



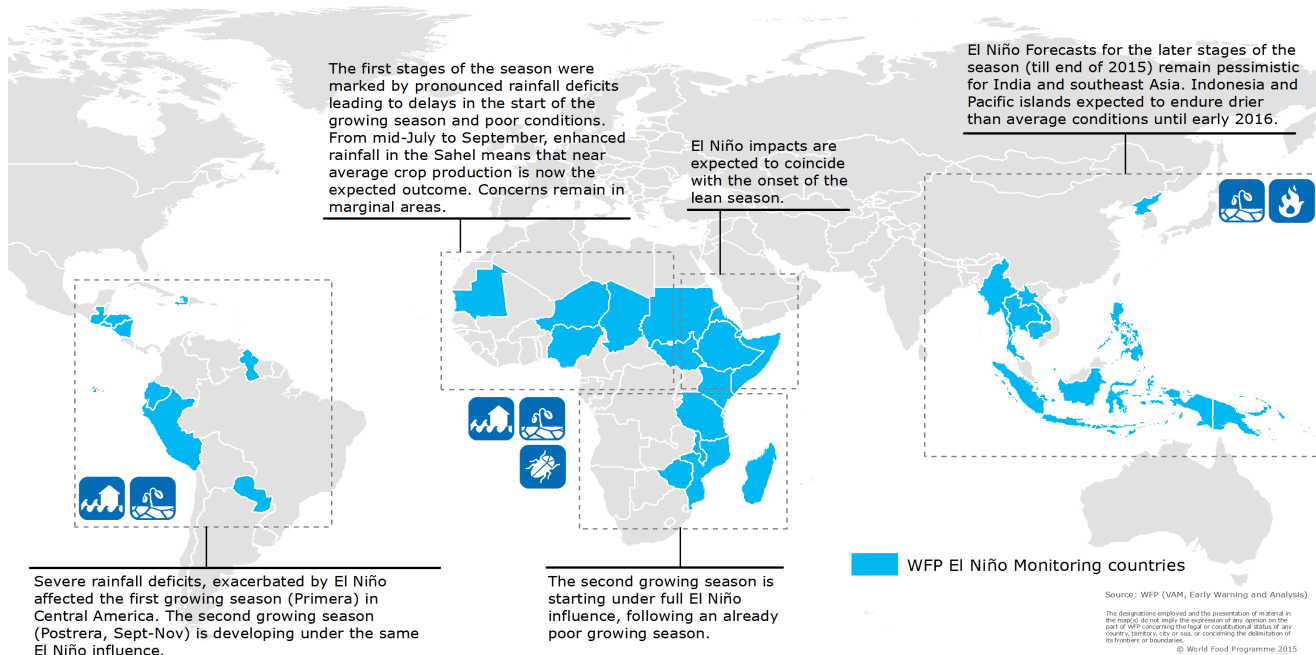
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World Food Programme

El Niño 2015-2016: Preparedness and Response

Global El Niño Impacts 2015



Overview

An El Niño event has been occurring since March 2015 and is steadily strengthening as it approaches its maximum intensity in late 2015. This El Niño is forecasted to peak in December, before gradually ending in early 2016. There are indications that it could become one of the most intense El Niños of the past 30 years.

The effects of El Niño will likely be felt throughout 2016. Over the next 12 months, El Niño could potentially affect the food security of a large number of already vulnerable people who are dependent on agriculture and livestock for their livelihood in Central America, most of Sub-Saharan Africa and South and South East Asia.

In grain-producing countries, El Niño related effects could lead to higher and more volatile commodity prices and jeopardize the fragile food security of the people WFP assists. Further impacts may be exacerbated by conflict and other factors such as urbanization and land degradation.

Effects will be more severe for communities that are already suffering from the cumulative impact of prior poor growing seasons.

Some food-insecure families have already been adopting a range of negative coping strategies. These include skipping meals, selling off their assets and pulling children out of school.

WFP is closely monitoring the current El Niño, and preparing for, and responding to, its effects.

Situation Update by Region

In **East Africa and the Greater Horn**, El Niño is expected to lead to drought as well as instances of flooding depending on geographical area. **Ethiopia** is facing a dry second season in addition to an already poor first one. Drier than average conditions are also affecting **Eritrea** and **Djibouti**. Wetter than average conditions are forecast for other areas. Increased flooding is possible in **Somalia** and Kenya river systems.

In **Southern Africa**, the last growing season was affected by the early stages of the current El Niño, resulting in sharp production losses across the region. Most at threat from immediate food insecurity are **Malawi**, **Zimbabwe** and **Madagascar** which all suffered severe crop failure due to extended dry

spells. The current forecast is pessimistic for the first stages of the coming season (October-December), which raises the possibility of two consecutive poor cropping seasons. Furthermore, the poor harvest experienced by farmers across the region will negatively impact the capacity of vulnerable farmers to purchase seeds, fertilizer and other necessities for the current planting season.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, according to some estimates, it is expected that the region will be more severely affected than the 1997/1998 El Niño event, which affected an estimated of 27 million people and caused more than USD 18 billion in damage.

WFP is particularly concerned about the impact of drought in **Haiti**; drought in **El Salvador**, **Guatemala** and **Honduras**; as well as the impact of drought in **Colombia** and floods in **Bolivia**, **Ecuador**, **Paraguay** and **Peru**. WFP is actively responding to the needs of drought affected people in Haiti and Central America and working closely with the South American Governments in preparedness actions.

In **South and South East Asia**, the season has been favourable in **Pakistan** and **Afghanistan**, whereas India and most South East Asian countries are facing an unfavourable one. Drier than average conditions are also reported in the **Philippines** and **Indonesia**, which are expected to endure until early 2016, with likely negative impacts on national crop production. The negative impacts already felt in **Papua New Guinea** are likely to worsen.

Case Studies

Globally, WFP is working closely with host governments and partners to prepare for, or is already responding to, the effects of El Niño in numerous countries.

Malawi



Malawi is experiencing the worst food insecurity in a decade, and 2.8 million people are reported to be food insecure. WFP is planning to assist 2.4 million food-insecure people during the height of the lean season, the period prior to the next harvest when domestic food stocks become depleted. Lean season activities will combine food assistance with cash transfers in areas where market conditions allow. So far in 2015, WFP has already provided food assistance to one million people who have been affected by floods.

WFP is working together with the Government and partners to finalize the national food insecurity response plan for the 2015/16 lean season.

The Government of Malawi has committed to contribute more than 25,000 mt of maize, covering 30 percent of total maize requirements. However, WFP needs immediate funds to be able to meet the overall need of to assist the most vulnerable.

WFP OPERATIONS IN MALAWI

Existing WFP Beneficiaries:	1.7m
Estimated additional WFP assisted relief beneficiaries:	700,000
WFP funding shortfall for the next six months (USD):	113.5m

Ethiopia



Ethiopia is suffering its worst drought in decades. The Belg growing season (February to May) was affected by a severe drought resulting in poor crop and pasture production. This situation puts further stress on households at the start of the following main season (Meher) indicating that a moderate recovery is now unlikely, and serious food security impacts can be expected in many areas of Ethiopia, given two consecutive poor seasons in 2015.

The level of acute need across virtually all humanitarian sectors has already exceeded levels seen during the 2011 Horn of Africa drought and is projected to be far more severe throughout an eight month period in 2016. The Revised Humanitarian Requirements Document (HRD) released on 23 August 2015 states that 4.5 million people are in need of relief assistance. However, at the beginning of October this figure was drastically revised upwards to 8.2 million by the Government. WFP will assist the Government by increasing the number of people assisted from two to six million. However, additional funds are required immediately in order to meet the increased needs.

WFP OPERATIONS IN ETHIOPIA

Existing WFP relief beneficiaries:	2m
Estimated additional WFP assisted relief beneficiaries:	4m
WFP funding shortfall for the next six months (USD):	488.2m

Zimbabwe



Following widespread drought-induced crop failures, WFP is working with the Government and partners to support some 400,000 of the most vulnerable people, scaling up its assistance to reach 850,000 people at the height of the lean season at the beginning of 2016. Assistance will be given in the form of both food and cash transfers. The ability to achieve this scale-up, however, remains subject to funding availability, as current funding projections are significantly lower than required.

On 09 October, WFP, together with FAO, UNICEF, and WHO announced a joint appeal to humanitarian and development partners for USD86 million.

WFP OPERATIONS IN ZIMBABWE

Existing WFP Beneficiaries (2015):	250,000
Estimated additional WFP assisted relief beneficiaries:	400,000
WFP funding shortfall for the next six months (USD):	28.7

Somalia



In Somalia, the El Niño event has triggered drought conditions in north-western Somalia, while it is likely to lead to massive flooding in the southern and central parts of the country (along the Juba and Shabelle river basins), which may increase the number of people in IPC Crisis and Emergency phases by over 400,000.

To address the emergency food needs of the drought affected populations, WFP, the Regional Government and partners will provide the up to 60,000 drought affected people with e-transfers and WFP and partners are planning to provide immediate assistance to 200,000 flood displaced people upon arrival in the traditional locations of safety from flooding. The areas most expected to flood will face enormous logistical difficulties and only boats or helicopters would be able to reach remote areas where roads have been cut off. Based on initial estimates, WFP has started to pre-position food commodities and logistical assets in five of the major areas that have been identified as likely locations for displaced persons. See the WFP Somalia external situation report on El Niño dated 23 October [here](#).

WFP OPERATIONS IN SOMALIA

Existing WFP Beneficiaries (2015):	1.9m
Estimated additional WFP assisted relief beneficiaries:	260,000
WFP funding shortfall for the next six months (USD):	85.7m

Indonesia



Indonesia is heavily affected by El Niño which is associated with a rise in sea surface temperature, negatively impacting rainfall in much of the country. The lack of rainfall will reduce water supplies in reservoirs and the flow of rivers, decreasing the availability of water for irrigation. There is an increased risk of harvest failure due to drought for crops planted after May 2015 and in locations at the tail end of irrigation systems. In the last major El Niño in 1997, drought affected more than 500,000 hectares of rice fields and damaged approximately 87,000 hectares.

WFP supports the efforts of the Government and a set of recommended options has been prepared to minimize food insecurity and malnutrition as a result of El Niño if rainfall is further delayed, food prices reach critical levels and malnutrition increases. Key aspects include strengthening Government food reserves and social safety nets as well as targeted nutritional supplements and monitoring.

Central America Drought



Central America has experienced widespread drought during the Primera season which has just ended. Drier than average conditions are affecting the early stages of the second season (Postrera), and forecasts of rainfall until the end of the year are pessimistic. Most-affected countries are El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

WFP is actively responding to the needs of drought affected people. Vulnerable populations are provided with food, cash or vouchers to meet immediate needs, while simultaneously building government agricultural capacity. More information can be found [here](#).

Contacts 

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Background – What is El Niño?

During El Niño events sea temperatures at the surface in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean become substantially higher than normal. In contrast, during La Niña events, the sea surface temperatures in these regions become lower than normal. These temperature changes are strongly linked to major climate fluctuations around the globe and, once initiated, such events can last for 12 months or more. The strong El Niño event of 1997-1998 was followed by a prolonged La Niña phase that extended from mid-1998 to early 2001. El Niño/La Niña events change the likelihood of particular climate patterns around the globe, but the outcomes of each event are never exactly the same. Furthermore, while there is generally a relationship between the global impacts of an El Niño/La Niña event and its intensity, there is always potential for an event to generate serious impacts in some regions irrespective of its intensity. (World Meteorological Organization)