

INFORMATION UPDATE ON DROUGHT RESPONSE BY THE UN SYSTEM

May 2024

The purpose of this information update is to keep the UN in Zambia updated on the United Nation's contribution to the current emergencies (Drought and Cholera). The brief may also be shared with Cooperating Partners as a way of also keeping them updated.

Key Highlights

- President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia declared the ongoing drought, caused by the El Niño weather phenomenon, a national disaster on February 29, to complement the Government's response efforts, the UN and its partners launched an appeal on May 7, calling for \$228 million to assist 4.6 million people between May and December of this year.
- So far, only \$18.1 million of the \$228 million UN Appeal has been funded. We urgently call on humanitarian partners to provide the necessary funding to save lives and support those affected by this crisis.
- From the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), \$5.5 million has been allocated to four UN agencies—WFP, FAO, UNICEF, and UNHCR. These agencies, in collaboration with cluster partners, will address needs in Food Security (both Agriculture and Food Assistance), Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene, Nutrition, and Protection. This support will reach 560,000 people, including 50,000 refugees affected by the drought. The UN is doing advocacy to allocate more funds.
- UN agencies have also reprogrammed existing funding and initiatives to respond to drought where this has been possible.
- At an Extraordinary Summit of the heads of state and government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the current crisis, leaders announced that 61 million people were impacted by El Niño. They launched a humanitarian appeal for US\$5.5 billion to supplement the affected member states' own resources, calling for support to meet the urgent humanitarian needs.
- Ms. Cindy McCain, Executive Director of WFP (World Food Programme), visited Zambia to Strengthen Food Security Initiatives.



- Preparations for the 2024 In-depth Vulnerability & Needs Assessment (ZVAC) exercise lead by DMMU are underway, 8 UN agencies (UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM, UNDP, WHO, WFP, FAO, UNFPA) have committed financial and in-kind support to this process. UNFPA together with Lifeline-Childline is supporting DMMU with PSEAH awareness and reporting training during the TOT of enumerators.
- Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) survey monitor nutritional status has been completed and results presented at the inter cluster meeting with DMMU.
- Lifeline-Childline is responding to protection and PSEA related concerns with a tollfree line and has collected data to assess the situation and to inform responses since January 2024.
- ECHO mission in Zambia and consultation meeting with UN and humanitarian partners held on 24th May. ECHO discussed on providing support the Zambian System to better preparedness for any crisis and support to the drought response.
- Multisectoral rapid qualitative assessment conducted from 29 May – 2 June covering Education, WASH, Nutrition and Child Protection in 4 districts prioritized by DMMU (Sikongo and Shangombo districts in Western province and Kazungula and Gwembe districts in Southern province) with support from UNICEF. Institutions involved are DMMU, PPDF, MoH, ZNPHI and UNZA.

Situation Update

Zambia is experiencing the driest agricultural season in more than forty years, resulting in significant crop losses, increased livestock deaths, and worsening poverty. Over nine million people in 84 out of the 117 districts are affected according to the Government crop assessment data.

The drought has also impacted areas where about 2.04 million people were already severely food insecure in IPC 3 and 4 and in need of humanitarian assistance beyond the end of the lean season (October 2023 - March 2024). Rising inflation, coupled with high food inflation, increasing prices of commodities will impede access to food for vulnerable populations

Shortage of food due to depleting stocks, increasing commodity prices will increase the risk of malnutrition among the affected communities. Drying water sources and decreasing ground water availability is severely impacting access to safe water for people in affected areas. About 3.5 million people will be targeted in support to access safe water. Currently, the country has at least 74.7 per cent of its population accessing water through improved sources however, the number is expected to reduce due to the drought.

The drought is having devastating consequences for women and children, heightening the risk of GBV, sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as child marriage. School absenteeism has been anecdotally noted to have increased and is expected to heighten risks including adolescent pregnancies.



Drought Response - UN Support to Government

Coordination

In response to the unprecedented challenges posed by the drought exacerbated by climate change, the Government of Zambia through DMMU activated various clusters (Agriculture and Food Security, Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, Health, Education, Protection, Early Recovery & Resilience, Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), Energy, Emergency Logistics, Infrastructure and Wildlife Management) co-led with the UN System, in November 2023, to facilitate the implementation of the Government-led Food Security Drought Response Plan.

The United Nations (UN) as Co-chair of the cluster groups reiterates its commitment to supporting the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) in positive contribution to the drought situation in the country in creating a nexus between humanitarian and development to facilitate a smooth transition from emergency response to development perspective in the affected districts. Cluster meetings were conducted regularly for the month of May 2024.



The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), deployed one full time staff as surge capacity to the UN Resident Coordination Office to provide broad based technical assistance to the UN, DMMU and cluster member staff on coordinated responses. The OCHA coordinator continued to support conducting Humanitarian Country Team meeting, Inter-sector coordination meeting, Response Monitoring (5W matrix), Drought response appeal financial tracking, support Government led Situation Report, finalizing UN-Partner Appeal, management of Central Emergency Response Fund for Zambia.

Overall Resource Mobilization Update (Financial Tracking)

Resource mobilization for the response has been a priority of the UN. So far US\$ 18,161,000 has been confirmed. In addition to this amount, the UN is working with partners to re-purpose at least US\$ 4 million from existing funding.

The breakdown of the sources of the funding to date (US\$ 18,161,000) is:

- **US\$ 5.5 million from the UN Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF)**
- **US\$ 3.5 million from Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) Premium paid by WFP**
- **US\$ 325,000 WFP from Government of Ireland**
- **US\$ 3.9 million WFP Emergency funds**
- **US\$ 3.1 million FAO Emergency funds**
- **US\$ 250,000 UNFPA Emergency funds**
- **US\$ 86,000 UNICEF Emergency funds**
- **US\$ 100,000 UNDP Crisis Bureau (Emergency)**
- **US\$ 50,000 UNDP SURGE**
- **US\$ 1,350,000 UNDP SCRALA Project Water and Irrigations System(reprogrammed funds)**

Funding under consideration – **US\$ 3.886 million**, by which includes some re-purposing funds.

Agriculture & Food Security

Approximately 6.6 million people across 84 districts urgently need food assistance. A rapid needs assessment conducted in March 2024 revealed that 85% of affected households rely on agriculture, with total crop losses reported. Households are increasingly adopting negative coping strategies, jeopardizing future productivity and recovery.

The FSC's response targets 2.6 million people in 41 affected districts, requiring \$109.5 million. The Government is leading immediate humanitarian efforts through the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), which provides in-kind food, cash-based transfers (CBT), and community sales by the Food Reserve Agency (FRA).

WFP has delivered 1,603 MT of FRA maize to 19 districts. Logistics support continues with WFP transporting FRA maize, achieving 58% of the target. WFP has resourced up to \$10M and submitted funding requests for additional resources from bilateral and multilateral partners, i.e., CERF, ARC pay-out, AfDB, Ireland, BHA, BHC, including internal funding mechanisms. A consortium of NGOs is set to enhance FSC efforts with nutrition programming funded by repurposed EU funds.

Efforts include WFP, UNICEF, and WVI conducting joint targeting, registration, and market assessments in Western Province. WFP is also setting up a remote food security and markets monitoring system to cover all 84 districts by June's end, complemented by near real-time data from traders via a call centre in collaboration with DMMU.

The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) is finalizing a crop forecasting survey, expected to contribute to the Zambia Vulnerability Assessment Committee (ZVAC) process. Preparations for ZVAC are underway, with training of enumerators scheduled soon, supported by eight UN agencies.



The Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS) plans to expand the Social Cash Transfer (SCT) program both vertically and horizontally, with a rollout scheduled for June/July where each household will receive ZMW 400.

Coordination and clear guidelines for transfer values between social protection and humanitarian response are critical to avoid confusion as the response plan is rolled out.

A total of \$60.1 million is required to provide initial life-saving and early recovery assistance to 2,764,843 smallholder farmers affected by drought. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is supporting DMMU, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock in conducting a Loss and Damage assessment for the agriculture sector, which has been integrated into the Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC) process.

To address the emergency in the animal health sector, \$1,841,456 is available under the FAO Emergency Center for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD). Additionally, \$120,000 is allocated to support feed production and vaccines for poultry in priority districts.

Nutrition



The SMART surveys conducted across various provinces revealed notable findings regarding malnutrition and household hunger:

Prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) among Under-fives:

The prevalence varied across provinces, with the lowest recorded in the eastern provinces at 1.7%, and the highest in Southern Province at 6.2%. This marks a significant increase in acute malnutrition compared to the 2019 drought, particularly evident in Southern Province, where rates rose from 2.7% to 6.2%.

Detection of Extremely Malnourished Cases: Despite relatively low overall GAM prevalence, cases of extreme malnutrition were noted in Southern, Western, and Lusaka rural areas. This suggests a potentially worsening nutrition situation and highlights gaps in the detection and referral of malnourished individuals.

Acute Malnutrition among Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLW):

The surveys indicated a high prevalence of acute malnutrition among PLW, ranging from 3 to 5 times higher than that observed among children. UNICEF and UNFPA are planning joint procurement of certified micronutrients for pregnant women in selected districts, identification done through MOH mobile clinics supported by partners including UNFPA.

Chronic Malnutrition (Stunting): Across all surveys, stunting prevalence was found to be high to very high, with rates ranging from 26.1% in Western Province to 34.6% in Eastern Province. Elevated stunting levels were also observed in Lusaka urban (34.3%) and Northwestern Province (30.6%).

Household Hunger Scale: More than half of the households surveyed reported experiencing hunger, except for Lusaka urban areas. Severe hunger was particularly pronounced in Western Province, with 48.2% of households experiencing it, while in Southern Province, 17.8% faced severe hunger.

These worsening trends in malnutrition and household hunger are expected to exacerbate both acute and chronic nutrition challenges, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions and support.

In April 2024, a total of 528,689 individuals were screened, with 5,585 admitted for Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) at a rate of 1%. Lusaka recorded the highest admissions with 192,698 children screened. Although wasting remains below 1%, an increase is expected due to the ongoing drought and the commencement of door-to-door active case finding.

The overall response plan for preventive and treatment interventions in 26 districts will cost \$11,607,898 over 12 months, targeting 1,047,571 people. A bi-weekly monitoring tool has been implemented across the 84 drought-affected districts to enhance monitoring and avoid stockouts of nutrition commodities. Training for 46 health workers on the integrated Emergency IMAM/MAICYN package is underway in Lumezi and Lundazi Districts, supported by UNICEF.

Following a joint UNICEF-WFP mission to Western Province, the Food Security Cluster has prioritized households with pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) with malnutrition, as well as children under 5 with SAM and MAM, for food aid. Weekly cluster meetings continue every Friday. All provinces currently have sufficient Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) to treat the existing caseload, and ongoing support is being provided for the distribution of supplies.

A Nutrition Cluster Coordinator has been recruited to support systematic monitoring and operationalization of cluster coordination decisions. Against a funding requirement of \$11,607,898, the cluster has received \$1,000,000 from CERF, with \$2.6 million under discussion for repurposing SUN II Joint Programme, and additional funding considerations from FCDO (\$843,000) and GIZ (\$443,000), totaling a pipeline of \$3.886 million.

WASH

The overall WASH response plan aims to assist approximately 3.5 million people in 84 affected districts across eight provinces, focusing on those accessing therapeutic feeding in healthcare facilities and those in areas with depleted water tables. The response, which prioritizes healthcare facilities and schools, is projected to cost \$20,650,000.

Progress includes the ongoing development of a concept for harmonizing water quality monitoring guidance by the National Water and Sanitation Council and the Ministry of Health (MoH). The Cluster Information Management Coordinator began duties, and meetings have been held with NWASCO and DMMU to leverage data and roll out the 4W and 5W templates. Visuals for 3W/4W data are being developed, and maps of boreholes in districts with complete data are being created.

Weekly coordination meetings continue, including National WASH cluster meetings, WASH/IPC in HCF sub-cluster meetings, and Water Quality Monitoring meetings. An initial meeting on harmonizing water quality monitoring guidelines took place on May 17, and a draft concept note is being developed. A national drought response plan meeting was held on May 14, chaired by the Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation. Preliminary meetings in Western and Southern provinces have set the stage for revising healthcare facility statuses to benefit from joint Nutrition and WASH CERF funding.

The distribution of WASH supplies for cholera response continues, with 40,000 household kits sent to Central Province and 130,000 kits to the Copperbelt, including 173 schools. The Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation has requested weekly updates from partners in the WASH Cluster to inform cabinet submissions.

Planning for rapid assessments on dysfunctional boreholes in 20 drought-affected districts targeted by UNICEF has commenced, with completion expected by mid-June. Data collection by district authorities on dysfunctional boreholes is ongoing and should be completed by the end of May.

Resource mobilization remains a challenge, with \$800,000 secured from CERF and \$128,639 in the pipeline from SUN-II re-purposing, leaving a funding gap of \$19,908,000 (96%).



Education

With the Ministry of Education response plan having putting more emphasis on school feeding during the drought, this response will target 4.6 million learners in the affected districts with the school feeding programme and other interventions aimed at ensuring continued learning. The Ministry of Education (MoE) will commence the adaptation and development of audio and video content to support continued learning for grades 5, 6, 10, and 11 in English, Math, Science, and Civic Education during the drought emergency.

Weekly coordination meetings continue every Thursday. A joint meeting with UNESCO was held to support MoE on learner content continuity through radio, TV, and Learning Passport.

The cluster is also planning a joint rapid assessment on school attendance and performance to coordinate the response and generate evidence of the drought emergency's negative impact on students' regular attendance and education continuity.

An EiE training workshop for MoE colleagues and cluster partners is also being planned, with further meetings necessary to finalize details.

The Education Cluster's resource mobilization update shows an appeal for \$2,675,415, with \$86,462 secured, leaving a gap of \$2,588,953.



Health

The health sector planning involves coordination with cluster partners. WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health (MoH) in 84 districts, UNICEF in 20 districts, and UNFPA in 17 districts, while no response has been received from NGOs regarding district support. Key challenges include the absence of an Incidence Management System for drought response, affecting coordination and commitment levels, and a lack of catalytic funds to support MoH activities.

A situation analysis of DHIS2 and IDSR data on key diseases is ongoing. No field missions or on-site assessments have been conducted yet, pending the review of this data and outbreak reports. Current outbreaks include cholera in Copperbelt (Chililabombwe, Kitwe, and Ndola) with 121 cases as of May 20, 2024, anthrax in Western province (Mongu and Nalolo), vaccine-derived polio in Ndola, and increasing diarrheal diseases.



UNFPA conducted a comprehensive training on the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in crisis situations, with another session planned for June 10, 2024, in Lusaka Province. In Monze, 20 community-based volunteers were trained as Safe Motherhood Action Groups (SMAGS) to support pregnant and lactating women, linking them to SRH services.

These efforts will expand to other affected districts with integrated mobile clinics supported by UNFPA.

UNFPA also supports the national Life/Childline for providing maternal health and GBV services information, having received 50,778 calls by mid-May, with 26% related to GBV risk mitigation. Additionally, traditional and community leaders in Monze were oriented on the importance of continued SRH/GBV services amidst the drought.

MOH run mobile SRH clinics have been funded by UNFPA to support and identify particularly vulnerable pregnant women to support the linkage to emergency food support; MOH has issued public awareness IEC materials to link vulnerable groups to the UN supported Lifeline-Childline.

Permanent Secretary Dr. Sinyangwe chaired an MoH update meeting on May 21, 2024. Action points include a donor resource mobilization meeting planned for May 30, 2024, and provincial contingency planning and technical support from June 4-6, 2024.

The MoH requires K4,732,918,782 (\$182,035,337.77), with only K180,515,028 (\$6,942,885.69) available, leaving a gap of K4,552,403,754 (\$175,092,452.08). UN Health Cluster's estimated budget includes several projects focusing on various populations with a total funding requirement of \$20,169,458, with only \$250,000 secured, resulting in a gap of \$19,919,458.

Protection

To effectively implement the response plan activities, partners in the protection sector require an estimated \$3 million for the period from April to December 2024. On May 21, 2024, a meeting was held with the Minister at MCDSS, involving UNHCR, UNFPA, and UNICEF, to formalize the handover of sector co-leadership from UNFPA to UNHCR. This meeting also highlighted the need for better coordination with MCDSS. Following this, a protection sector meeting is scheduled to enhance regular coordination.

The sector requested and received approval for a small amendment to the CERF allocation of \$445,000 to include Lifeline/ChildLine as an additional implementing partner. The sector met on May 23 to discuss the next steps for project implementation. The protection sector will be represented at a DMMU meeting alongside the RCCE sector to coordinate key public messaging related to the drought.

Lifeline-Childline is starting outreach work through existing emergency funding from UNFPA in Southern Province on 10 June 2024.



Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

The cluster has updated the plan, with the lead changing from the Ministry of Information to the Public Private Dialogue Forum (PPDF). Partners have offered support in various areas, including call centre support, agents, studio for disaster adverts, communication officers, rapid assessment questionnaires, and transport needs. Progress has been made since the change in lead institution, but financing remains a challenge as no funds are allocated.

Two progressive meetings were held to update the plan and schedule activities. TV programmes have commenced, with the RC featuring on the first programme. The call centre toll-free line is functional, but agents are yet to report. The private sector has submitted a response plan to help fund the multi-sectoral drought response plan by leveraging local and international networks.

The RCCE requires \$1,745,000, with no funds allocated yet. There is a commitment from donors for technical support amounting to \$150,000.

DMMU Situation Room Update

The Situation Room is set to become operational from 3 June 2024, with the public able to utilize the Toll-Free line 909 to report drought-related issues or seek assistance. ZNBC TV and Radio initiated Public Service Announcements on 20 May 2024 to raise awareness about the drought and promote the Toll-Free number. Messages are being developed in English and seven local languages by the RCCE cluster for dissemination through community radio stations. The UN is providing coordination support for the Situation Room, which will be housed at DMMU. Additionally, the UN, through WFP, has recruited 10 call centre agents who underwent training/orientation from 30-31 May 2024. Upon request from the Government, ZESCO will designate/seconde some call centre agents to the Situation Room to provide additional support. The UN has also prepared scripts and information for use by call centre agents to ensure effective communication with the public.

