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World Food Programme

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Anticipatory Action Activation

Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zimbabwe



Anticipatory Action against El Niño: WFP's regional response in Southern Africa

The World Food Programme (WFP) has activated the Anticipatory Action programme in four countries in Southern Africa: Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. This collaborative effort with national governments and humanitarian partners aims to safeguard over 550,000 people and their livelihoods in anticipation of the projected impacts of El Niño-induced drought.

This activation will prevent vulnerable populations from sliding into food insecurity and malnutrition. It involves a range of anticipatory actions tailored to the unique circumstances of each of the four countries. These actions encompass the dissemination of early warning messages, anticipatory cash transfers, provision of safe water, and distribution of agricultural inputs, along with training sessions on planting practices.

The El Niño is expected to hit at a time when the region is already facing serious food security issues. Presently, about 47.4 million people in certain parts of southern and central Africa are facing acute food insecurity. Forecasts predict significant rainfall deficits and a deviation from typical regional temperatures. The peak impact is projected to occur between November 2023 and January 2024. Unfortunately, this adverse situation is anticipated to persist until early 2024, coinciding with the crucial planting season in all four countries. As a result, it will directly impact the harvest in April 2024.

In the face of this forecast, WFP has prepared its first regional activation, made possible through the generous co-funding of Germany, the European Union, and Norway, amounting to a total of USD 14.2 million.

Anticipatory Actions Planned per Country	Lesotho	Madagascar	Mozambique	Zimbabwe
Number of people supported with Early Warning messages	103,000	101,700	270,000	75,000
Number of people supported with anticipatory cash transfers	41,000	101,700	33,300	N/A
Number of households provided with safe water and agricultural inputs Training* (only Lesotho)	10,325 5,107*	10,168	520	15,000
Number of water points rehabilitated or boreholes*	3	90	N/A	53*

Mozambique faces many weather-related hazards, with drought being the most pervasive in its impact on the population. This activation of USD 2,548,972, has taken place in eight districts: Massingir, Mapai, Mabalane, Chibuto, Guija, Caia, Chemba and Marara. Based on data from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) in June and August 2023, readiness thresholds were met for a severe drought scenario in Mbalane, Massingir and Mapai, and for a moderate drought scenario for Guija and Chibuto. Later on, and as per October forecasts, “ready and set” phases were reached for moderate drought scenario for Marara, and forecast monitoring is in place for the districts of Caia and Chemba. The activation decision-making process has been carried out in a participatory manner within the government-led Technical Working Group. The anticipatory actions are implemented under the direct leadership of the National Institute for Disaster Management and Risk Reduction (Instituto Nacional de Gestão e Redução do Risco de Desastres -INGD).

WFP's support primarily dissemination of Early Warning Messages (EWM), and the provision of anticipatory Cash-Based Transfers (CBT). INGD's nationally led anticipatory actions encompass activities focused on agricultural conservation and water system rehabilitation. Additionally, WFP channels funds through the government of Mozambique to facilitate the implementation of INGD-led anticipatory actions in Guija, Chibuto, Caia and Marara districts, ensuring seamless complementarity.

Since 2019, WFP, with funding from The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), has been actively assisting Mozambique. Through close collaboration, Mozambique has emerged as an exemplar in terms of institutionalizing Anticipatory Action by integrating processes and tools into the national system.

In **Lesotho**, a severe drought is forecasted to occur in the districts of Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing and Thaba-Tseka. The Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS), in collaboration with the International Research Institute (IRI), has been working with WFP for triggers's development and monitoring. By combining seasonal prediction models with drought forecast trigger developed by LMS, IRI and WFP, a severe drought scenario has been anticipated, prompting the activation in these four districts.

From September to January, anticipatory assistance is being implemented through the distribution of agricultural inputs distribution, cash, provision of safe water, and dissemination of EWMs. This activation of USD 3,192,466 will enable households to better cope with drought's impacts by bolstering their awareness and preparedness and protecting agricultural production among vulnerable populations.

"We cannot afford to not act when we already know that early action saves lives and livelihoods" says Menghestab Haile, WFP's Regional Director for Southern Africa

Madagascar has witnessed a steady rise in drought occurrences in recent years, particularly in the southern region of the country. This has exacerbated existing issues of famine and malnutrition in the area, where WFP has been actively involved since 2022. In accordance with the forecast trigger model developed by the General Direction of Meteorology (Direction Générale de la Météorologie - DGM), IRI and WFP. The decision to trigger action was made by the Technical Working Group (TWG) for two districts: Betroka and Betioky.

This activation strengthens household resilience through the dissemination of EWMs, the provision of short-cycle seeds and in cultivation training, the provision of cash and the rehabilitation of water points. These activities are rolled out in close collaboration with the regional institution dealing with Agriculture and Livestock (Direction Régionale de l'Agriculture et l'Elevage - DRAE). This intervention of USD 3,258,627 aims to prevent the already precarious humanitarian situation in the area from deteriorating further.

Zimbabwe holds the distinction of being the first country in the southern Africa region where WFP activated anticipatory action, benefitting nearly 33,000 individuals in the Mudzi district in 2021. This year, a drought scenario is forecasted in five districts across the country: Hwange, Gwanda, Chiredzi, Binga and Masvingo.

Based on the ECMWF forecast between June and August 2023, the “ready and set” phase thresholds have been reached in all these districts. The Meteorological Services Department (MSD) of Zimbabwe, in partnership with WFP, has initiated the activation for a moderate drought scenario. Through the dissemination of EWMs, distribution of drought-tolerant inputs, and provision of safe water, this activation of USD 5,000,000 aims to strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers and enhance households' protection against climate-related hazards.

