



Tackling Southern Africa's Climate-Driven Food Crisis

Update #3

14 January 2020

In Numbers

A record **45 million** Southern Africans are food insecure as the region enters the peak of the lean season (January-March 2020)

WFP to support **8.3 million** people in 8 countries: Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia, Madagascar, Namibia, Eswatini, Lesotho and Malawi

An additional **USD 284 million** is required to meet urgent food needs (USD 205 million of the required USD 489 million secured to date)

Situation Update

The scale of the region's hunger crisis is unprecedented. As we enter the peak of the lean season, the number of food insecure people in the 16-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC) is set to reach a record 45 million.

Driven by climate change, millions of people are experiencing crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity. The severity of the situation is largely a consequence of the cumulative effects of climate-related natural disasters in the form of recurrent widespread drought — the region has only had one normal rainy season in the last five years — cyclones and persistent flooding.

For hard-hit families in a region heavily dependent on rain-fed smallholder farming, this means: limited food stocks; fewer meals; more children out of school; the distress sale of livestock and other assets; and other negative coping strategies.

Afflicting urban as well as rural communities, the hunger crisis is aggravated by rising food prices and mounting joblessness, posing a risk of political instability. It is also deepening acute malnutrition in particularly vulnerable communities.

The crisis could deepen this year. Forecasts indicate an increased likelihood of below-normal rainfall in many parts of the region in January-March 2020, the crucial growing period ahead of the main April-May harvest.

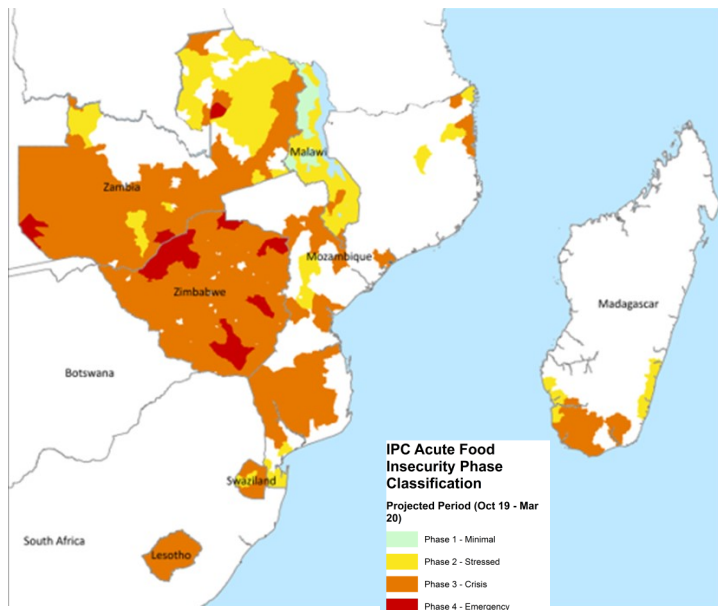
Highlights

Immediate funding is required for WFP to continue assisting those struggling to feed themselves and avert a deeper disaster.

As climate-related natural disasters are becoming more frequent, multi-year funding is crucial for sustainable and effective impact.

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)

October 2019 to March 2020



WFP Response

WFP is scaling up to support 8.3 million people in eight of the most affected countries over the next six months with in-kind food and cash assistance. With a funding gap of USD 284 million, immediate contributions are required to avoid a bigger humanitarian disaster.

WFP does its utmost to offset the consequences of delayed financial contributions. Food is procured locally and regionally to the extent possible, although food production in the region has been below average due to the drought. Where necessary, commodities are purchased on the international market. WFP's advance procurement mechanism, the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF), allows for immediate dispatch once additional resources become available, significantly reducing lead-time. Where appropriate and

where markets function, cash and voucher transfers are used, allowing recipients to purchase food items of their choice.

WFP's necessary focus on emergency assistance for Southern Africa's most acutely food insecure must not detract from the vital work to address the root causes of long-term hunger, minimise disaster risks and build resilience to climate extremes. Bridging humanitarian action and longer-term development programmes is crucial to overcoming recurrent crises and tackling the root causes of poverty and food insecurity. Increased multi-year funding is crucial to enabling communities and countries to build resilience to future shocks.

Needs by Country

	Number of people WFP aims to assist	Net Funding Requirements (January to June 2020)
Zimbabwe	4.1 million	USD 205 million
Mozambique	1.25 million	USD 20 million
Zambia	1.1 million	USD 24 million
Madagascar	783,000	USD 13 million
Namibia	379,000	USD 12 million
Eswatini	166,000	USD 3 million
Lesotho	174,000	USD 7 million
Malawi	313,000	Fully funded

Zimbabwe

WFP continues to scale up its response to the worst hunger emergency in a decade – 5.5 million people in rural areas and 2.2 million in urban areas are severely food insecure. In November and December, WFP reached more than 1.4 million people. Food distributions are rapidly increasing with the aim of assisting 4.1 million people. Through April, while food insecure people in urban areas will receive cash assistance, WFP is fully transitioning to in-kind food assistance in rural areas due to a dire shortage of local currency. To prevent child malnutrition during the lean season, WFP is providing specialized nutritious food to all children under the age of five in targeted households through June.

Mozambique

In Mozambique, 2 million people are experiencing “crisis” and “emergency” levels of hunger due to the effect of cyclones and flooding in the centre and north of the country and of drought in the south. WFP plans to support 1.25 million of them at peak lean season. That assistance will run in parallel with support to longer-term recovery, reconstruction and resilience-building, anchored in Food Assistance for Assets, for another 1.2 million people.

Zambia

In Zambia, for the first time since 2004, WFP is providing emergency lean season food assistance in addition to its regular technical assistance to the government. WFP is supporting the government's emergency response, procuring and delivering pulses for 1.1 million people and transporting local maize meal to 13 hard-to-reach districts. So far, 167,000 people have been supported and assistance will increase progressively if additional funds are received.

Madagascar

With 25 percent of families in Madagascar's drought-prone south now suffering crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity, and stunting rates the highest in the region, WFP aims to support more than three-quarters of a million people there with food and nutrition assistance through March. Some 200,000 were assisted in December. In advance of the annual rains, WFP pre-positioned food at key points to ensure supplies to hard-to-reach locations.

Namibia

Having suffered its worst drought in a generation during the last growing season, a 53 percent drop in 2019 cereal production and massive livestock losses, Namibia has also seen hunger surge. Some 290,000 of its 2.5 million people are now severely food insecure. Not having directly distributed food in the country for several years, WFP provided food to 17,000 people in December. Distributions will be expanded to reach 379,000 people.

Eswatini

Responding to Eswatini's deepening hunger crisis – fuelled by drought, a poor harvest, inflation and rising unemployment – WFP reached 47,000 people with cash transfers in December. While 166,000 people require WFP support, only half that number will receive assistance with current funding levels. Immediate contributions are required if vulnerable groups are not to fall further into destitution.

Lesotho

Two drought-stricken harvests in succession — cereal production dropped by 36 percent in 2018 and by 70 percent in 2019 — have contributed to an alarming surge in severe hunger in Lesotho. The number of people in IPC Phases 3 and 4 is 430,000, more than 20 percent of the population. WFP plans to provide 40 percent of them with lean season assistance, having reached 51,000 in December. Assistance is cash-based with a portion being mobile money that can be spent flexibly, and the rest in the form of vouchers that provide recipients with nutritious food items from local retailers.

Malawi

While Malawi enjoyed a 25 percent year-on-year increase in maize production notwithstanding the impacts of Cyclone Idai, WFP is planning to assist, through March, 415,000 of the 1.1 million people in IPC Phase 3 as a result of drought and cyclone-induced flooding. Thus far, WFP has assisted 54,000 people with cash-based food assistance, in line with the expansion of the national Social Cash Transfer Programme.