

HIGHLIGHTS

- The region is exposed to a range of environmental and social pressures.
- 47 defined international humanitarian emergencies were identified between 2000 and 2012.
- The results highlight the short recurrence intervals for major shocks and the annual co-occurrence of multiple shocks.
- The research signals a transition from conditions of armed conflict seen in the 1980s and 1990s to social conflicts, often in urban areas, particularly in national capitals.



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The Humanitarian Trends Study

Study rationale – the changing character of humanitarian emergencies

There is a growing consensus that the nature of humanitarian emergencies is changing, with crises increasingly driven over time by a combination of complex and inter-related circumstances, rather than single, identifiable shocks. In southern Africa, as in the rest of the world, humanitarian actors increasingly face new, 'atypical' challenges.

It is within this context that members of the Southern African Regional Interagency Standing Committee (RIASCO) called for an investigation into the threats to lives and livelihoods likely to confront southern Africa over the next decade, along with available capacities to address these challenges. RIASCO also sought greater clarity on the causal processes that may exacerbate population displacement, food insecurity, health emergencies, livelihood loss, as well as at-risk groups, including children and people living with HIV/AIDS. A regional research team was formally commissioned to investigate likely future humanitarian challenges in southern African and their associated implications for programming, which culminated in the *Humanitarian Trends in Southern Africa Study*.



Mobilising new collaborations – southern African universities as research partners

The research was carried out during 2012 by 33 researchers through four research hubs across the southern Africa. These involved the University of Antananarivo (Madagascar), North-West University (South Africa), Stellenbosch University (South Africa), the Technical University of Mozambique, along with independent researchers in Lesotho, Malawi and South Africa.

The research adopted a 'mixed-methods' approach at regional, national and sub-national scales. This incorporated the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, drawing extensively on both secondary and primary information sources. Specifically, the research design involved a desk-top review of relevant reports and published literature on emerging disaster risk and humanitarian assistance issues. This was complemented by primary data collection in thirteen countries, with more than 209 interviews. The research method also incorporated detailed analysis of all humanitarian emergencies that generated Consolidated and Flash Appeals from 2000 to 2012, departing from the

FIGURES (SADC)

Number of Countries	15
Total Population	212 mil
Food Insecure Population 2012	7.65mil
Lowest - Highest Stunting Rates	18 – 53 %
Asylum Seekers (UNHCR 2010)	193,000
Refugees (UNHCR 2010)	146,000
HDI Rankings (of 187) UNDP	52 - 173

The results suggest that current data-gathering systems consistently underestimate the occurrence and effects of trans-boundary processes, as well as their spatial extent.

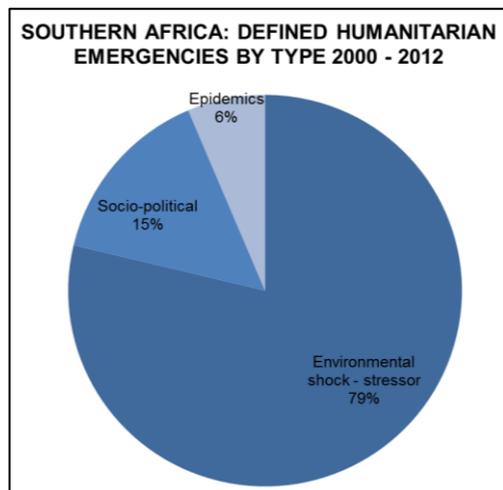
established practice of separating more environmentally-induced disasters from those of social, political and economic origin. This recognised that risks in southern Africa escalate due to the interplay of multiple risk and vulnerability drivers at different scales.

Diverse emergency patterns – and increasingly complex

Contrary to perceptions that southern Africa has a homogeneous and 'low-risk' profile, research results indicate a region exposed to a range of environmental and social pressures. Excluding the protracted humanitarian situations in Angola and Zimbabwe, 47 defined international humanitarian emergencies were identified between 2000 and 2012.

The research shows that 37 of these were associated with an identifiable environmental shock/stressor, while 7 were linked to socio-political triggers and three to epidemics.

From 2000-2012, more than 14 million people reportedly required international humanitarian assistance for flood-related events, including the five million who were affected by Cyclone Eline (2000). The results highlight the short recurrence intervals for major shocks for many countries and the annual co-occurrence of multiple shocks, even in countries that do not seek external assistance.

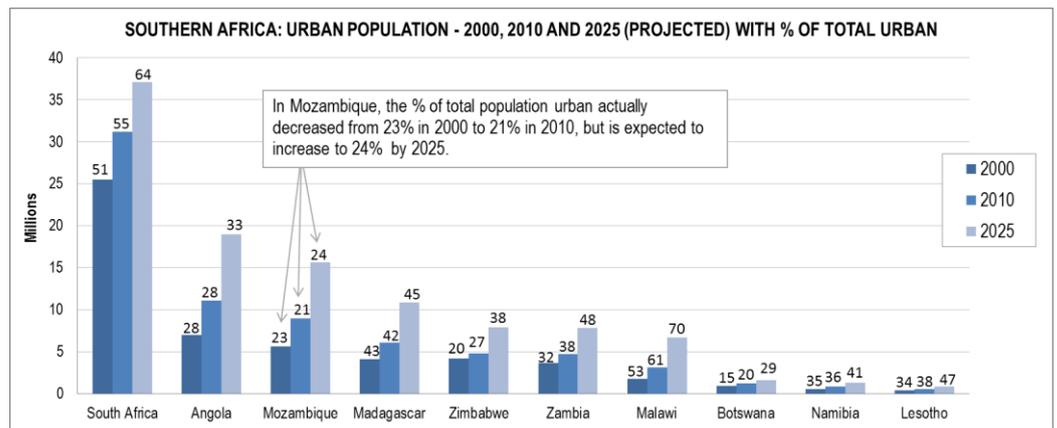


During the past decade, large numbers of southern Africans have been affected by human-induced emergencies. The research signals a transition from conditions of armed conflict seen in the 1980s and 1990s to social conflicts. These often occur in urban areas, particularly in national capitals. Humanitarian intervention was triggered by a wide spectrum of social, political and economic factors. These include instances of armed conflict (e.g. Angola), political conflict (e.g. Madagascar) and social violence/conflict due to escalating tensions between the State and civil society (e.g. Zimbabwe's 'Operation Restore Order' and Mozambique's food price riots). There is also evidence of collective violence (e.g. xenophobic violence against foreign nationals in South Africa).



A recurrent finding of this study is the high frequency of trans-boundary emergencies (emergencies that affect more than one administrative jurisdiction). The results suggest that current data-gathering systems, however, consistently underestimate the occurrence and effects of trans-boundary processes, as well as their spatial extent. This is partly due to systematic biases that favour national reporting and is further constrained by non-reporting requirements for countries that do not seek international assistance. Trans-boundary risks apply to all scales. For instance, with increasing global and continental connectivity, and the region's growing integration, global economic shocks are likely to transfer throughout the region. The effects of global fuel and food price volatility and economic recession, for example, were experienced by most southern African countries between 2007 and 2009 and resulted in widespread effects and knock-on consequences.

While disaster risk management committees represent a first step towards the multisectoral coordination of risk reduction efforts, they cannot be custodians of information, nor provide effective implementing vehicles without an executing mechanism.



Source: UN HABITAT

Emerging capacities and resilience builders

In recent years, encouraging capabilities have emerged across the region that have reduced vulnerability and strengthened capacity for response in times of duress. A positive development across the study countries has been the progressive establishment of national disaster management authorities, whose core operating budget is government-funded. This signals increasing national commitment to anticipate and reduce recurrent risks, and provides an institutional framework for retaining skilled human capital especially that developed by the humanitarian system.

The table below lists the staffing levels for these institutions in eight of the study countries. It shows emerging government commitment for core funding of this competency, along with modest allocations of contingency reserves for immediate response.

Illustrative capacities of selected national disaster management authorities

Country	Institution	Total staff	Contingency reserve
Comoros	DGSCGC	6	No
Lesotho	DMA	48	No
Malawi	DoDMA	9	No
Mozambique	INGC/NIDM	146	Yes
Namibia	DDRM	34	Yes
South Africa	NDMC*	37	Yes
Swaziland	NDMA	15	Yes
Zimbabwe	DCP	8	Yes

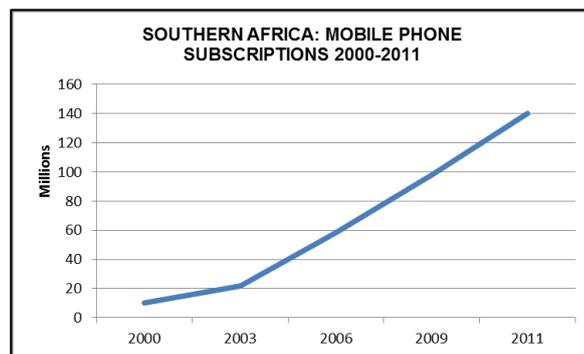
*Excl. staff in nine provincial disaster management centres, metros & local municipalities (e.g. the City of Cape Town DRM Centre has more than 80 full-time staff members).

While these developments are encouraging, the staffing levels are uneven. Moreover, with the exception of South Africa (and Windhoek in Namibia), there is limited subnational architecture for municipal or district risk management, despite the presence of disaster (risk) management committees. While disaster risk management committees represent a first step towards the multisectoral coordination of risk reduction efforts, they cannot be custodians of information, nor provide effective implementing vehicles without an executing mechanism.

States that experience chronic fragility warrant particular attention by humanitarian actors, given their compromised resilience to shocks, potential for internal conflict and limited capacity to manage humanitarian emergencies.

There are other important ‘resilience builders’ that have allowed households and governments to withstand recurrent shocks and stresses, and that have begun to avert the need for large-scale humanitarian operations. Expanded efforts in social protection and antiretroviral drugs support to people living with HIV have protected the region’s social and human capital and reduced vulnerability to a wide range of economic, health and natural shocks.

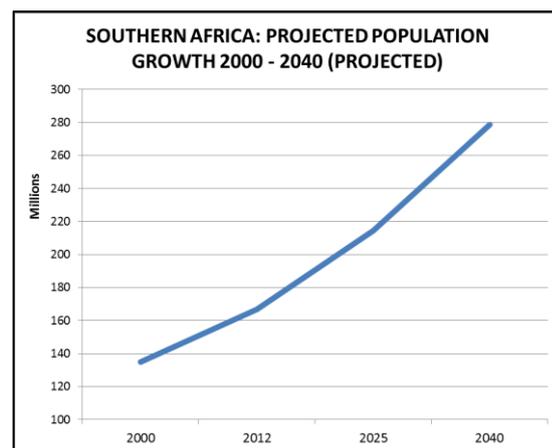
In addition, migration and mobility, within countries and across borders, represent adaptive livelihood responses – linked to sizeable remittance flows. The rapid expansion of cellphone use and information and communications technology in many countries also represent crucial resources for trade and information, as well as cash, and for mobilising social networks in times of duress. Similarly, informal trade networks at regional and sub-regional scales have also proven to be essential – reflected, for instance in informal cross-border flows of cereals and other commodities.



Source: ITU

Looking ahead: Changing threats and vulnerabilities

Between 2012 and 2025, the region’s population is projected to rise from 167 million to 215 million with an increasing urban share that is located in informal settlements. It is increasingly mobile, further enabled by SADC’s Free Trade Area protocol (SADC, 2008) and the forthcoming implementation of SADC’s Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (SADC, 2005). It carries forward entrenched vulnerabilities, such as marked structural inequality, high levels of chronic child malnutrition (stunting) and HIV that are increasingly concentrated in towns and cities. In nine of the countries studied, 20%-24% of the population is aged between 15 and 24 years, unlikely to be enrolled in secondary or higher education, and struggling to find stable employment. Southern Africa’s expanding economic links both globally and continentally afford valuable trade and development opportunities, but are also accompanied by new exposures and risks.



Source: UNDP

Moreover, four countries (Angola, the Comoros, Malawi and Zimbabwe) are identified as fragile states. States that experience chronic fragility warrant particular attention by humanitarian actors, given their compromised resilience to shocks, potential for internal conflict and limited capacity to manage humanitarian emergencies. As southern Africa’s interconnectedness increases the chances of the effects of poorly managed shocks and stresses in any single country being transferred rapidly throughout the region, it underlines the need for continued support to those states so they progress to more stable and resilient conditions.

Based on the findings of field research, secondary data analysis and detailed interrogation of regionally significant humanitarian emergencies, the research team proposes six broad clusters of potential threats with implications for humanitarian action. However the team stresses that these categories should be viewed as indicative only, given the highly dynamic risk profile of the region, and urges both disaster risk management and humanitarian actors to be constantly alert to new and unfolding risk configurations. The broad areas of concern include:

Environmental threats: Shocks and threats that are generated by a primary environmental driver such as severe weather, floods, fires or earthquakes. They may be also known as

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'natural' or 'physical' hazards, but are not limited to natural phenomena (e.g. large informal settlement fires).

Aggregate (economic) threats: Shocks that simultaneously/sequentially affect:

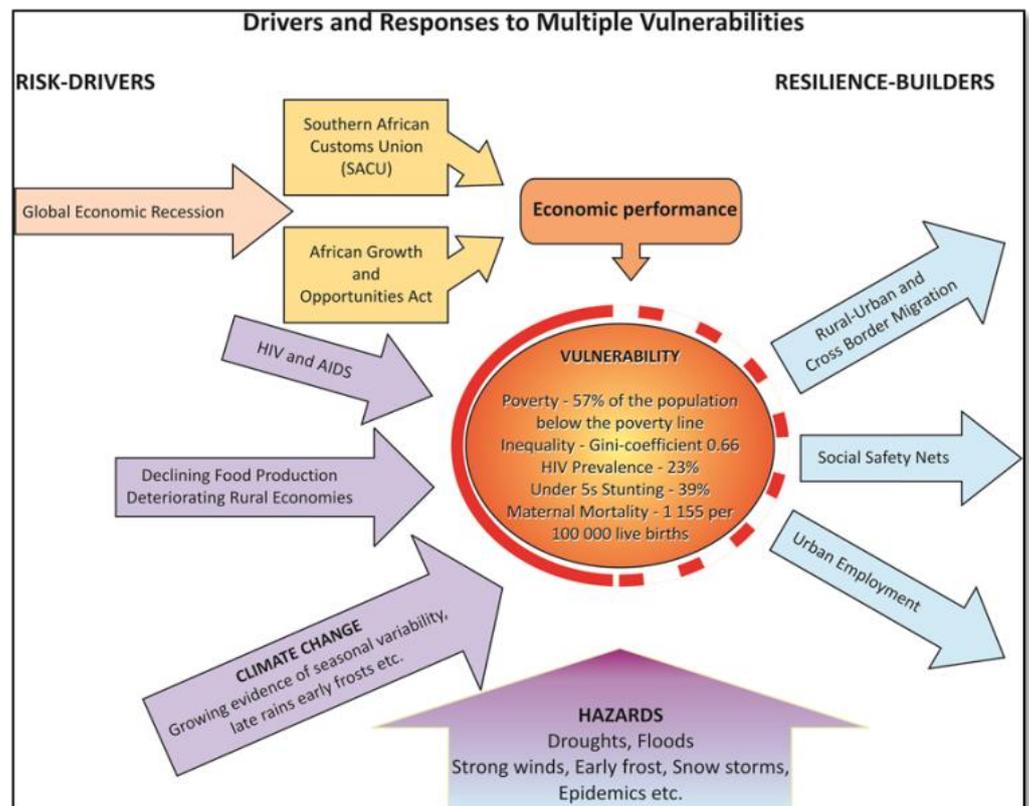
- aggregate or macroeconomic conditions in a particular country or region (e.g. gross domestic product (GDP), current account, exchange rate) and,
- a large defined group or groups of people in the same country or region (adapted from Mendoza, 2009)

Socio-political shocks: Complex processes that adversely affect human security, that are generated by tensions between the state and civil society or between different groups.

Public health threats: Events with potential to adversely affect the health of human populations, especially those that may spread internationally or present a serious and direct danger (adapted from the International Health Regulations, WHO, 2005).

Aid Shocks: Refer to the volatility in the value of official development assistance (ODA) for a specific country (or region), particularly the abrupt reduction or withdrawal of bilateral or multilateral assistance to lower than expected levels.

Compound and composite threats: Refer to the convergence of several shocks or stresses that either simultaneously and/or sequentially compound (amplify) an emergency – and that increase the likelihood of concatenating crises occurring within the region.



Planning priorities for disaster risk management and humanitarian actors

Although this study identified numerous concerns related to developmental risk reduction and humanitarian action, the study team proposes seven planning priorities. These give emphasis to the changing locus of emergencies and the region's dynamic risk profile. They specifically seek to strengthen regional, national and sub-national capabilities to better anticipate and respond to changing risk conditions facing southern Africa. The seven proposed planning priorities are:

- Establish institutional mechanisms for multisectoral urban risk management in growing urban centres.
- Support sustainable resourcing for national disaster management authorities.
- Strengthen human capital and capacity in national disaster management centres.
- Strengthen regional efforts in cross-border operational communication and cooperation.

It is hoped that this study will form the basis of humanitarian action in southern Africa over the next few years. Based on its findings, RIASCO partners will develop joint work plans and identify areas for additional study.

- Improve strategic information management on recurrent emergencies, risks and disasters.
- Revisit the scope and focus of current contingency plans.
- Prioritise measures that protect and advance human and social capital development (ie reduce vulnerability).

The study also developed a Humanitarian Planning Priorities Capacity and Gap Analysis, which can be found as an annex.

The way forward

It is envisioned that this study will form a basis for humanitarian action in southern Africa over the next few years. Based on its findings, RIASCO partners will develop joint work plans and identify areas for further study. An initial meeting of RIASCO members has been scheduled for 30 May 2013, during which the plans for the official launch of the report will also be discussed.

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Annex: Humanitarian Planning Priorities Capacity and Gap Analysis

Planning Priority Institutional Concerns	Capacity Analysis	Gaps to be addressed
Establish institutional mechanisms for multi sectoral urban risk management in growing urban centres	Southern Africa's population is increasingly urban , with economic, public health, social violence and food security shocks increasingly located in urban areas. Research findings indicate that with the exception of Namibia (Windhoek) and South Africa, there is no budgeted or sustainably staffed disaster/emergency response institutional capacity in southern African cities.	The absence of defined institutional capability with operational responsibility for urban risk management in rapidly growing cities constrains both developmentally-oriented risk management planning and contingency planning for complex emergencies – and risks diverting national disaster management resources to urban areas at the expense of rural locations – if both come under threat simultaneously.
Support sustainable resourcing for national disaster management authorities	Although almost all southern African countries have established national disaster management authorities, with core staff costs covered by government, many remain heavily dependent on co-funding by external assistance partners.	Highly constrained resourcing limits local efforts in disaster risk management and discourages employment /retention of skilled staff. Prolonged provision of external funding simultaneously creates dependency and increases exposure to aid shocks should funding be withdrawn.
Strengthen regional efforts in cross-border operational communication and cooperation.	Study results indicate uneven (and often poor) communication between neighbouring countries on emergent risk conditions (e.g. cholera outbreaks, and more recent downstream Limpopo floods) that have cross-border implications. UN and other international and non-governmental partners currently fill this communication gap. As local response capabilities improve, there is also potential for bilateral humanitarian assistance agreements along shared borders.	Given the high levels of cross-border mobility in southern Africa, combined with high likelihood of trans-boundary threats (especially epidemics and floods), the absence of mechanisms for timely and transparent bilateral communication increases the likelihood of regional emergencies. The focus here is on real-time, operational communication, rather than relying only on pre-planned seasonal consultative such as SARCOF. This also underlines a potential role for the SADC DRR Unit.
Strengthen human capital and capacity in national disaster management centres	Research findings indicate highly uneven human resource capabilities in national disaster management authorities. While some countries have built strong capability, in part through retention of experienced and skilled staff over many years, others are less experienced (for instance in the Indian Ocean Countries, aside from Madagascar). The region however, is increasingly served by HEIs that have actively engaged with local and national authorities in strengthening risk management capabilities.	There has been limited opportunity for exchange visits between respective national disaster management authorities (e.g. Namibian officials visiting the INGC, Mozambique for shared insights on improved trans-boundary flood management and management of flood-displaced people). There are also needs to manage succession planning for younger, less experienced staff.