



Anticipatory Action to mitigate the impact of drought in Kenya

In September 2025, the World Food Programme (WFP), in partnership with the Government of Kenya, activated its Anticipatory Action Plan (AAP) to mitigate the predicted impacts of drought in the Marsabit and Wajir counties in northern Kenya.

Priority areas were selected based on the probability of reaching the Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI) thresholds for a severe drought as forecasted by the Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD). In addition, rural wards characterized by their reliance on pastoralism and limited water access were prioritized to safeguard livelihoods and reduce negative coping strategies. Other considerations included prioritizing wards within hubs supported by WFP for climate-resilient livelihood activities, in order to cushion the households from engaging in negative coping strategies that may directly or indirectly erode those investments.

According to the August 2025 KMD forecasts, the readiness trigger was reached for all drought scenarios which include mild, moderate and severe. Furthermore, the severe scenario activation trigger was reached in September, as the forecast issued by the KMD indicated that a Standard Precipitation Index (SPI) value of -0.78 would be reached with a forecast probability equal to or greater than 35% for Marsabit County, and an SPI value of -0.89 or lower was expected with a probability of 30% or greater for Wajir County. These thresholds reflect a high likelihood of rainfall deficits, thereby justifying the need for anticipatory interventions.

To mitigate the predicted impacts of drought, WFP is implementing the following AAs:

1. Early Warning Messages. WFP, KMD and Kenya's National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), with support from IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) and other relevant partners, including county-level TWGs, developed the content of the messages, ensuring that agreed messages are translated into the most relevant local

Key facts

Location: Marsabit County: Saku Sub County (Karare and Sagante Wards) North Horr Sub County (North Horr Ward, localities) Moyale Sub County (Golbo ward) Laissamis Sub County (Loiyangalani Ward)

Wajir County: Wajir North sub county (Danaba, Korondille, Buna localities); Eldas sub county (Lakole/Basir, Dela localities), Tarbaj Sub County (Sarman, Elben localities); Wajir West sub county (Arbajahan, Hadado, Ademasajida localities); Wajir South Sub County (Habaswein, Dadajabulla localities), Wajir East Sub County (Khorof Harar)

Number of people targeted with early warning messages	462,621
Number of people targeted with anticipatory cash transfers	64,500
Number of children under 2 years and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWGs) targeted for cash top-ups	10,750
Number of people benefitting from Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) interventions	10,750

languages. The messages provide relevant early warning information on food security and agriculture, as well as water, livestock management, and other sectors. These messages are shared via radio talk shows, radio spot messages, public barazas/face-to-face, and bulk messaging (SMS/WhatsApp).

2. Anticipatory Cash-Based Transfers (CBT). Vulnerable households receive US\$79/month for three months, disbursed in two tranches (October and November), covering part of the Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) for a six-person household.

3. Cash top-ups to households with children under 2 and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWGs). These top-ups enable families with increased dietary needs to purchase diverse and nutritious foods, helping to meet specific nutritional requirements and reduce the risk of rising malnutrition rates due to drought. A cash top-up transfer value of US\$7 per month supports these groups in meeting their elevated dietary needs. The top-ups will follow the anticipatory CBT schedule, with disbursements in October and November.

4. Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) interventions. Delivered through counselling, radio, posters, and community gatherings to promote positive nutrition and resilience practices.

These anticipatory actions aim to i) maintain household food consumption, nutrition and health; ii) protect household livelihoods and resilience investments from the impacts of drought; and iii) sustain access to safe and clean water for domestic and livestock consumption.

This activation is made possible through US\$4 million in funding from the German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), providing critical support to protect the most vulnerable from the harmful impacts of the predicted drought.