Namibia: Drought  
Office of the Resident Coordinator Internal Situation Report No.8  
(as of 1 October 2016)

This report is produced by Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It covers the period from 1 October to 31 October 2016. The next issue will be published around 30 November 2016.

Highlights

- African Union visits Namibia on Drought Response
- US OFDA Mission in Namibia on Drought Situation
- Weather and Climate-Related Disasters Double
- Namibia Celebrates International Day for Disaster Reduction.

578,480  
People affected, 25% of population

$ 44 m.  
Required by Government for response

Situation Overview

The Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee - RIASCO confirmed that an estimated $540 million of the $1.24 billion requested by its Action Plan had been received. According to the latest Food & Nutrition Security Outlook, an estimated 40.6 million people (22.5 percent of rural population) in southern Africa will be food insecure at the peak of the lean season and this is expected to last until March 2017. It was estimated that over 513,000 children under five need treatment for severe acute malnutrition, while over 777,180 children are in need of moderate acute malnutrition treatment until the end of 2016. The nutrition and HIV situation is likely to deteriorate during the lean season as a consequence of the situation. The Food and Nutrition Security Working Group reports that assistance coverage has been affected by the funding shortfall.

The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction analysis of the past twenty years indicates that the number of weather and climate-related disasters more than doubled over the past 40 years, accounting for 6,391 events between 1996 and 2015. This is a marked difference from the 3,017 events between 1976 and 1995. This has prompted the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon to call on all governments to move from managing disasters to managing risks and promote collaboration for prevention action and resilience building.

The African Union’s Department of Political Affairs and Permanent Representative Committee (PRC), Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons visited Namibia from the 24 – 27 October 2016. The visit was part of a two-country visit to the Southern African Region to get a better understanding of the effects of the el-Nino-induced drought affecting over 40 million people. During the mission, the delegation visited some of the regions in Namibia that were most affected by the drought and met with government authorities as well as other stakeholders. The mission also announced USD100,000 donation to the Namibian government towards the drought response.

The United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) regional office in Pretoria also visited Namibia from 24-28 October to conduct a rapid assessment on humanitarian needs and assistance options. The team spent 3 days in the
northern regions after a day of preliminary meetings in Windhoek. The delegation visited the UN on 24 October and was briefed by the Emergency Humanitarian Focal Points (EHFP) on the drought situation and the response of the UN in support of government efforts.

Namibia celebrated the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDR) on the 13 October this year. Under the theme "Live to Tell: Raising Awareness, Reducing Mortality", the event was hosted by the Region of Kunene and saw the attendance of over 2500 participants. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Hon. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah chaired the occasion. An event was later hosted by the City of Windhoek on the 15th October. On both occasions, awareness on disasters was emphasised, along with the message of the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon launching the “Sendai Seven Campaign: Seven Targets, Seven Years”. The Secretary-General announced that this year was focused on reducing loss of life.

UN Response

The UN System in Namibia continues to offer support to the drought emergency. It is currently offering technical support towards the finalization of a Drought Relief Response Plan. The UN is further providing technical support towards the revision of the Revised National Disaster Risk Management Policy. The UN is also currently assisting the Directorate for Disaster Risk Management (DDRM) in developing monthly drought updates for dissemination nationally.

The UN System in Namibia has supported DDRM in submitting updated information on the drought situation in Namibia for consideration in the RIASCO Action Plan. Seven countries are currently prioritized by RIASCO. The revision will be informed by the latest assessments and other new developments since the adoption of the RIASCO plan. In the current RIASCO classification, Namibia is classified in Tier 3 and is therefore among the countries which are to be ‘closely monitored’. This was prior to the declaration of the Drought Emergency by the President of the Republic, the CADRI Assessment Mission, the publication of the country’s vulnerability assessment report and Drought Relief Response Plan. These recent changes may have a bearing on Namibia’s classification.

In October this year, IOM in support of the Ministry of Environment and Transport and OPM/DDRM launched a project on migration, environment and climate change (MECC). The project will conduct a country assessment on the linkages between migration, environment and climate change. The effects of the drought on human mobility within Namibia will also be part of the analysis. Based on the data collected, a second step will be to support the GRN in developing an action plan on MECC. The third and last phase of the project, will entail bringing the findings to the attention of the SADC to advocate for a regional action plan on MECC.

Funding

FAO and UNICEF received funding from USAID towards response to the ongoing drought emergency as well as for resilience-building. FAO received USD 961,280 for livelihoods, livestock, water, coordination and analysis while UNICEF will receive USD 1.4 million. China is making a donation of 30 million RMB to the Government of Namibia and India contributing 100 metric tons of rice. Japan has provided food support worth N$6 million.

Background on the crisis

Namibia has been suffering from droughts since 2013, however this year seems to be the worst yet for the country. Namibia has experienced persistent drought over the past four years, which has caused farmers to destock and has affected over a quarter of the population, who are now food insecure. Furthermore, the country is faced with a water crisis due to adverse effects of drought. The 2015/16 rainfall season was characterized by poor and erratic rains and prolonged dry spells, spanning from mid-January to end February 2016. The onset of the rains was delayed with little to no rainfall received in October and November 2015, leading to delayed sowing. The ongoing El Niño event has affected much of Southern Africa with similar drought conditions. The likelihood of a La Nina event in late 2016 has risen to 75%, which is likely to exacerbate current food security conditions throughout the region. The government has set aside N$90 million for the period April to July 2016.

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