as cyclones will start hitting.

Some of those measures have already proven useful in early 2016 when flooding swept through the northwestern region of Madagascar: the local authorities were able to raise the alarm quickly, evaluate people's needs on time

and communicate efficiently with humanitarian actors to set up aid operations. Likewise, during the floods in early 2015, having equipment prepositioned allowed humanitarian actors to assist up to 50% more people right after the disaster struck - without having to wait weeks for sea shipment or spend significant amounts on expensive and polluting air shipments.

Madagascar is one of the examples where preparedness actions have proved worth the investment by empowering UN agencies, the government and other partners in providing better life-saving assistance.

**Without those actions, the current response to the drought would not have been as fast, appropriate and coordinated as it is today.**



Registration of beneficiaries using SCOPE in Madagascar

**More on:**

*WFP in Madagascar addresses food security and malnutrition challenges through a range of programmes, from encouraging access to education in food insecure areas, providing nutrition support to children and mothers, helping farmers to access market and delivering cash-based transfers assistance where food is available but not accessible to communities. Read more on WFP work in Madagascar at <http://www.wfp.org/Countries/Madagascar>*