



HIGHLIGHTS

- Resilience refers to the ability of a system, communities and households to endure stresses and shocks.
- Southern Africa as a region is characterized by high levels of vulnerability.
- Recent momentum around the resilience building agenda in Lesotho and Malawi show great promise.
- A groundbreaking resilience framework is being developed to guide future activities in the region.

FIGURES (SADC)

# of countries	15
Population*	212 m
Ave. life exp.	55.1 yrs
HIV Prev. rate (15 – 49 yrs.)	12.6%
Food insecure population*	8.65 m
Stunting rates	18 – 53%
Asylum seekers*	272,000
Refugees*	134,000

(Sources: SADC, IOM, UNHCR)

FUNDING

297 million

Committed/contributed in 2013 (US\$)*

(Source: FTS)

SADC MEMBERS

1. Angola
2. Botswana
3. DR Congo
4. Lesotho
5. Madagascar
6. Malawi
7. Mauritius
8. Mozambique
9. Namibia
10. Seychelles
11. South Africa
12. Swaziland
13. Tanzania
14. Zambia
15. Zimbabwe

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A vulnerable region

Where disasters occur in a context of vulnerability

Despite a number of Southern African countries being categorised as Middle Income by the [World Bank](#), the majority falls in the Low Human Development [category](#). According to a 2013 [joint study](#) by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union and the African Development Bank, some of the key issues facing the region include:

- High rates of poverty, income inequality and unemployment.
- High incidences of diseases probably related to or being worsened by HIV/AIDS prevalence rates; and poor health service delivery.
- Areas of chronic food and nutrition insecurity.
- Low enrolment in education beyond primary school.
- Extensive loss of forests and its related environmental impacts; deteriorating biodiversity and quality of ecosystems; and the impact of climate change.
- Poor funding and weak capacity of institutions involved in service delivery, especially those involved in environmental management and mainstreaming sectors.
- Environmental threats, including floods, cyclones, insect infestations.
- High migration between countries, as well as expanding urbanization.

This analysis is echoed by the 2013 [Humanitarian Trends in Southern Africa](#) study, which notes that while future projections anticipate an increase in extreme rainfall events due to climate change, population exposure and vulnerability also constitute key determinants of local risks. For instance, areas not previously flagged as 'high-risk' may become more emergency-prone due to population growth and settlement patterns, rather than because of changing weather or other environmental factors alone.

Year	Number of people affected by	
	Storms/floods	Food insecurity
2007/8	1,050,000	6,238,242
2008/9	1,370,000	7,477,492
2009/10	367,000	4,852,760
2010/11	708,000	3,743,958
2011/12	554,000	4,447,086
2012/13	519,000	6,729,095

Source: OCHA, UNRCO, SADC, NVACs. IFRC, media, respective governments. Data partial and incomplete.

The compounding nature of small and medium scale disasters

In the context described above, floods and cyclones necessitate emergency aid to hundreds of thousands of people across the region annually; and even in years of good

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agricultural conditions, millions of people continue to require food aid; often the same communities year after year.

However, it is not only the large scale emergencies that increase vulnerability: throughout Southern Africa multiple, frequently repeating and compounding shocks prevent communities from fully recovering. Ironically, as each individual shock is not of a scale that attracts global attention, responses are often under-resourced, which can magnify the severity of their longer-term impacts. There is little indication that current responses, while essential, are able to break this cycle of crises and increasing vulnerability. If long-term solutions are to be implemented, focus must shift towards risk management, preparedness and resilience building.

The diversification of threats

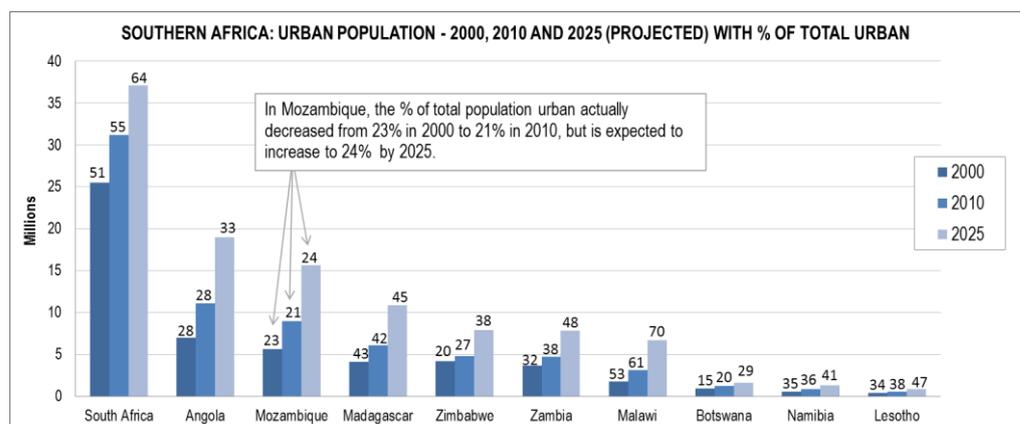
Furthermore, as Southern Africa becomes more economically integrated, it also becomes more exposed to a wider diversity of threats. Similarly with growing global and continental connectivity, the consequences of shocks sustained elsewhere are most likely to transfer quickly across Southern Africa with the potential of amplifying existing vulnerability and weakening coping mechanisms.

These issues act with a compounding force to weaken the ability of communities to handle any future shock, be it climatic or economic. The categorization of a number of countries in the region as Middle Income, often due to revenues generated from mining and exportation of raw materials, masks the crisis conditions many communities find themselves in.

The new Southern Africans: young, urban and unemployed

Looking ahead, Southern Africa's changing settlement patterns and population distribution is reshaping its risks. The region's growing population is increasingly located in urban areas, often in unplanned and underserved settlements with inadequate municipal infrastructure. It is also young, with up to 20 per cent of the population aged between 15 and 24 years and likely to be unemployed. Cross-border migration has become city-bound and is associated with an ever-expanding informal economy. This has been augmented by patterns of continental migration from outside Southern Africa.

Chronic vulnerability conditions, including high HIV prevalence and a high rate of stunting and malnutrition, are also increasingly concentrated in urban areas, while in many countries enrolment in high school is low and pursuit of higher education opportunities remain constrained. It is essential that these trends considered and responded to; otherwise vulnerability will not be adequately addressed, and may even increase.



Source: UN HABITAT

Another result was that more children were enrolled in schools because their parents were able to provide meals for them.

Resilience case studies

Lesotho: tackling food security through resilience building

In 2012, an estimated 726,000 Basothos (more than 36 per cent of the population) were in need of immediate humanitarian assistance following late rains. In addition to the response to immediate needs, momentum was created around resilience building approaches, funded in part by an allocation from the OCHA-managed Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was able to go beyond the traditional emergency provision of seeds and tools by restoring crop production capacity through sustainable techniques such as [conservation agriculture](#) and improving nutritional diversity through [home gardening](#). Initial results from this project were very encouraging and had additional resilience-building effects such as changing destructive farming practices and building community solidarity.

Also, the UN World Food Programme (WFP), through their [Cash for Assets](#) project, sought to protect livelihoods and enhance the self-reliance of affected households while also implementing projects that engage communities in protecting community assets, such as protecting rangelands from erosion by planting trees and constructing anti-erosion barriers.

These initiatives, together with several others undertaken by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and NGOs such as CARE, CARITAS, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and World Vision International (WVI), had a substantial impact: in 2013, the [number of people at risk of food insecurity](#) decreased by 500,000 people to 223,000.

Sharing sustainable agricultural practices in Malawi

In late 2012, aid organizations in Malawi estimated that close to two million people – 13 per cent of the population – faced food insecurity. The central and southern regions - areas that are often plagued by unpredictable rains and poor harvests - were the hardest hit.

With a serious food crisis looming, the CERF [released US\\$3.2 million in January 2013](#) to support emergency relief efforts. FAO received almost \$1.4 million of that allocation to provide 124,000 people with seeds, small-scale irrigation equipment, and training on sustainable agricultural practices. The targeted communities saw significant increases in production, improved crop and nutrition diversity, and enhanced household income. Another result was that more children were enrolled in schools because their parents were able to provide meals for them. The most notable measure of success, however, came in late 2013. By November, the country once again faced widespread food shortages, with 1.8 million people at risk of hunger. However, the few communities that benefited from the FAO project required no assistance.



Credit: Chesterman Kumwenda / FAO
Malawi (2013) - In Thyolo in southern Malawi, an agricultural project has helped communities overcome chronic drought and food insecurity.

The Regional Resilience Framework

The pillars of a Resilience Framework

Given the paradigm shifts in our understanding of humanitarian assistance and development, together with the evolving regional humanitarian context, the Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee for Southern Africa (RIASCO) has initiated the

The development of these proposed activities are envisaged within the next twelve months, with the launch of a Resilience Strategy foreseen before the end of 2014.

development of a regional resilience framework for Southern Africa, in partnership with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and academia.

A technical workshop held in early June 2014 identified three main pillars of a resilience framework:

Enhancing livelihoods and productivity to promote resilience, which will include key activities such as strengthening market access to diversify livelihoods and promote farming as a business; strengthening value chains, regulatory support, and access to market information through mobile technology; improving access to financial services; focusing on urban livelihoods for the youth and supportive regulatory environments; improving early warning information for early mitigation; and focusing on gender and youth as key target groups.



Credit: Mpho Shelile / IRIN
Lesotho (2013) - The 2012-2013 farming season got off to a promising start with increased support for farmers.

Strengthening peoples' access to social and basic services that are important to resilience, including efforts to inform people of their right to basic services; promoting adaptive and scalable social services that can withstand shocks; and promoting a common understanding of risk factors that can disrupt access to social services and plan for this in both rural and urban settings

Promoting social protection for resilience building, by means of strengthening social protection; strengthening coordination of social protection initiatives to respond to different forms of vulnerability; improving measures of vulnerability to promote better early warning and response; and strengthening dynamic vulnerability mapping.

Moving the resilience agenda forward

The following next steps have already been identified:

- SADC will be a key partner in the development of a regional resilience framework/strategy, of which a draft will be ready by end September 2014.
- National governments will chart and lead the agenda for resilience, strengthen the way they communicate within their system and with their stakeholders (including their citizens), as well as strengthen existing institutions to lead the resilience agenda by supporting platforms through a framework that applies resilience to their processes.
- UN and NGO Country Offices will foster existing or nascent multi-sectoral and multi-agency platforms; ensure cooperation between parties and with governments; as well as work on the same level within the same framework. This should contribute to fostering government ownership at national and local level, through the inclusion of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and the private sector.
- UN, NGO and donor Regional Offices will embed within RIASCO a resilience initiative, which will, in the interim, be co-led by WFP and World Vision, supported by FAO. OCHA, as chair of RIASCO, will continue leading advocacy efforts, while the interim resilience working group will remain responsible for managing technical work, as well as facilitating engagement with SADC and governments to take the process forward.

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