

A GLOBAL CALL FOR SUPPORT AND ACTION: RESPONDING TO EL NIÑO

Event Summary

26 April 2016, Geneva

Main event: 'A Global Call for Support and Action: Responding to El Niño'

Panel: OCHA, CARE, IFRC, UNDP, AU Commission, RC/HC Ethiopia

This was the sixth significant Member States briefing on El Niño since October 2015. More than 45 Member States and over 200 humanitarian and development partners participated.

The ERC urged donors to act now to support the national and international response to avert the crisis from worsening, stressing that the longer we wait, the more people will suffer, the more development gains will be lost, and the more costly the response will be. Urgent support must be provided to the 60 million people already affected by El Niño. CARE noted that people are being forced to make impossible choices for survival and outlined the need for four things: a commitment from donors for additional funding now, the development and prioritization of costed response plans by governments of affected countries, a conference in September to prepare for the possible La Niña, and a review of the weaknesses of the current global system to respond to such crises. The RC/HC of Ethiopia highlighted Ethiopia as being the country with the strongest collaboration between a Member State and its partners to address this crisis, including in the prioritization of needs and linking of humanitarian and development systems. UNDP noted the need to walk the talk of the WHS, noting that 'emergency development' needed to be linked with longer term recovery efforts. This includes strengthening coordination at the national and regional level, restoring livelihoods and economic recovery, strengthening early warning capacity at national and regional levels (with a focus on building strong disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation institutions), and establishing flexible funding mechanisms (such as the Zimbabwe Resilience Fund).

The European Commission announced a contribution of €414 million to address both immediate and longer-term needs. Italy announced a contribution of €10.5 million and Norway pledged NOK 30 million (US\$3.8 million). A detailed breakdown of where these pledges will go is being sought. DFID and USAID noted that they were working with its development partners to see where funds could be brought forward or reprioritized.

Affected countries took the floor to call for support, including Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Somalia and Sudan.

Some next steps suggested by humanitarian partners include a high-level pledging event, possibly in the margins of ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment, to increase much-needed funding to the response and resilience efforts.

Technical Panel: 'From El Niño to La Niña and beyond: the need for preparedness, early action and long-term resilience solutions'

Panel: FAO, International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), Oxfam, UNDP

IRI noted that models project that there is a 60 per cent likelihood of a La Niña event beginning towards the end of the year. Most models indicate that we are coming out of El Niño more slowly than normal, which has implications for a transition to La Niña (i.e. makes it more likely). IRI noted that there has been incredible change in the response to this El Niño compared to previous events. **FAO** highlighted good practices in early warning (EW) and early action (EA) to the ongoing El Niño, including early warning in the October IASC EWEA report and the development of FAO EA plans. Somalia was highlighted as a good example demonstrating return on EA investments: \$1.7 million was invested and approximately \$6.7 million of maize production was saved (four times the investment). Many challenges remain however, including incomplete EWEA systems and slow and insufficient funding due to risk aversion by donors. **Oxfam** noted that, while some organizations were prepared and there were some early actions, on balance and at scale there was not enough early action. Many of the countries most affected by El Niño are more development contexts (e.g. Southern Africa), where a lot more surge capacity should have been sent earlier. Funding is one of the biggest reasons, even though the statistics and financial case for early action are unequivocal: commercial destocking in Ethiopia, for example, is 137 times cheaper than international food aid and restocking. There has been insufficient change with how donors are looking at funding early action. 'Crisis modifiers' are part of the solution, but more are needed and their speed needs to be enhanced. Slow-onset crises require different tools than rapid-onset crises, with cyclical rather than linear models that scale up and down as needed. Oxfam raised the need for a specific early action fund/funding window which is global and multi-sectoral. There is a need to build in La Niña preparedness and early action into our El Niño response and recovery, with a focus on quick wins (e.g. repairing weirs/dams). Oxfam suggested organizing a La Niña conference in September to support early action and resource mobilization. **UNDP** noted that there are many ongoing development programmes that can be utilized/re-focused to mitigate the risks to La Niña. The US\$50 million multi-donor Zimbabwe Resilience Fund was highlighted as a good practice that should be replicated elsewhere (it aims to build resilience when there is no crisis and supports response to crises when they do happen).

Technical Panel: 'Nutrition, HIV and Gender Integration in the El Niño response in Southern Africa'

Panel: WFP, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS

The impacts on health, nutrition, water and sanitation are devastating, necessitating a coordinated, multi-dimensional response. Impacts on nutrition, health and HIV include acute malnutrition, increases in mother-to-child HIV transmission and higher drug resistance. FAO highlighted that women play a key role in agricultural production, and UNICEF noted that there are correlations between gender and higher levels of both acute and chronic under-nutrition, underscoring the need to understand how gender roles adapt following the onset of a crisis. Challenges include the lack of reliable, disaggregated and long-term data, relatively low investment in nutrition, and insufficient integration of nutrition, HIV and gender issues in vulnerability assessments. WHO stated that unaddressed health issues will create development consequences, and that there also needs to be a focus on preventative measures to health concerns. Gender inequality, the lack of access to resources and strict gender roles limit the options for women and girls in El Niño-induced emergencies, and can lead to increased rates of sexual exploitation and abuse, early marriages and tensions in family circles due to food insecurity.

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ROOM XIX
PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA
26 APRIL 2016

PROGRAMME

Credit: OCHA/ Charlotte Cans

09:30 - 13:00 TECHNICAL PANEL DISCUSSIONS		
AGENDA	SCHEDULE	TOPIC
09:00		Arrival and registration
09:30 - 11:00	Technical Panel Discussion 1	From El Niño to La Niña and beyond: the need for preparedness, early action, and long-term resilience solutions
11:00 - 11:30	Break	El Niño response exhibition in foyer
11:30 - 13:00	Technical Panel Discussion 2	Nutrition, HIV and Gender Integration in the El Niño response in Southern Africa
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch	El Niño response exhibition in foyer
14:30 - 16:30 GLOBAL CALL FOR SUPPORT AND ACTION		
AGENDA	SCHEDULE	TOPIC
14:20		Return/Arrival and seating
14:30 - 14:40	Opening statement	Emergency Response Coordinator's Opening Remarks and Welcome
14:40 - 14:45		Screening of El Niño film
14:45 - 15:15	Presentations from panel of distinguished speakers	Presentation of current situation and requirements in responding to El Niño
15:15 - 16:15	Statements from the floor	Statements, announcements of pledges and questions to the panel by Member States, UN agencies and NGOs
16:15 - 16:20	Closing	Emergency Response Coordinator to close
16:30 - 17:00		Press Conference