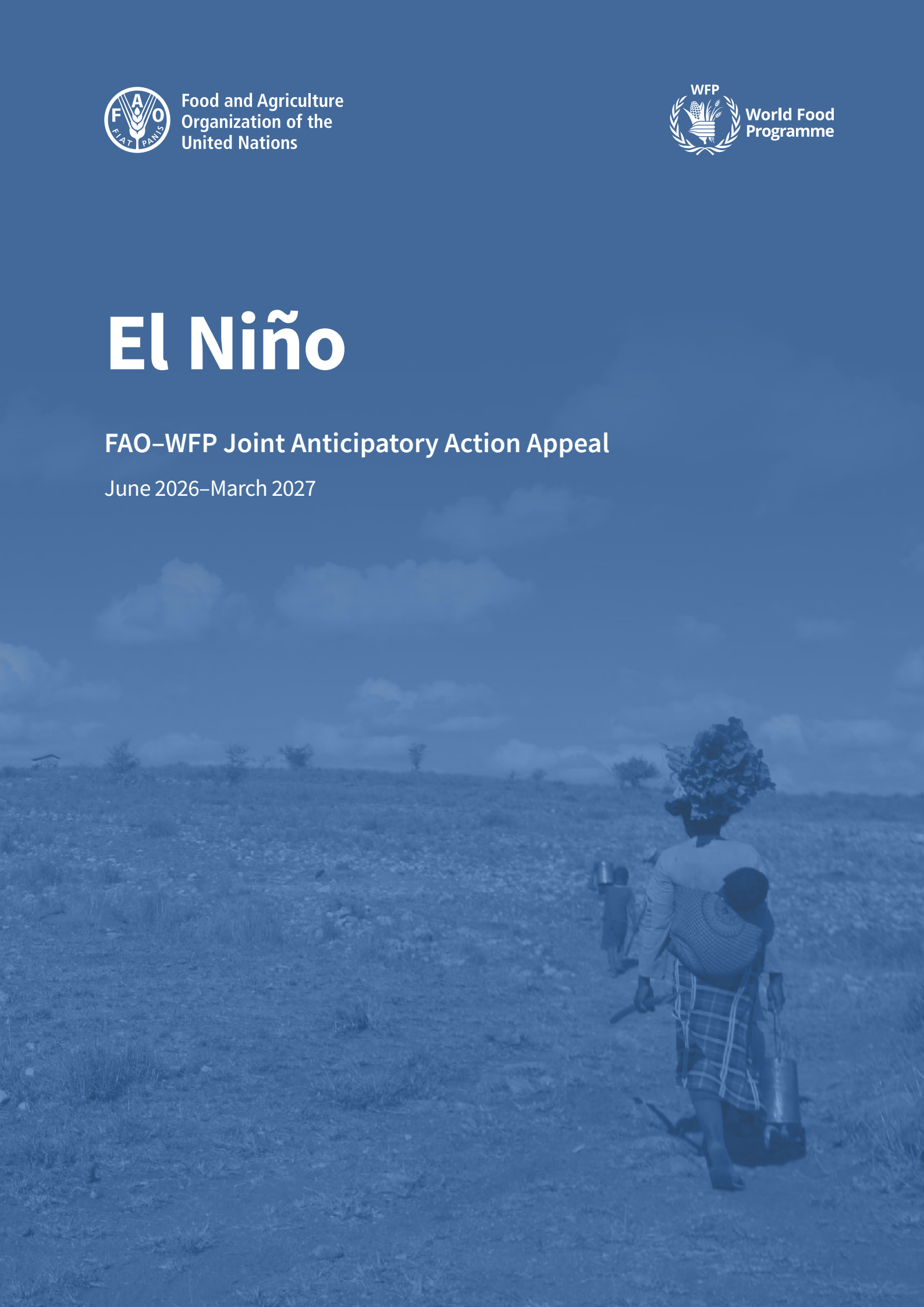
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

WFP World Food Programme

El Niño

FAO–WFP Joint Anticipatory Action Appeal

June 2026–March 2027



Strong El Niño conditions are developing, putting millions of food-insecure people at risk and threatening agriculture and livelihoods across multiple regions.

Drier weather is forecast in Southern Africa, Central America, parts of Asia and the Pacific, and parts of Eastern Africa, while risk of floods and storms may intensify in the Horn of Africa and parts of Asia.

These impacts could be further amplified by a positive Indian Ocean Dipole, worsening drought in some areas and increasing flood risks in others.

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Summary

An El Niño is forming, and millions of food-insecure people are in its path. Strong El Niño conditions are developing, threatening food security, agriculture and livelihoods across multiple regions into 2027. This El Niño is expected to bring significantly drier conditions to Southern Africa, Central America, parts of Asia and the Pacific, and Eastern Africa, while increasing the likelihood of floods and storms in the Horn of Africa and parts of Asia. This risk is compounded by a heightened probability of a transition to a positive Indian Ocean Dipole phase over the same period, which is expected to intensify drought conditions in parts of Asia and the Pacific, and Southern Africa, while further increasing flood risks across the Horn of Africa.

For the first time, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are issuing a joint, forward-looking appeal for anticipatory action at scale. The two agencies are positioned to immediately support 1.2 million people at risk from the predicted El Niño impacts. An additional USD 167 million would extend anticipatory assistance to 7.6 million more, enabling the two agencies to protect 8.8 million people with a total investment of USD 202 million.

The joint Appeal marks a shift from reacting to crises to financing action before they happen on unprecedented scale. It draws on the complementary strengths of both agencies and interventions proven to mitigate the humanitarian impact of climate shocks through anticipatory action before they drive millions more into hunger and destitution.

Evidence shows that every USD 1 invested in anticipatory action can generate up to USD 7 in avoided humanitarian losses. In the context of rapidly shrinking global aid budgets, these savings are critical and making anticipatory action not only cost-effective, but essential to maximizing the impact of limited resources.

Prioritized, high-risk countries span three regions:

1. **Africa:** Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe.
2. **Asia and the Pacific:** Afghanistan, Pakistan, Philippines and Timor-Leste.
3. **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Funding will support a proven package of context-specific anticipatory actions for food security and agriculture, such as cash transfers, seeds of drought-tolerant or flood-resistant varieties, livestock support, and flood defenses or water storage systems. For a vulnerable family, this means the difference between hunger and food on the table, a failed harvest or a productive one, and children who receive daily milk or go without it. The window is narrow: funds must be committed now to ensure interventions can be triggered once climate thresholds are reached and delivered before critical planting and lean seasons begin.

The tools, systems and partners are ready – what is needed urgently is funding. El Niño is converging with rising humanitarian needs, shrinking aid budgets and economic consequences from the Strait of Hormuz conflict. Soaring food, fuel and fertilizer prices are already undermining food production and access in some of the world's most vulnerable, food-insecure countries. This is the moment for anticipatory action at scale.

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Context

The El Niño Southern Oscillation is a naturally occurring climate phenomenon that alters global weather patterns and increases the likelihood of extreme climate hazards, including droughts, floods and storms. El Niño episodes typically occur every two to seven years and can last between nine and 12 months. Because of its relatively slow onset and predictable evolution, El Niño presents a critical opportunity for anticipatory action before shocks escalate into humanitarian crises.

El Niño conditions are present and expected to strengthen in the second half of 2026.[1] El Niño would lead to severe consequences for food security, agriculture and livelihoods across multiple regions later in the year and into 2027. Current climate outlooks point to an increased likelihood of below-average rainfall across Southern Africa, Central America, parts of Asia and the Pacific, and Eastern Africa, while above-average rainfall and flood risks are expected across the Horn of Africa and other flood-prone regions. These evolving climatic conditions compound already highly vulnerable

1 Climate Prediction Center. 2026. El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) diagnostic discussion. In: *National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center.* [Cited on 12 June 2026]. https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.shtml

situations across many of these countries and threaten agricultural production systems, livestock health, water availability, market stability and household food access.

The world enters this El Niño cycle at a time of already elevated humanitarian needs. Millions of people globally continue to face acute food insecurity due to the combined impacts of conflict, economic instability, climate extremes and displacement. In many vulnerable countries, rural households have limited capacity to absorb another major climate shock after successive years of droughts, floods, cyclones and high food prices. Ongoing geopolitical tensions, including the Strait of Hormuz conflict, continue to disrupt fuel, fertilizer, agricultural input and agricultural export markets, increasing costs and uncertainty across food systems. Combined with forecast El Niño impacts, these pressures risk creating a multiplier effect on food insecurity and livelihoods.

The impacts of El Niño on agriculture and food security can be severe. During the 2015–2016 El Niño event, more than 60 million people worldwide were affected, leading to widespread crop failures, livestock losses and humanitarian appeals totaling billions of dollars. More recently, the 2023–2024 El Niño episode triggered even more severe and widespread impacts across multiple regions, with regional estimates indicating that nearly 68 million people were affected by drought in Southern Africa alone.

Acting early is essential to protect food production, preserve livelihoods and reduce the need for costly humanitarian response later. Compared to previous El Niño events, the 2023–2024 El Niño event demonstrated significant progress in the scale and operationalization of anticipatory action. FAO and WFP supported over 3 million people ahead of peak impacts – up to ten months earlier than response interventions – while generating up to USD 3 in avoided losses for every USD 1 invested.[2] However, despite these advances and demonstrated results, anticipatory action coverage remained far below overall needs, highlighting the urgent need for earlier, larger-scale and more flexible financing.

Anticipatory action is designed to protect those most at risk before a crisis unfolds. It will therefore always reach fewer people than the total number ultimately affected. For this reason, the 8.8 million people targeted under the joint Appeal should not be directly compared with the much larger populations affected during past El Niño events. This difference reflects two key factors:

1. Anticipatory action seeks to prevent or mitigate the initial impacts of El Niño induced hazards before they trigger cascading effects across food systems and livelihoods. By acting early – for example, by supporting farmers to sustain local production – these interventions help stabilize food availability and market supply, thereby reducing the downstream impacts that would otherwise affect a much larger population. In this way, timely support to a smaller, highly targeted group contributes to protecting the food security of many more people.

2. Anticipatory action is inherently time bound. It is delivered within a short pre impact window when forecasts are sufficiently reliable and preventive measures remain feasible. Within this limited window, FAO and WFP prioritize those most exposed and vulnerable, ensuring they are protected first, while broader needs are addressed through subsequent emergency response once the shock materializes.

WFP and FAO, in coordination with anticipatory action partners including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), are jointly calling for immediate, flexible financing to support anticipatory action ahead of forecast El Niño impacts. By acting before crises peak, humanitarian partners can help vulnerable households safeguard livelihoods, stabilize food consumption, protect agricultural production and strengthen resilience.

2 FAO, OCHA and WFP. 2025. Saving lives, time and money – Evidence from anticipatory action, May 2025. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cd5250en

Objectives

The FAO–WFP Joint Anticipatory Action Appeal aims to protect lives, livelihoods and food security in countries at high risk of forecast El Niño impacts during 2026–2027.

The Appeal focuses on two complementary objectives:

1. Protect local food production in the face of climate shocks, through anticipatory action measures that reduce expected losses and damage.
2. Safeguard vulnerable households' food security and coping capacity through anticipatory assistance that helps families meet immediate needs while preserving productive assets.

In line with their joint Anticipatory Action strategy, and under the aegis of Rome-based Agencies collaboration actions, FAO and WFP will build on their respective strengths and expertise:

- FAO will protect agriculture-based livelihoods, enabling households to maintain food production and income generation through targeted support for crops, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture.
- WFP will protect consumption of nutritious food and coping strategies of the most vulnerable households and communities.

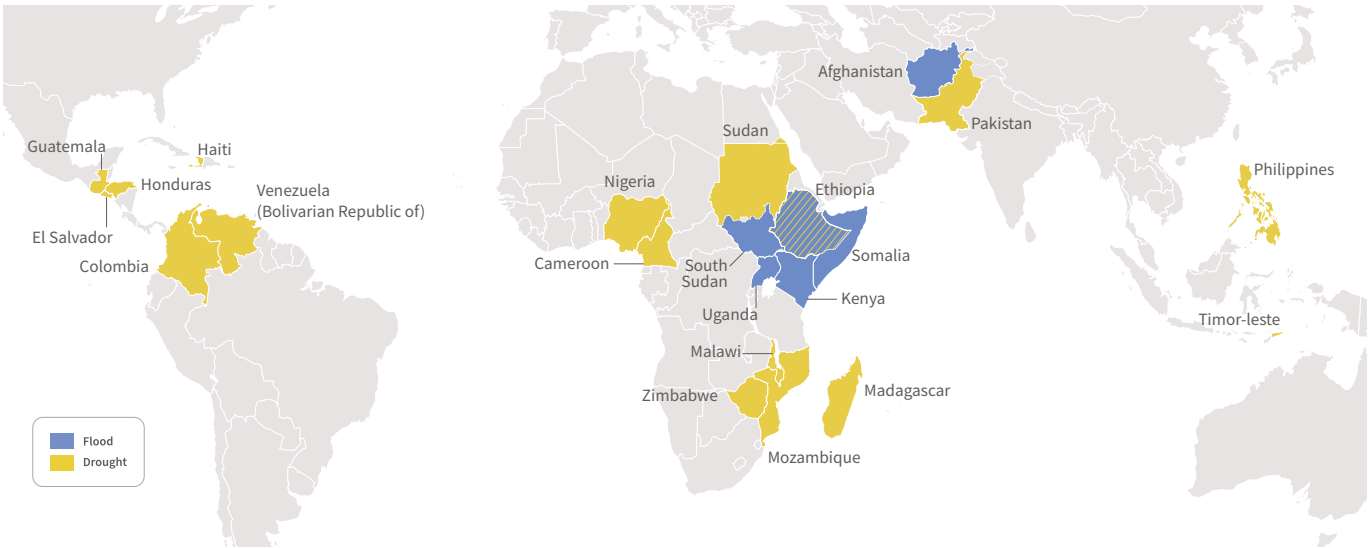
Building on a solid technical and operational partnership in anticipatory action for food security, FAO and WFP will work closely together at global, regional and country levels to scale up anticipatory action ahead of the forecast El Niño-induced hazards.

The specific modalities and combinations of assistance will depend on country-level operational contexts, existing frameworks and comparative advantages. Coordination with governments, technical partners and inter-agency anticipatory action frameworks remains central to implementation.

Together, the two Agencies aim to ensure that vulnerable communities are informed in a timely manner, through early warning dissemination, and protected both from production and consumption perspectives, helping to reduce negative coping strategies and prevent deterioration into crisis-level food insecurity.

The joint Appeal aligns with the **UN80 Initiative New Humanitarian Compact.** It leverages opportunities to achieve meaningful efficiencies and cost savings, priorities under the humanitarian reset – a systemwide effort to increase the efficiency of humanitarian action.

Figure 1. Current coverage of the joint Appeal (22 countries)



Source: United Nations Geospatial. 2025. Map of the World. [Cited 8 June 2026]. https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/map-world-1

Refer to the disclaimer on the last page for the names and boundaries used in this map. The final boundary between the Sudan and South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined. The dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

Geographical coverage

FAO and WFP have jointly identified 22 priority countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Country prioritization was informed by multiple criteria, including:

- historical El Niño rainfall patterns;
- latest seasonal climate forecasts;
- agricultural calendars;
- existing levels of food insecurity and vulnerability;
- availability of national and inter-agency anticipatory action frameworks; and
- operational readiness and potential for timely activation.

Based on these criteria, Figure 1 outlines the countries prioritized under the joint Appeal.

The list of priority countries includes those with existing anticipatory action frameworks already operational for El Niño-related risks, i.e. El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

It also includes countries where FAO or WFP already has an existing anticipatory action framework that could support rapid scale-up and joint implementation, i.e. Cameroon, Colombia, Pakistan, Philippines, Timor-Leste and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Finally, the Appeal includes high-risk countries where FAO and WFP are strengthening readiness efforts and supporting the development or refinement of anticipatory action plans considering forecast El Niño risks, i.e. Afghanistan, Haiti, Kenya, Nigeria, South Sudan and Sudan.

The priority list is not exhaustive of all countries potentially at risk from El Niño impacts. Other countries at risk, but not covered by the Appeal, include Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Rwanda and United Republic of Tanzania in Eastern Africa; Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal and Togo in Western Africa; and Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Viet Nam in Asia and the Pacific. The list may, therefore, continue to evolve as forecasts are updated and additional analyses become available, also considering spillover effects from the Strait of Hormuz conflict.

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Funding needs and modalities

USD 202 million

8.8 million people

CURRENT FUNDING GAP USD 167 million[3]

FAO and WFP are seeking immediate and flexible funding to scale up anticipatory action interventions before forecast El Niño impacts materialize.

The Appeal focuses on rapid and flexible financing mechanisms capable of supporting anticipatory action activations at country level within narrow operational windows. Immediate, pre-arranged funding is critical to allow for procurement of inputs, prepositioning of funds for cash transfers and supplies before extreme weather events disrupt agricultural seasons, food security and livelihoods. This approach builds on the expanding role of anticipatory action coordination and financing across the humanitarian system, including through mechanisms such as OCHA's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

Funds received for this joint Appeal will be equally split between FAO and WFP. Direct funding modalities include FAO's Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities and WFP's Anticipatory Action trust fund.

3 FAO funding gap: USD 96.4 million; WFP funding gap: USD 70.6 million. Any new funding provided in response to the Appeal will be divided equally between the two Agencies.

The forecast development of El Niño conditions does not automatically trigger anticipatory action activations at country level. Rather, El Niño forecasts increase preparedness and readiness efforts in high-risk countries, while country-level activations remain linked to localized forecasts, agreed thresholds/triggers and operational decision-making processes.

In several countries, the Appeal also complements ongoing and planned inter-agency anticipatory action frameworks supported through OCHA's CERF mechanism, including contexts where anticipatory action activations linked to drought or flood risks are already underway. The joint Appeal aims to help scale up food security and agricultural livelihood support beyond existing allocations, while strengthening operational readiness and preparedness capacities ahead of forecast El Niño impacts.

The Appeal follows a no-regrets approach to anticipatory action. While forecast uncertainty is unavoidable, evidence shows that the cost of inaction is consistently far greater than the cost of acting early. Flexible financing will allow resources to be rapidly adapted and redirected as forecasts evolve. Acting early will reduce humanitarian needs later, lower response costs and help protect development gains already achieved by vulnerable communities.


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Regional contexts

Southern Africa

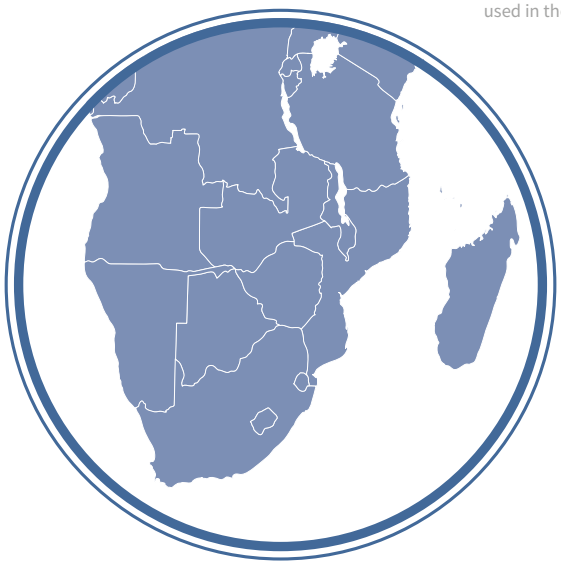
USD 54 million

2.3 million people

CURRENT FUNDING GAP USD 42 million

Southern Africa is expected to face a high probability of below-average rainfall and drought conditions during the 2026–2027 agricultural season. The region remains highly vulnerable following the severe impacts of the 2023–2024 El Niño event, while the strong historical relationship between El Niño and drought in Southern Africa provides a critical opportunity to act early through existing anticipatory action frameworks and preparedness mechanisms.

Refer to the disclaimer on the last page for the names and boundaries used in the map.



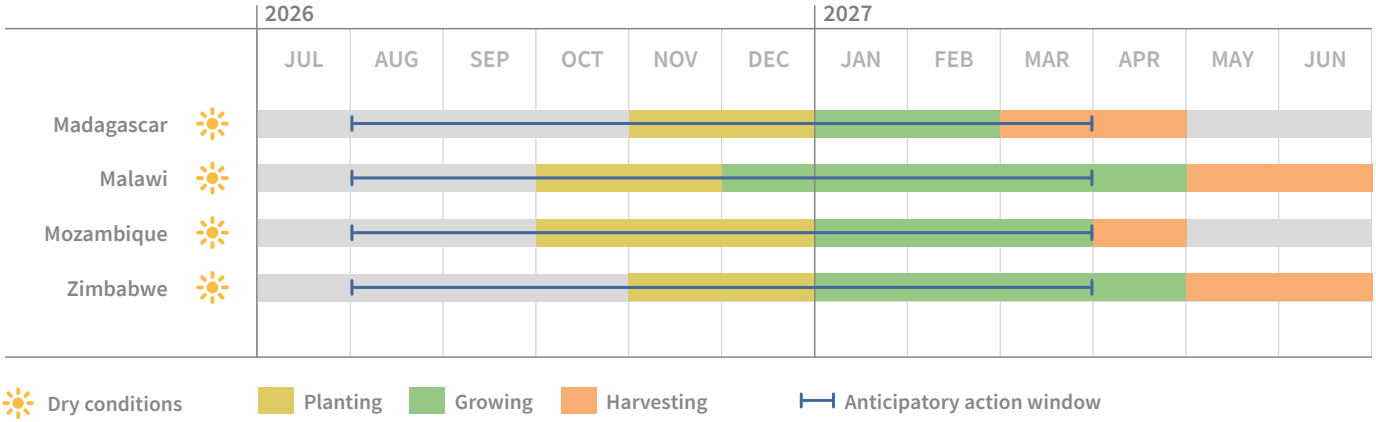
KEY RISKS

- Drought and rainfall deficits during the main cropping season.
- Reduced maize production and crop failures.
- Reduced pasture and water availability for livestock.
- Increased food insecurity and livelihood losses among rainfed farming households.

PRIORITY ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS

- Distribute seeds of drought-tolerant varieties and agricultural inputs.
- Provide anticipatory cash transfers.
- Disseminate early warnings.
- Provide livestock feed and animal health support.
- Provide water harvesting and irrigation support.

Figure 2. Seasonal calendar of priority countries in Southern Africa



Source: FAO. 2026. Internal Document. Rome.

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Eastern Africa

USD 78.2 million

3.9 million people

CURRENT FUNDING GAP USD 68.3 million

El Niño impacts across Eastern Africa vary both geographically and temporally. From June to September – the main rainy season in the western parts of the region, including Sudan, western and northern Ethiopia, South Sudan[4] and the Karamoja region of Uganda – El Niño is typically associated with below-average rainfall. By contrast, between October and December, in the bimodal areas of the Horn of Africa, including Somalia, Kenya, Uganda and eastern Ethiopia, El Niño is linked to an increased risk of above-average rainfall and flooding. Global models already indicate a high probability of wetter than normal conditions during this season. Existing anticipatory action frameworks and readiness mechanisms provide opportunities for rapid scale-up ahead of forecast impacts.

4 In South Sudan, while El Niño is generally associated with below-average rainfall during the main rainy season (June–September), flood risks typically peak later in the year – around August–October – due to river flows from upstream parts of the Nile Basin, including Uganda. As El Niño is associated with above-average rains in Uganda between September and December, it also heightens flood risks in South Sudan during this period. Anticipatory actions, therefore, prioritize flood risk.

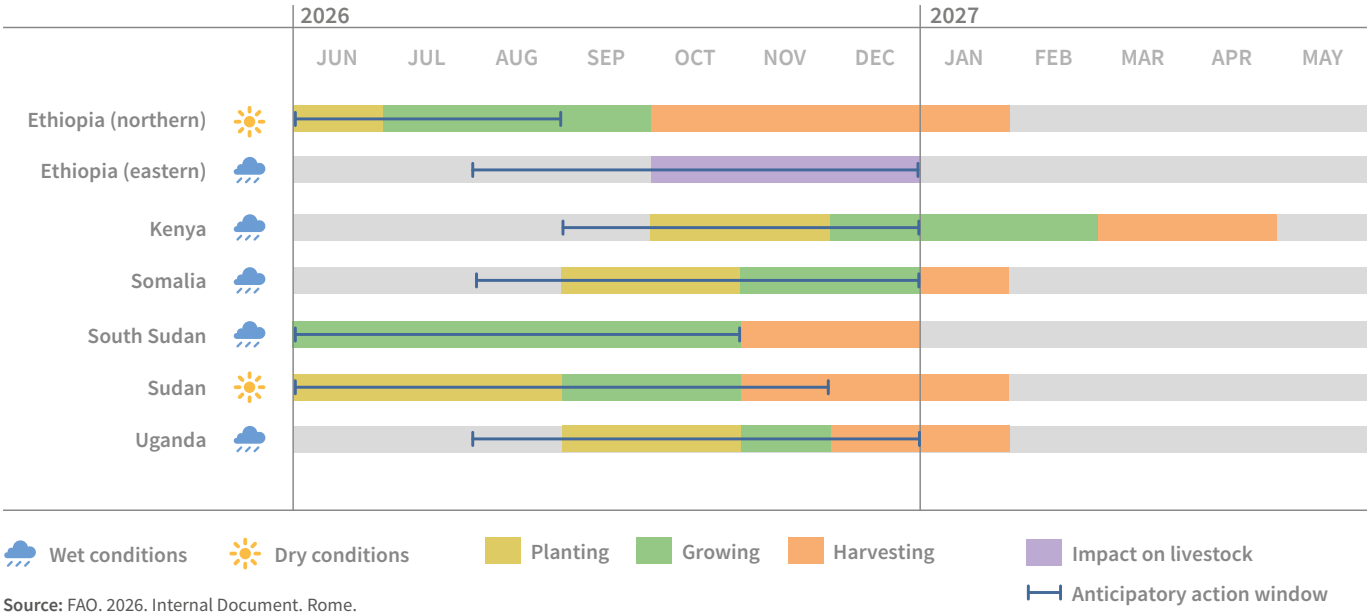
KEY RISKS

- Rainfall anomalies and related impacts, including drought and flood risks across various parts of the region.
- Crop losses and damage to agricultural infrastructure.
- Livestock disease outbreaks, reduced milk production and animal losses.
- Population displacement and disruption of livelihoods.

PRIORITY ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS

- Disseminate early warnings with tailored advisory.
- Provide anticipatory cash transfers.
- Distribute seeds of drought-tolerant varieties and agricultural inputs.
- Improve water access and storage.
- Support post-harvest protection measures (e.g. hermetic storage bags).
- Carry out livestock vaccination and animal health campaigns.
- Put in place flood protection measures.

Figure 3. Seasonal calendar of priority countries in Eastern Africa



Source: FAO. 2026. Internal Document. Rome.

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Western Africa

USD 11 million

500 000 people

Parts of Western Africa are expected to face increased risks of below-average rainfall and drought conditions linked to forecast El Niño impacts. Anticipatory action efforts linked to drought risks are already underway in parts of the broader Sahel (Chad, Mauritania) through existing inter-agency frameworks and readiness mechanisms. In Cameroon and Nigeria, preparedness and readiness activities are ongoing to strengthen anticipatory action capacities ahead of potential seasonal impacts.

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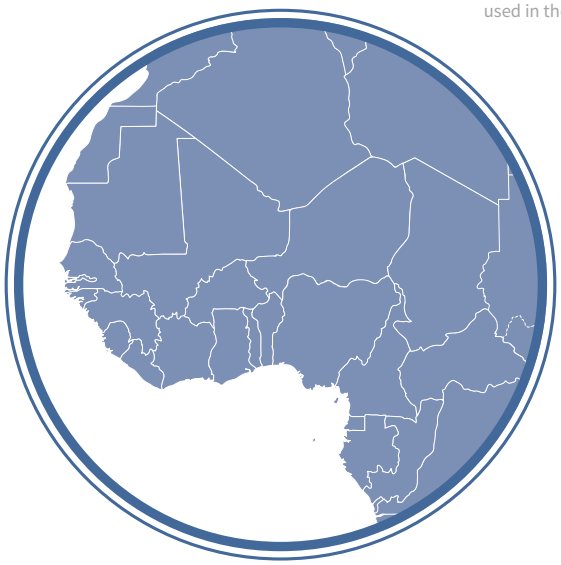


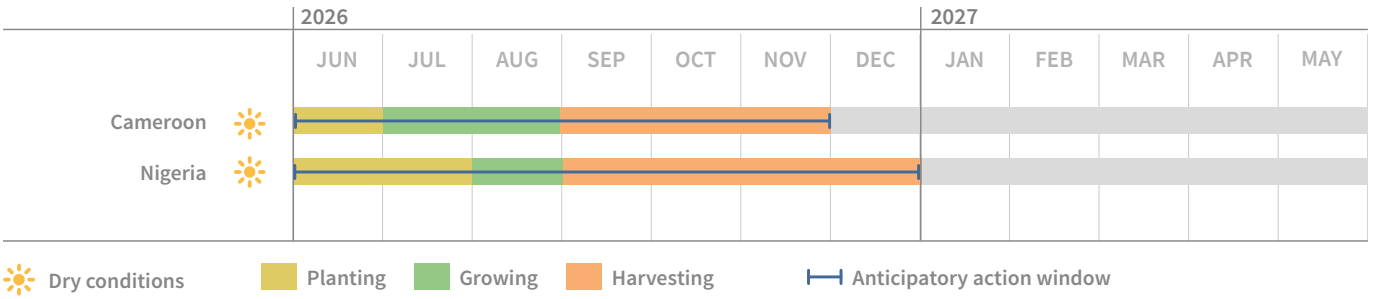
KEY RISKS

- Rainfall deficits and prolonged dry spells.
- Reduced crop production and lower yields.
- Declining pasture and water availability.
- Increased food insecurity among agropastoral communities.

PRIORITY ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS

- Disseminate early warnings with tailored advisory.
- Distribute seeds of drought-tolerant varieties and agricultural inputs.
- Provide anticipatory cash transfers.
- Provide livestock feed and animal health support.
- Provide water harvesting and micro-irrigation support.

Figure 4. Seasonal calendar of priority countries in Western Africa



Source: FAO. 2026. Internal Document. Rome.

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Asia and the Pacific

USD 25.7 million

1 million people

CURRENT FUNDING GAP USD 17.7 million

El Niño impacts across Asia and the Pacific are highly diverse and can include drought, floods and cyclones depending on the country and subregion. Drier-than-normal conditions are expected across several countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific, including Timor-Leste, Philippines and parts of Pakistan.[5] At the same time, above-average rainfall and localized flood risks may affect countries such as Afghanistan.[6] Some South Pacific Island countries may also face heightened cyclone risks, as well as the Philippines, which usually experience less cyclones but have longer lead times and intensity if they do come to formation. The region's exposure to multiple and overlapping climate hazards makes anticipatory action particularly important. Past El Niño episodes demonstrated how droughts, cyclones and floods can occur in rapid succession, severely affecting already vulnerable households.

Refer to the disclaimer on the last page for the names and boundaries used in the map.

5 Despite a less historical consistent relationship between El Niño and climate impacts in Pakistan compared with other countries in this Appeal, current regional and global forecasts indicate elevated risks of below-average rainfall that warrant anticipatory action measures.

6 In Afghanistan, flood impacts are often highly localized, rapid-onset and associated with considerable uncertainty regarding their scale and geographic distribution.

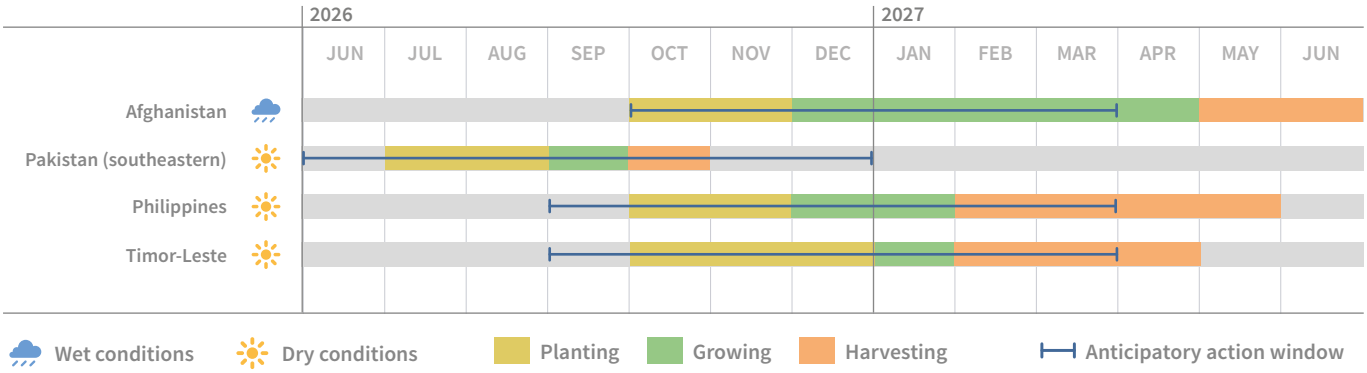
KEY RISKS

- Agricultural drought and water shortages.
- Reduced crop and livestock production.
- Aquaculture disruptions due to water restrictions, shortages or saltwater intrusion.
- Fisheries disruptions, including increased damages and losses to critical infrastructure.
- Increased risk of crop and livestock pest and disease outbreaks.
- Increased risks of wildfires.

PRIORITY ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS

- Disseminate early warnings and agricultural advisories.
- Provide anticipatory cash transfers.
- Provide seeds of drought-tolerant varieties and water management support.
- Safeguard fisheries and aquaculture equipment and assets.
- Put in place flood and cyclone protection measures (e.g. strengthen fishing boats, distribute hermetic bags to protect seeds).
- Provide livestock feed and veterinary support.

Figure 5. Seasonal calendar of priority countries in Asia and the Pacific



Source: FAO. 2026. Internal Document. Rome.

Latin America and the Caribbean

USD 33 million

1.1 million people

CURRENT FUNDING GAP USD 27.9 million

El Niño conditions are expected to increase the likelihood of drought and rainfall deficits across parts of Central America, northern South America and the Caribbean, particularly affecting the Dry Corridor. Anticipatory action interventions are already underway for the primera season, while preparedness efforts continue for the upcoming postrera season. Existing inter-agency frameworks and operational experience in the region provide important opportunities for rapid scale-up.

Refer to the disclaimer on the last page for the names and boundaries used in the map.

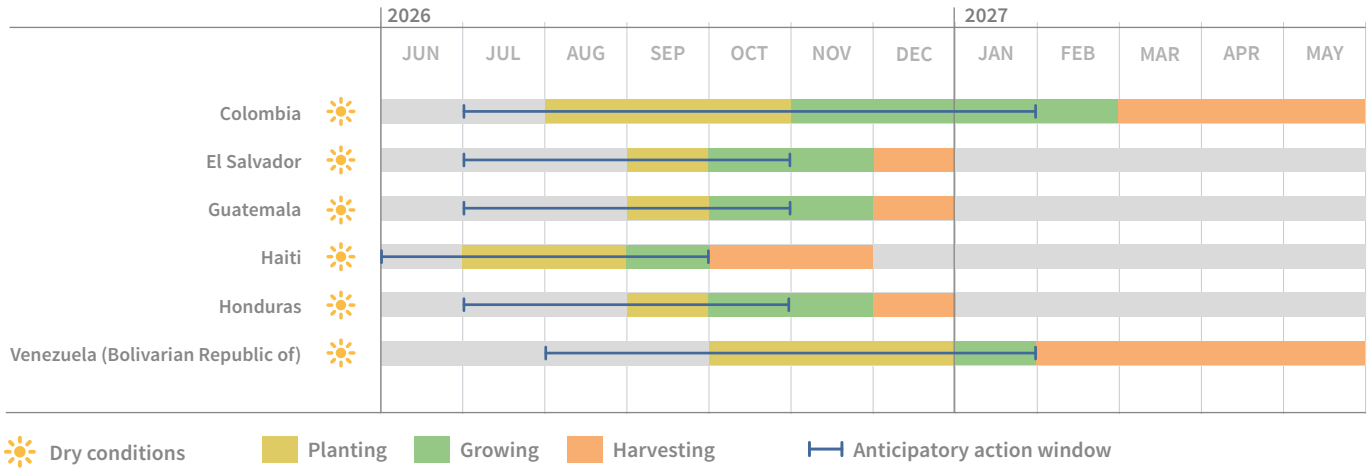
KEY RISKS

- Prolonged dry spells and rainfall deficits.
- Reduced staple crop production.
- Water shortages affecting households and agriculture.
- Negative impacts on livestock and fisheries livelihoods.
- Tropical storms and cyclone-related damage in Pacific-facing coastal areas.

PRIORITY ANTICIPATORY ACTIONS

- Distribute seeds of drought-tolerant varieties and agricultural tools.
- Provide anticipatory cash transfers.
- Disseminate early warnings and agricultural advisories.
- Provide water harvesting and micro-irrigation support.
- Provide livestock and animal health support.
- Safeguard fisheries and aquaculture equipment and assets.

add: Figure 6. Seasonal calendar of priority countries in Latin America and the Caribbean



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