

**TO:** Chris Nikoi  
Regional Director, RBJ

**DATE:** 15 February 2016  
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Country Director, Lesotho

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**IMMEDIATE RESPONSE EMERGENCY OPERATION  
LESOTHO IR-EMOP 200939  
Emergency assistance for vulnerable households affected by El Niño drought  
conditions in Lesotho  
PROJECT DOCUMENT**

**PART 1: INFORMATION NOTE**

**NATURE OF EMERGENCY**

**Location:**

1. This immediate response emergency operation (IR-EMOP) will be implemented in the Mafeteng and Mochale's hoek districts of Lesotho. Of all ten districts in the country, these are experiencing some of the highest levels of acute food insecurity as a result of El Niño-related drought conditions.
2. WFP currently implements school meals and nutrition programmes in Mafeteng and Mochale's hoek, targeting a combined total of approximately 30,000 beneficiaries. During 2015, WFP also implemented a Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) programme in the same locations, supporting 30,250 people with the creation of community assets to enhance resilience to shocks and disasters.

**Cause:**

3. Across Southern Africa, the El Niño event officially declared in March 2015 is forecasted to continue and to peak in the first quarter of 2016. The Southern Africa Regional Climate Outlook Forum (SARCOF) has predicted the worst drought in decades.
4. In Lesotho, current water shortages have been compounded by the cumulative impact of poor rainfall in previous years. During the 2014/2015 agricultural season, the planted area dropped by 19 and 29 percent relative to the 2013/14 and 2008/9 seasons, respectively, when average conditions were experienced. The result has been a sharp decline in food production and a failure to plant new crops by a large proportion of farmers. Crop estimates suggest that the next harvest is likely to be at historically low levels.
5. Unlike the failed harvest experienced in 2012, current food insecurity resulting from a loss of crops and livestock is exacerbated by local and regional food price increases and depreciation of the South African Rand, to which the Lesotho Maloti is fixed. The WFP monthly food price update of December 2015 revealed

that the price of maize in South Africa was 51 percent higher than the previous five-year average, and 23 percent higher in Lesotho.

6. On 22 December 2015 the Government of Lesotho declared a state of emergency and launched an appeal seeking the support of development partners and the broader international community to address the effects of the drought. At a total appeal value of US\$38 million, the Government of Lesotho has committed to make some US\$10 million available for the response.

**Effects:**

7. In November 2015 the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) estimated that some 464,000 people were at risk of acute food insecurity. More recent estimates by the Lesotho Disaster Management Authority (LDMA) suggest that this number has risen to 650,000 people in 2016.
8. The impact of the El-Niño phenomenon is expected to be particularly severe on vulnerable communities affected by the cumulative effects of the past poor growing seasons. Reports indicate that communities have already started to adopt negative coping mechanisms including skipping meals and selling productive assets. The poor harvest and lack of water have resulted in a reduction of labour opportunities (both in Lesotho itself and neighbouring South Africa), which form crucial contributions to the livelihood strategies of rural households.
9. Water scarcity is already affecting the normal functioning of hospitals, health centres and schools. It exposes the most vulnerable groups to water-borne diseases and other health-related problems. Of particular concern are people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV), pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children under the age of five years.
10. Lesotho is confronted with high levels of stunting (33 percent) and micronutrient deficiencies among children aged 6 to 59 months (particularly iron deficiency anaemia at 51 percent).<sup>1</sup> The highest levels are found in mountainous parts of the country. The prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) remains low at 2.8 percent nationally. It is expected that this may increase in connection with current drought conditions. At present, there is no documented evidence to confirm an increase in GAM rates, but it is expected that the nutrition situation (particularly of vulnerable groups such as PLHIV, PLW, young children and the elderly) may deteriorate as a result of drought conditions. WFP, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, the Government, and non-governmental organizations, is closely monitoring the situation. Should a specific response be warranted, WFP will make preparations to act accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> Demographic Health Survey, 2014

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<b>WFP IR-EMOP</b>
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**Justification for an immediate response, expected impact:**

11. Against the backdrop of other socio-economic adversities in Lesotho, the effects of current drought conditions in the country call for an urgent, timely and effective humanitarian response in support of the Government.
12. Most recent assessments and projection exercises evidence the likelihood that high levels of food insecurity are affecting a large proportion of the population living in agro-ecological zones in the Mountains, the Southern Lowlands, the Foothills, and the Senqu River Valley. It is expected that Mafeteng and Mophale'shoek will be among the worst affected areas; the findings of the 2015 Integrated Context Analysis reveal that these districts are particularly exposed to repeated and protracted natural shocks that cause high levels of food insecurity.
13. A joint multi-sectoral assessment to update current available information is underway and will be concluded during the period of this IR-EMOP. The findings will be used to design a subsequent response as needed.
14. In the interim, WFP, in coordination with government and other humanitarian partners, will launch an immediate life-saving response to the basic needs of the most vulnerable affected households in priority locations.
15. According to latest market data regularly collected by WFP field offices, food markets in the two targeted districts remain functional in the medium term, although it is expected that prices will increase as supply tightens further. The latest market assessment (from December 2014) indicated that food was available in shops throughout the year; maize meal, the main staple food, was sold in all. The current price of a 12.5kg bag of maize meal ranges between LSL68.00 and LSL72.00, which represents an increase of 12 percent compared to last year.
16. As a result, WFP plans to provide vulnerable households not receiving assistance through existing national safety net programmes with unconditional cash-based transfers. A thorough market assessment will be conducted in February 2016. Furthermore, considering that new food purchases could not be procured, delivered and distributed in full within a three-month period, the cash-based transfer modality is a more appropriate one to meet the immediate food needs of affected populations.
17. The response proposed by this IR-EMOP is valued at a total of US\$1 million, over a period of three months.

**Duration of assistance (maximum three months):**

18. Three months (from 18 February to 17 May 2016).

**Number of beneficiaries and location:**

19. WFP will target 20,920 food insecure beneficiaries (4,184 households) residing in the Mafeteng and Mophale'shoek districts. Food insecure households not already benefiting from existing safety net programmes will be targeted.

**Food basket composition and ration levels / cash-based transfer value:**

20. WFP will provide a monthly cash transfer of US\$65 per household, to facilitate access to basic food needs from local markets. This transfer value is calculated on the basis of the average retail price of a basic family food basket (consisting of 12 kg of maize meal, 1.8 kg of pulses and 600g of vegetable oil per person per month), with the addition of a monthly US\$5 transport top-up to account for the costs involved in traveling to banks and markets which are primarily located in town centres.

**Mode of implementation:**

21. Under the coordination of the LDMA, WFP will use a combination of beneficiary targeting methods, referencing both the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) and the LDMA community-based targeting approach. NISSA is a census-based tool with an established database including all vulnerable households in the communities it covers. Specific vulnerability criteria include households with limited access to land, no alternative source of income, no livestock, and a limited number of active members. From the NISSA lists, WFP jointly with LDMA and UNICEF, will identify vulnerable households who are not receiving assistance under any national social protection or safety net programmes. The beneficiary lists will then be verified by community members through the LDMA community based targeting method. In the areas where NISSA is not operational, only the LDMA community based targeting will be used. WFP and its partners will carry out random verifications to ensure that the most vulnerable households have been selected.
22. WFP has an existing field presence within the proposed operational area. Given the magnitude of the crisis – which will likely call for a subsequent larger response following conclusion of this IR-EMOP – WFP will engage an additional seven national staff at the field office level to ensure adequate monitoring and effective implementation of the programme.
23. Under the coordination of the LDMA, WFP will work with Government line ministries and sister United Nations agencies to ensure the provision of complementary multi-sectoral assistance in the target locations. WFP will collaborate with DMA, the Ministry of Social Development and UNICEF as to the targeting of the beneficiaries through the NISSA. Furthermore WFP through trainings will provide the targeted communities with life skills in the areas of nutrition, gender and conservation agriculture. These complementary activities will be implemented jointly with FAO, the Ministries of Agriculture and Food Security; Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation; Gender, Youth and Sports; Trade and Industry; and Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing.
24. Cash-based transfers will be effected through a bank with the requisite capacities; beneficiaries will be requested to visit bank branches to collect their entitlements. WFP utilised this particular delivery mechanism with success during implementation of the 2015 FFA programme.

## PART 2: EMOP BUDGET

Cost Components	Number of Beneficiaries <sup>1/</sup>			Value (US\$)	% of DOC	% of Total Project Costs
<b>Food Tool</b>	-	Tonnage (mt)	Rate per mt			
Cereals		-	\$0.00	\$0	% of Food DOC	
Pulses		-	\$0.00	\$0		
Oil and Fats		-	\$0.00	\$0		
Mixed and Blended Food		-	\$0.00	\$0		
Other		-	\$0.00	\$0		
<b>Total Food Transfers</b>		-	\$0.00	\$0	0%	
<b>External Transport</b>			\$0.00	\$0	0%	
<b>LTSH</b>			\$0.00	\$0	0%	
<b>ODOC Food</b>			\$0.00	\$0	0%	
<b>Total Food Tool DOC</b>			\$0.00	\$0		0%
<b>% of overall Food distribution costs (DSC and ISC included) over Total project costs</b>						

Cash and Voucher Tool	Number of Beneficiaries <sup>1/</sup>		% of C&V Transfer	Value (US\$)	% of C&V DOC
Cash Transfers	20 920			\$816 000	% of C&V DOC
Voucher Transfers				\$0	
<b>Total Cash and Vouchers Transfers</b>				\$816 000	93%
<b>C&amp;V Related costs</b>			8%	\$64 300	7%
		C&V Delivery	3%	\$24 800	3%
		C&V Other	5%	\$39 500	4%
<b>Total C&amp;V Tool DOC</b>				\$880 300	88%
<b>% of overall C&amp;V transfer costs (DSC and ISC included) over Total project costs</b>					

Capacity Development & Augmentation Tool	Value (US\$)
<b>Total Capacity Development &amp; Augmentation Tool costs</b>	\$0
<b>% of overall Capacity Development &amp; Augmentation costs (DSC and ISC included) over Total project costs</b>	

Total Costs	Number of Beneficiaries <sup>1/</sup>	Value (US\$)	DSC as % DOC
Total Direct Operating Costs (DOC)	20 920	\$880 300	
<b>Direct Support Cost (DSC)</b>		\$54 280	6%    5%
Total WFP direct project costs (US\$)		\$934 580	
<b>Indirect Support Costs (ISC) 7%</b>		\$65 421	7%
<b>TOTAL WFP COSTS</b>		\$1 000 000	100%

**PART 3: EMOP APPROVAL**

- 1) IRA funding is available to cover EMOP budget

Chief, RMBB: Calum Gardner, Director RMBB, Date:

- 2) EMOP is approved

Regional Director, RBJ: Chris Nikoi, Date: