



El Niño and Food Security

How does El Niño affect food security?

The El Niño climate pattern, which is strongly linked to weather fluctuations around the globe, is fueling an international food security crisis for millions of people. By disturbing rainfall and temperature patterns, El Niño has affected agriculture, water supplies and the spread of disease, and is now threatening the food security and livelihoods for some 60 million people worldwide.

Ethiopia is one of the countries most affected by El Niño and is facing its worst drought in five decades.

About **10.2 million** people need urgent humanitarian food assistance and **450,000** children aged under five are severely malnourished.

Investing **US\$1.4 billion** in the drought response in Ethiopia will safeguard **US\$30 billion** contributed by international donors in official development assistance over the **past 10 years.***

The current El Niño climate pattern has matched the strongest on record. Its impact on poor peoples' lives and food security will intensify over the coming months, well into 2017. Unless resources are mobilized swiftly, poor harvests and food scarcity will threaten decades of development progress and leave vulnerable communities even more exposed to a changing climate.

*OCHA

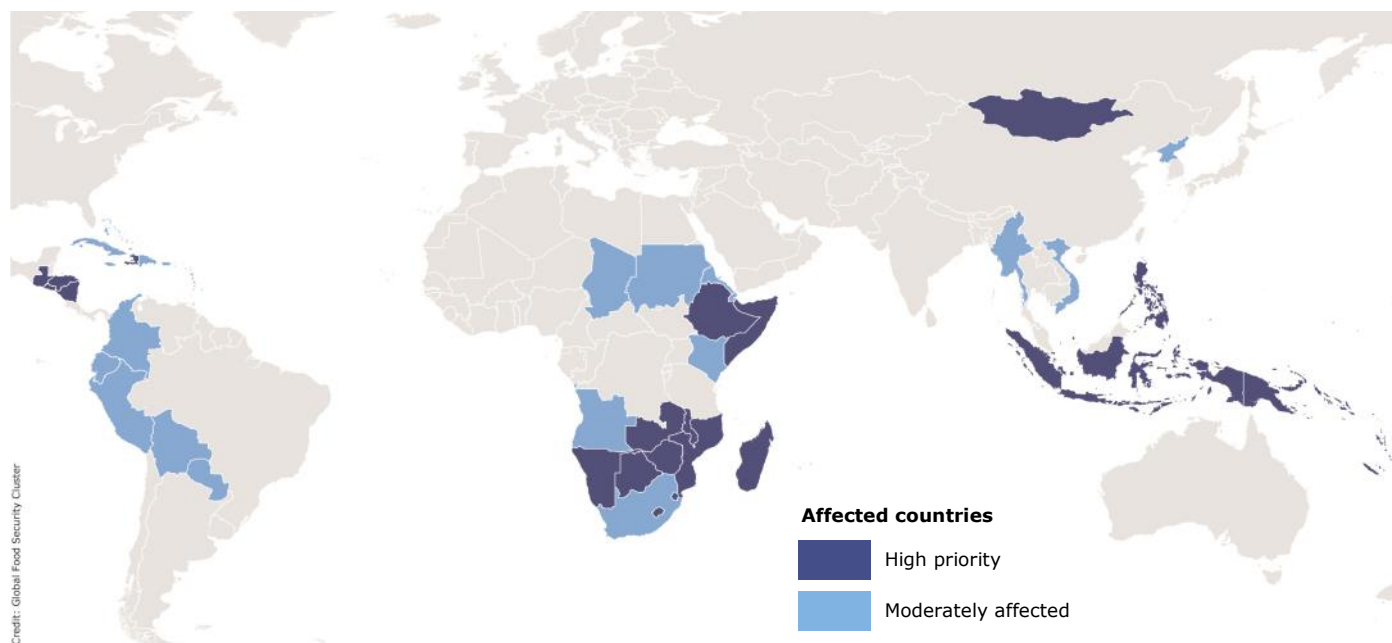
WFP's response: rapid relief + longer-term resilience

El Niño has driven up assistance needs across most areas where WFP operates, particularly in **Southern Africa, Central America, Haiti**, and parts of **Asia** and the **Pacific**.

In response, WFP is working with governments and partners in the most food-insecure countries, scaling up relief operations and resilience programmes to bring food and cash-based assistance to the most vulnerable. That includes those already hit hard by consecutive years of droughts and poor harvests, leaving them with few resources.

WFP is providing emergency food where needed, and cash to buy food where markets are functioning. Innovative insurance payouts have also been triggered in participating countries to help farming families and economies endure El Niño.

El Niño - Affected Countries



Building resilience through innovative programmes

WFP is a leader in developing and delivering large-scale innovations that help people at risk of hunger to build their resilience and to adapt to climate disasters and change.

These innovations help communities which are the most food insecure, most at risk, and with the least capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from climate-related disasters so that they can become food secure and resilient in the face of a changing climate and such phenomenon as El Niño.

What are some initiatives to help build resilience to climate risks?

- **The R4 Rural Resilience Initiative (R4)** is a joint project of WFP and Oxfam America to help vulnerable rural households pay for crop insurance to bolster their food and income security in the face of rising climate risks. It operates in Malawi, Zambia, Ethiopia and Senegal and means household with insurance no longer need to take drastic measures if and when crops fail, therefore building their resilience over time. R4 has provided El Niño-related payouts to affected farming families in Ethiopia and Senegal.
- **Africa Risk Capacity (ARC)** is an extreme weather insurance initiative aimed at improving responses to drought, food security crises, and build capacity to manage risks. WFP is working closely with ARC to refine tools to help national governments and partners to develop cost-efficient responses to drought.

- WFP is activating the **Food Security Climate Resilience Facility (FoodSECuRE)**, the first global tool that triggers funds *before* a disaster occurs. FoodSECuRE mobilizes funding and action to scale up national nutrition programmes and disaster risk reduction activities so that people are better prepared and stronger in the event of a flood or drought.
- WFP is deploying innovative **mVAM** and other digital technologies to support the tracking of prices, market access, food quality and supply chain efficiency by getting respondents to supply vital food security data on their mobile telephones. This data helps inform more targeted responses.

WFP's Seasonal Monitor has been tracking El Niño development and impacts across the globe, since its onset in early 2015. See <https://www.wfp.org/content/seasonal-monitor>

Globally, the food security of almost **60 million** people has been affected by El Niño.

This figure is expected to increase until at least early 2017.

- Latin American and the Caribbean: **6.4 million**
- East and Central Africa: **15.7 million**
- Southern Africa: **26.4 million**
- Asia and the Pacific: **11.1 million**