



This report is produced by Office of the Resident Coordinator in Lesotho in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It was issued by the Humanitarian Country Team. It covers the period up to 19 May 2016.

## Highlights

- Lesotho continues to face a drought crisis. While the peak of the El Niño weather phenomenon has subsided, its significant effects on the population are set to continue and worsen until at least April 2017.
- Below normal rainfall has continued in Lesotho with forecasts predicting this is likely to persist until June 2016.
- A recent Nutrition and HIV mass screening assessment conducted in five districts, found that 8.2% of pregnant and lactating mothers were moderately malnourished. 2.2% of children under the age of five were moderately malnourished while 0.6% had severe acute malnutrition.
- In a recent effort to assess the impact of the drought on children, it was found that child labour, sexual abuse of children and separation from usual caregivers have increased as a result of the drought.
- The Government of Lesotho has declared a state of emergency (22 December 2016) and has requested international support.
- While some response operations have commenced with the limited funding received so far, other limited funds that have been pledged will allow limited continuation and expansion of the ongoing humanitarian response. So far the level of funding in general has meant that funding received has had to be prioritised to provide limited coverage in the hardest hit areas.
- A recent FAO study identified that in order to maintain cereal consumption in vulnerable households in Lesotho, every percentage increase in the price of cereals would have to be matched by a 0.4 percent increase in total income.



Map Sources: ESRI, UNCS, The Times Atlas of the World.  
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created in Sep 2013.

**534,502**

People currently at risk of food insecurity up to June 2016

**377,900**

People immediately requiring food or cash assistance

**US \$47.2 m**

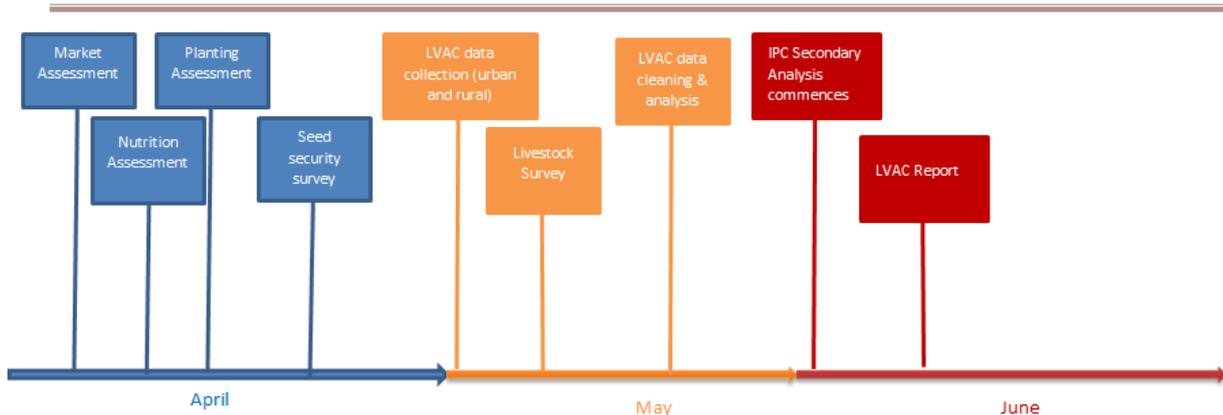
Resource Gap for UN and NGOs to meet current needs

# Situation Overview

Lesotho, like the rest of Southern Africa, is experiencing the impacts of an unprecedented El Niño phenomenon, including two consecutive years of drought and erratic rains. An LVAC Rapid Assessment conducted in January 2016 found the estimated total number of people at risk of food insecurity in Lesotho has increased to 534,502 people from 463,936 in July 2015.

The Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee has been re-formed. In May 2016, teams have conducted data collection in the districts and results are currently being analysed and compiled with findings expected to be available by June 1, 2016. Because of a number of factors relating to the poor harvest, food price rises, limited labour opportunities and poor access to water, it is expected that the LVAC findings will reflect a further deterioration of the findings of the Rapid Assessment from January 2016.

Timeline for Assessments in Lesotho

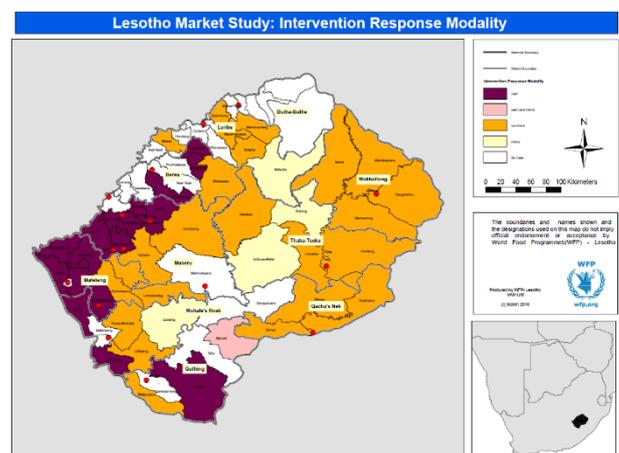


The Government of Lesotho (GoL) declared a state of emergency (22 December 2015) in light of the drought that has gripped the country since 2015 and is expected to continue through 2016 with continued negative impacts through 2017. The historic delays in rains attributed to El Niño are expected to have a severe impact on the food security of Basotho people in 2016 and 2017. Many areas that suffered water shortages in late 2015, are likely to start experiencing such water shortages by the middle of 2016 until seasonal rains recommence in October. The current drought cannot only be seen as a food security crisis. It is impacting different sectors including food security and agriculture, water, health and nutrition as well as migration and protection.

The Government of Lesotho will likely release its official crop forecast figures in May 2016, these results will be published in the next situation update. According to the LVAC Market Assessment from March 2016, all 10 districts are expected to have been affected by lower production levels. Key informant discussions in this assessment place maize production in the country for the 2015-16 harvest at 35,000MT, down from 74,000MT in 2014-15. The total cereal domestic annual requirements in Lesotho (stocks for human consumption, animal feed and waste) are estimated at 360,000MT. The lower expected production occurs at a time when food prices have been increasing in Lesotho. According to the Bureau of Statistics, the price of a 12.5kg bag of white maize in Maseru has increased by 37% between March 2015 and March 2016.

One of the objectives of the LVAC market survey was to determine programming modalities that could be viably used to reach food insecure population. The assessment determined that some community councils are able to support Cash (27 out of 62 councils) or vouchers (26 out of 62 councils) while others will require in-kind assistance (8 out of 62 councils).

A recent Nutrition and HIV survey found that the amount of pregnant and lactating women moderately malnourished was 8.2%, however this reflects a 37% increase in comparison to the 2014 DHS. The same survey found that there had been an increase in malnutrition during January and February where 5.23% and 7.61% of the total children screened were



found to be malnourished. While the highest caseloads are in Quthing and Maseru, increases in nutrition caseload does appear to be distributed evenly across districts assessed, with an impact observed in Maseru and Mohale's Hoek. There is an 8.3% increase in admissions of malnourished children for January – March 2016 (65) compared to same time last year (60). Maseru and Mohale's Hoek account for the highest admissions.

With regards to HIV this survey found that 33 children 0 – 5 years, 28 children 6 – 9 years, 58 children 10 – 19 years and 1,938 adults have been lost to follow up. 86% health facilities reported following up with clients who missed appointments (using tracking tools, phones and VHWs, while others reported a major challenge is the distance). 28% of the health facilities reported that they observed a reduction of clients on ART in the last three months. The districts with the highest number of ART clients lost to follow up (LTFU) were Maseru, and Mohale's Hoek. While defaulters in Mohale's Hoek seem to remain stable, a steady increase can be seen in the last months in Maseru.

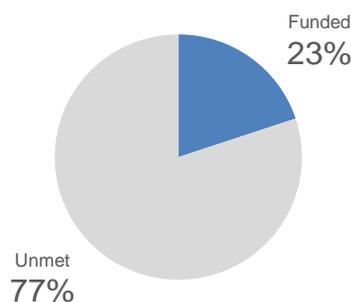
Concerning rising protection issues, only 33% of the health facilities indicated that they managed GBV victims according to the national protocol, and most common reason not to do so was absence of said protocol. GBV and other protection issues arise as one of the negative consequences out of the stress provoked by the drought. Currently, further data gathering is ongoing.

A recent survey of schools found that two-thirds of schools in Qacha's Nek had been affected by water shortages. The data analysis for water shortages in schools is ongoing for all districts.

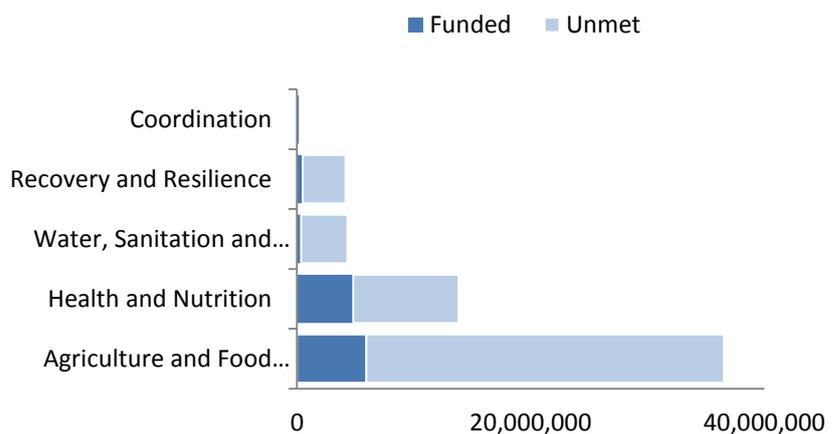
## Funding

Lesotho UN and NGO Drought Response Requirements

**US\$54million** requested



Funding by sector (in million US\$)



The Government of Lesotho released an Appeal Document in January 2016, and has pledged to fund around US\$ 10 million in immediate interventions, predominantly to address water shortages. This appeal is set to be revised in light of the upcoming LVAC assessment results.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) (UN and NGOs) have compiled their revised current and projected requirements and have planned interventions that will address drought and this amounts to \$54 million of which 23% funded. This HCT requirement (not including government requirement and commitments) will be revised following the LVAC assessment and the development of a new Humanitarian Response Plan.

The extent and projected length of the crisis means that Interventions are needed that both address immediate needs and build resilience against on-going and future shocks. These resilience building interventions also need to begin immediately.

The financial aspect, if cleared, will allow HCT partners to support the government in providing an effective response that will help alleviate the negative impacts of drought to the most vulnerable of the Lesotho population.

The Lesotho National Red Cross Society (LRCS) has launched an appeal for CHF 741,557 (US \$738,502) and have received the funding.

The United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has provided US \$4,78 million, supporting lifesaving interventions in the field of Food and Agriculture (WFP, FAO and UNICEF) Health and Nutrition (WHO, UNICEF and WFP) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (UNICEF).

Further funding has been provided by ECHO. FAO and WFP both benefitted from EUR 1 million that supported cash assistance (WFP) and agricultural inputs (FAO).

All humanitarian partners, including donors and recipient agencies, are encouraged to inform OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS - <http://fts.unocha.org>) of cash and in-kind contributions by e-mailing: [fts@un.org](mailto:fts@un.org)

## Humanitarian Response

The Lesotho Drought Response Plan will be revised following the release of the LVAC findings, led by the Government of Lesotho, in collaboration with UN and NGO partners. In the meantime, some of the ongoing response activities include those detailed below.



### Agriculture & Livestock and Food Security

In response to the 377,900 people found to need food or cash assistance by the Rapid Assessment, some response programmes have commenced. With the limited funds that humanitarian partners have received, cash transfers have started to reach the most vulnerable families in the hardest hit, prioritised districts. These programmes are in line with the Lesotho Drought Response Plan, prepared by the Government of Lesotho with the collaboration of development partners.

125,450 vulnerable people are currently targeted with direct cash assistance by WFP and UNICEF until the third quarter of 2016. UNICEF will respond to 115,000 of these across all 10 districts by supplementing existing safety nets, which are no longer sufficient in light of deteriorating livelihoods and livestock as well as increasing staple food prices. A top-up to the existing Child Grant Programme (CGP) will support ultra-poor and very vulnerable families with a small amount of extra funds (US\$38 per quarter) meet a higher share of their survival needs (not the full survival 'basket'). In addition to the support by UNICEF to all districts, WFP will reach 20,000 additional people at the same level of vulnerability that were not previously covered by existing safety nets. WFP funding will support ultra-poor households in Mofale's Hoek and Mafeteng, two of most affected districts<sup>1</sup>, complementing UNICEF's cash assistance in geographic areas that have not been covered previously. These same vulnerable households will also benefit from complementary programming in the form of a small home garden and nutrition kit from FAO to bolster food production and nutrition in the household and to liberate funds currently used to purchase fruits and vegetables<sup>2</sup>.

FAO currently has funding to assist 25,000 Households (125,000 people) with home gardening and nutrition complementary packages. Besides FAO will assist in protecting livelihoods of vulnerable active farmers with distribution of agricultural inputs (staple food crops and home gardening) with the promotion of Climate Smart Agriculture at community level. FAO has currently received funds to assist 3,000 households (15,000 people). With ECHO funds, FAO is currently conducting an assessment on the livestock subsector, severely affected by the drought, and the seed security in the country. Both assessments are being undertaken and national level and will inform the response plan in the coming weeks.

Out of the same set of beneficiaries, WFP will be able to support the 1,500 most affected children 6 to 59 months and 200 lactating women with supplementary feeding interventions to prevent Moderate Acute Malnutrition in the same most affected community councils.

LRCS provided support under the Food and Agriculture sector to 1,800 vulnerable households translating into 9,000 beneficiaries. It covered 2 months' food distribution followed by cash transfer for 4 months ending in July 2016 in the three districts of Qacha's Nek, Thaba-Tseka and Mafeteng. The cash transfer program will run concurrently with the livelihood interventions that include provision of agricultural inputs; vegetables and field crops seeds and garden tools as well as community trainings on farming techniques. The LRCS response also include hygiene promotion.

The Government of Lesotho has allocated 155 million Maloti for the drought response. Line ministries have begun activities using this fund. The Government of Lesotho has also received donated staple foods from the Government of China (2477MT) and the Government of Botswana (60 MT).

<sup>1</sup> Based on the findings of the rapid assessment.

<sup>2</sup> The complementarity of social protection cash grants and home gardening and nutrition support in Lesotho was evaluated in 2014 after piloting the model with DFID funds in response to 2012 crisis. Evidences advice for a scale up of the model in the current crisis. See report in the following link: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4694e.pdf>

1,500 vulnerable households will receive substantive agricultural input support from FAO in time for the next planting season.



## Health and Nutrition

UNICEF is leading the response of malnutrition pre- and post-hospitalisation and will be procuring and distributing the relevant treatment items (like ready to use therapeutic food, F-75 and micronutrients) and monitor and report on cases in the communities. WHO is leading the support to health clinics and hospitals to strengthen the response to disease outbreaks and the treatment of patients in all district hospitals.

Access to water and sanitation in health centres has been identified as a crucial area in terms of maintaining the service delivery of health centres across the country. Programmes by UNICEF, WFP and WHO to ensure adequate ongoing treatment of the most vulnerable (children under the age of 5, pregnant and lactating women, PLHIV and TB, the elderly and the disabled) by:

- Strengthening treatment of malnutrition (UNICEF) of 17,810 women and girls and 1,775 boys;
- Preventing Moderate Acute Malnutrition (WFP) of 2,000 beneficiaries (out of which 1150 are female);
- Strengthening disease surveillance and response to drought-related impacts in 200 health centres, covering 45,400 beneficiaries (WHO), out of which 25,500 are female.



## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

In the WASH sector, the GoL was tankering water during the previous peak in water shortages to communities most in need, however, districts are report insufficient support thus far. To complement Government interventions, UNICEF will provide water quality surveillance and household water treatment as well as hygiene education at the school level, which are critical measures to address the new circumstances provoked by drought-related water shortages.

These interventions need to be urgently scaled up, particularly geographically. In order to reach all people in need of life-saving assistance across all affected geographic areas more donor funding needs to be received.

## General Coordination

An Inter-Ministerial Cabinet Task Force has been established to support the coordination efforts by the Disaster Management Authority.

To further strengthen the humanitarian coordination, the United Nations, together with NGOs and the Lesotho Red Cross Society has established a Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). This coordination mechanism seeks to optimise the collective efforts of the UN, Non-Governmental Organisations and the Red Cross movement and to strengthen the overall drought (current and anticipated) response.

The HCT will give strategic support to the Government of Lesotho in order to continue assisting its response and preparedness efforts. The United Nations system together with NGOs supported the Government of Lesotho in the development of a drought resilience and mitigation plan which accompanied the declaration of emergency on December 22, 2015.

Currently, the UN supports the set-up of an Emergency Operations Centre that coordinates the operational response and gathers information and drafts regular situation updates. The EOC will be hosted in the premises of DMA for the time being. UN OCHA will provide a training for the identified government and NGO partners to man the operations centre by the end of May.

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