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11 for 11

GLOBAL EL NIÑO PROGRAM

Appeal by Welthungerhilfe (WHH)

For a world without hunger



11 for 11

WHH together with its humanitarian partners has identified **11 at-risk countries** across Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

With **EUR 11 million**, WHH and its partners can scale up anticipatory and rapid response measures to reach an **additional 1 million people** - protecting lives, livelihoods and essential assets, preventing shocks escalating into humanitarian crises.

Prioritized, **high-risk countries** span across:

1. **Africa**: Burkina Faso, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Uganda, Zimbabwe;
2. **South Asia**: Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan;
3. **Caribbean**: Haiti.

SUMMARY

Drought, extreme heat and erratic rainfall threaten crops, livestock, and water supplies across Southern Africa and the Sahel, while parts of East Africa face heightened risks of flooding and storms after an extended dry period. At the same time, communities in South Asia, Central America and the Caribbean are exposed to worsening water scarcity, agricultural losses, and resulting livelihood disruption.

The 2026 'El Niño' global climate phenomenon is already classified as 'strong' and is expected to intensify into a 'very strong' and exceptional event, with a near 100% likelihood of persisting through February 2027. El Niño is already intensifying the risk of drought, floods, and extreme heat as well as significantly altering rainfall and temperature patterns across many regions. Meanwhile, the latest World Meteorological Organization (WMO) outlook^[1] warns that, the event could become stronger than anything observed since modern monitoring began, with impacts expected to multiply and cascade across communities, economies, and supply chains.^[2] El Niño is therefore acting as a risk multiplier, amplifying the effects of existing food insecurity, displacement, conflict, and economic pressures. FEWS NET^[3] similarly highlights growing food security risks in vulnerable regions where climate shocks are already compounding impacts on fragile livelihoods and markets.

The time to act is now, before these risks develop into a larger humanitarian crisis. Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and its vast network of national civil society partners are ready to work and scale on three levels: risk communication and readiness, taking anticipatory action when forecast thresholds are reached, and rapidly scaling up assistance when impacts materialize.

Ready to act - and ready to scale

As a civil society organization, WHH is the leading implementer of German-funded Anticipatory Action, with established operational structures, local partnerships, Action Anticipatory Plans (AAPs), and trigger models already in place across high-risk contexts. With more than 20 Anticipatory Action activations globally across slow- and rapid-onset hazards, WHH and its partners have demonstrated their ability to translate forecasts and early warnings into timely action before impacts materialize, even when the window of opportunity for action is narrow.

This existing readiness provides a strong foundation to anticipate and respond to the impacts of a 'very strong' El Niño. While WHH and its partners are already prepared to act, the scale and severity of the anticipated impacts require us to reach more people at risk, expand support to additional high-risk locations, and scale up anticipatory and rapid response measures before impacts escalate into larger humanitarian crises. Comprehensive risk analyses, as well as established contingency plans, operational structures, and local partner networks enable WHH and its partners to act rapidly as risks and needs evolve - protecting people, livelihoods, and essential assets.

Proven expertise in anticipating and acting on risk

WHH has well developed and tested practical expertise in using risk information and forecasts to guide localized anticipatory action. Across more than 20 anticipatory action activations spanning from slow-onset hazard events like droughts to rapid-onset hazard like floods and tropical cyclones, our teams and partners have implemented anticipatory measures even where window for action was narrow. Together, these experiences have built a strong operational track record that can be applied and scaled as risks increase.

[1] WMO (Sep. 2026) - [El Niño/La Niña Update \(August 2026\)](#).

[2] WMO (Sep. 2026) - [An exceptional El Niño demands an exceptional response](#)

[3] FEWS NET (Sep. 2026) - [El Niño 2026-2027](#).

Knowing where the gaps are

WHH has invested in the groundwork needed to ensure additional funding reaches people and places that need it most. Comprehensive risk analyses and stakeholder mapping allow us to identify high-risk locations, at-risk populations, and gaps in existing anticipatory and response capacities. This enables WHH to complement efforts and target additional resources towards locations and populations that are at high risk but are not adequately covered by existing mechanisms.

Locally rooted

WHH combines established operational structures and long-standing relationships with national civil society organizations with the experience and systems needed to operate at scale. This local presence allows anticipatory and emergency action to be designed and delivered with partners who understand local risks, vulnerabilities, capacities, and local operational context.

Funding WHH means investing in support that does not start from scratch. The structures, partnerships, risk intelligence and operational expertise are already in place.

What is needed now is the funding to take these capacities to scale before the predicted impacts of El Niño materialize.

Global El Niño Program

WHH calls on institutional donors, foundations and private partners to jointly establish a EUR 11 million Global El Niño Program. Contributions to this program will enable timely action across countries, with resources deployed where risks are most severe, needs are greatest, and WHH and its partners are best positioned to deliver impact.

Our Global El Niño Program covers **eleven countries across multiple regions**, enabling WHH and its partners to scale up anticipatory and rapid response measures while retaining the flexibility to direct resources where they can have the greatest impact. Funding will be prioritized based on evolving forecasts and risks, humanitarian needs, existing capacities, and the potential to prevent or reduce adverse impacts.

We aim to reach up to **additional one million people**, including in areas that receive less international attention despite significant levels of risk and vulnerability, such as Uganda's Karamoja region and the Sahel.



By **investing now**, donors can support WHH to **protect lives and livelihoods** before impacts materialize - reducing the scale and severity of future humanitarian needs, and avoiding the significantly higher human and financial costs of delayed action.

SCOPE AND SELECTION APPROACH

WHH works across 37 countries worldwide. This Appeal focuses on **eleven countries** where forecast exposure and seasonal timing overlap with high humanitarian vulnerability, significant funding gaps, and a realistic potential for WHH and its partners to scale up activities. Their inclusion does not imply that impacts are certain or uniform; priorities will be reviewed as forecasts and observed conditions evolve.
[4]

The scope of this Appeal is neither exhaustive nor static, and it does not prescribe fixed regional or country allocations.

Geographic priorities and available resources will be adjusted as conditions evolve, considering the severity and timing of needs, the potential to prevent or reduce impacts through timely action, operation feasibility, coverage through other WHH funding streams and other actors, and donor requirements. This flexibility will enable support to be directed where needs are greatest, and WHH can add the most value.

Prioritized, high-risk countries span:

- 1. East Africa: Uganda,**
- 2. Southern Africa: Madagascar, Malawi, Zimbabwe,**
- 3. The Sahel: Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger,**
- 4. South Asia: Pakistan, Myanmar, Bangladesh**
- 5. Caribbean: Haiti.**



Figure 1. Current coverage of the WHH Global El Niño Program Appeal (eleven countries)

[4] The country selection was informed by WAHFA and ACAPS analysis, emerging humanitarian impacts, underlying vulnerabilities, funding gaps, WHH's operational presence and regional considerations.

EL NIÑO AS A RISK MULTIPLIER: HUMANITARIAN OUTLOOK AND PEOPLE AT RISK

The 2026 El Niño is not a single uniform emergency with a fully known development and impact. It is a global climate phenomenon whose effects will vary by region and time, amplifying existing vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs where climate hazards intersect with conflict, displacement, food insecurity, weakened livelihoods, and economic pressure. These risks emerge against the backdrop of an accelerating climate crisis, multiple protracted conflicts and growing pressure on humanitarian financing, further limiting the capacity of households, governments, and humanitarian actors to absorb additional shocks. Its effects will vary by region but broadly include increased drought and heat across many tropical and subtropical agricultural zones, alongside heightened flooding and storm risks elsewhere.

In **East Africa**, WHH Country Offices and partners are monitoring and already responding to the early impacts, including dry spells, erratic rainfall, pasture degradation, and pressure on livestock and water sources. These are further deteriorating food security and nutrition in a region where many people already live in dire conditions. In Karamoja, Uganda, the severity of the current shock is already evident: between April and July 2026, rainfall deficits resulted in Standardized Precipitation Index values of -1.5 to -2.0 across most of the region, indicating severe drought conditions. Nearly 90% of households harvested less in 2026 than in 2025, with many experiencing complete crop failure, while 47% have already exhausted their food stocks at a time when staple food prices are 15–25% above 2025 levels. As a result, around 679,000 people are projected to face Crisis levels of acute

food insecurity or worse (IPC Phase 3+) in Karamoja through February 2027, including over 110,000 people who will likely face Emergency levels (IPC Phase 4).^[5]

At the same time, October – December 2026 is expected to bring a heightened risk of intense rainfall, flooding, and storms in parts of the region. The combination of drought-related impacts in mid-2026 followed by wetter-than-normal conditions over October – December creates a risk of compounding shocks, as intense rainfall following prolonged dry conditions can trigger flash floods and further damage crops, livestock assets, infrastructure and rural livelihoods.

Meanwhile **Southern Africa** faces a drier and hotter October 2026 – March 2027 season that threatens rainfed crops, livestock, water supplies and household food stocks. Madagascar, Malawi and Zimbabwe are at significant risk, particularly those areas still recovering from previous shocks, including the severe 2023/2024 El Niño drought as well as more recent floods, cyclones, conflict, and economic pressures. In Madagascar, for example, WHH teams have seen how severe rainfall deficits have already reduced crop production in the south, while recent cyclones have damaged crops, infrastructure, fisheries, and livestock. Between October 2025 and April 2026, rainfall in parts of the south was 1.5–2 standard deviations below average, with some agricultural areas experiencing their driest or second-driest season on record. In the southwest, maize production fell by an estimated 50–90%, while cowpea production declined by around 25%.^[6] El Niño is now expected to delay the next rainy season, further constraining crop establishment and increasing food security risks, with around 3.72 million people projected to face Crisis levels of acute food insecurity or worse (IPC Phase 3+), including nearly 426,000 people who will likely face Emergency levels (IPC Phase 4).^[7]

[5] IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) - Uganda (Karamoja): Acute Food Insecurity Situation for August - October 2026 and Projection for November 2026 - February 2027

[6] FEWS NET - An early lean season and El Niño challenge food security in the Grand South

[7] IPC (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification) - Madagascar: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for March - May 2026 and Projections for June - September 2026 and October 2026 - February 2027



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Across **the Sahel**, erratic or below-average rainfall could cause crop-water deficits, degrade vegetation, worsen livestock body condition and reduce milk production, with severe impacts on livelihoods and food security. WHH teams in Burkina Faso warn that a potential 20–30% decline in maize, millet, and sorghum production could sharply increase cereal prices and further deepen already critical food security needs, where up to 1.99 million people are currently in need of food assistance.^[8]

In **South Asia**, heat and below-average rainfall in parts of the region, with a particular impact in the Indus river basin, threaten crops, irrigation and water access. In Pakistan, below-average rainfall is expected to reduce the current harvest and agricultural incomes, while limited food stocks from the previous harvest and high food prices further constrain food access. As stocks run down, poor households are expected to reduce meals and cut essential spending on health and education, with 6.7 million people projected to face Crisis levels or food security or worse (IPC Phase 3+), including 570,000 at Emergency levels (IPC Phase 4).^[9] Meanwhile, WHH Pakistan Country Office warns the heightened risk of sudden flash floods, linked to intense, localized rainfall or accelerated glacier and

snow melt in northern areas, could devastate communities and infrastructure, as recently seen in Nepal.

For **Central America and the Caribbean**, drought and delayed planting threaten agriculture, while warming seas and shifting upwelling put fisheries and coastal livelihoods at risk. Additionally, the combination of drier and hotter-than-normal conditions is expected to trigger heatwaves, wildfires, water scarcity, and vector-borne and waterborne diseases. In Haiti, El Niño is adding climate pressure to an already severe food security crisis, with 5.83 million people (52% of the population) facing Crisis levels of food insecurity or worse (IPC Phase 3+), including nearly 1.9 million at Emergency levels (IPC Phase 4).^[10] July rainfall deficits reached 100–200 mm across much of the Artibonite and Centre regions. Western regions are facing a 40–50% probability of below-normal rainfall and 60–70% probability of above-normal temperatures through November, further threatening crops, water, and livelihoods.^[11]

Exceptionally warm global temperatures and a developing positive Indian Ocean Dipole are likely to amplify these extremes.^[12]

[8] FEWS NET: Burkina Faso – Latest food security analysis

[9] FEWS NET – Pakistan: Below-average monsoon rainfall expected to drive a below-average kharif harvest

[10] IPC – HAITI: Nearly half of country's population still facing food gaps due to armed violence, climate shocks, economic contraction.

[11] HaitiDocs - Haiti Monthly Climate and Weather, July 2026 (2026-07)

[12] In addition to a strengthening El Niño, a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), a climate pattern in which the western Indian Ocean is warmer and the eastern Indian Ocean cooler than average, is forecast. Together, these drivers can amplify regional risks of drought, flooding and wildfires, particularly around the Indian Ocean basin (WMO, July 2026).

Across all regions, impacts will cascade through livelihoods: crop and livestock losses reduce food and incomes; declining fisheries affect nutrition and earnings; water shortages increase disease and conflict; and market disruptions increase dependence on inaccessible commodities. These pressures are compounded by rising fuel, transport, fertilizer, and shipping costs increasing both production costs for affected communities and the cost of humanitarian operations.

At the same time, humanitarian actors are operating in an increasingly constrained funding environment. Declining humanitarian and development resources means that governments, donors, and organizations have less capacity to respond once needs have escalated. This makes timely, risk-informed action before impacts materialize not only a humanitarian imperative, but also an increasingly important way of using scarce resources effectively.

El Niño therefore acts as a risk multiplier:

It interacts with the wider climate crisis and other global shocks to deepen communities' existing vulnerabilities, eroding their ability to absorb further shocks. The combination of compounding risks and constrained financing makes timely action particularly critical: even modest investments in preparedness and anticipatory action can help prevent losses and avert much greater humanitarian needs down the line.

Those most at risk include displaced people and host communities, pastoralists and rainfed smallholders, coastal fishing communities, urban poor, and informal workers. Children, older people, pregnant and breastfeeding women, Indigenous peoples, and others with limited coping capacity are particularly vulnerable. While early impacts are already visible, the greatest risks lie ahead as drought, floods, heat, water stress, and market pressures erode household assets and coping capacity into 2027.

WHY ACTING NOW?

The window to prepare for and respond to the humanitarian consequences of El Niño is open now – though it differs across regions.

There will be no single trigger or a single response date. El Niño will affect regions differently and on varying timelines, so anticipatory action, preparedness, and rapid response need to be tailored to conditions on the ground, seasonal calendars and forecast risks.

In several countries, emerging drought already requires close monitoring and timely response as is the case in Uganda's Karamoja region where WHH is providing emergency food and nutrition support, while preparing for anticipatory action considering risks of heavy rainfall and floods. In other countries like Myanmar, WHH is currently responding to unseasonal flooding. Across many others, the coming weeks and months provide critical lead time ahead of later agricultural and hazard seasons.

East Africa requires strengthened preparedness ahead of the October–December short rains. WHH offices and partners in the region are on high alert given the heightened risk of intense and persistent rainfall, flooding, and landslides, and so are prepared to activate readiness measures to support timely action. These include river-basin and flood monitoring, identification of flood- and landslide-prone areas, evacuation and anticipatory action arrangements, drainage measures, and clear communication of forecasts and alerts to at-risk communities.

For Southern Africa, the priority is to prepare now for the October 2026 – March 2027 agricultural season, with close monitoring of delayed or failed rainfall onset and early-season dry spells to inform planting, livestock, and water-management decisions. At the same time, WHH country teams across the region are also closely monitoring the risks of flooding and

cyclones, with priority areas and actions for each hazard pre-identified to be implemented as risks evolve.

The cost of waiting is high.

Once crops have failed, livestock conditions have deteriorated, water systems are depleted or households have been forced to sell productive assets or leave their homes, recovery then becomes longer, more complex, and more expensive. Timely action can protect lives and livelihoods, limit irreversible losses, and help prevent the evolving climate shock from becoming a deeper food security and displacement crisis in 2027.

WHH is uniquely positioned to act within these different windows:

Our Country Programs and local partners combine long-standing operational presence, climate-sensitive disaster risk-reduction programming, and detailed knowledge of at-risk communities.

In several countries, existing Anticipatory Action Plans (AAPs) provide predefined triggers and arrangements, as well as pre-agreed anticipatory actions, while the continued revision of Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans strengthens broader readiness enabling efficient anticipatory and emergency measures.

Existing programs, partnerships, assessments, and coordination structures provide an operations platform from which additional assistance can be scaled without significant lead time.

Further reading:

- [Emerging 2026 El Niño: Potential Implications for Agriculture, Food Security and Anticipatory Action - Welthungerhilfe](#)
- [Global El Niño Overview: Countries to watch - Thematic report \(07 July 2026\) - World | ReliefWeb](#)
- [An Inter-Agency Report of the Global ENSO Analysis Cell: El Niño Status and Humanitarian Outlook - World | ReliefWeb](#)

HUMANITARIAN ACTION FRAMEWORK AND INTERVENTION OPTIONS

WHH's humanitarian action framework follows a simple logic:

Prepare and anticipate → Act ahead to protect lives and livelihoods → Respond rapidly when impacts materialize.

Prepare and anticipate: "Aware"

Build risk awareness and readiness before impacts occur. This includes monitoring hazard forecasts and triggers; strengthening community preparedness and contingency planning; mapping vulnerable populations and critical assets; and communicating what risks may emerge, where, and when. Risk communication may include community meetings, radio and social media, sensitization of Disaster Risk Reduction committees, and engagement with local authorities and services.

Act ahead: "Act"

When forecasts indicate that predefined trigger thresholds will be reached or exceeded, WHH uses the Window of Opportunity to roll out anticipatory actions aiming to mitigate or reduce expected impacts before they fully unfold. For floods and storms, actions may include early warning and evacuation support, moving livestock and household assets to safety, protecting water systems, and providing cash to enable at-risk households to take timely protective measures. For drought and heat, anticipatory actions may include pre-positioning and stockpiling of food supplies, cash assistance, livestock feed and water support, early livestock destocking, protection of productive assets, agricultural support, and measures to maintain safe water access. Clear, actionable warnings should specify the expected hazard, location and timing, what people should do, and where assistance is available.

Respond rapidly: “Respond”

Where negative impacts materialize and humanitarian needs emerge, rapidly scale up assistance to address losses and immediate needs. Depending on the context, this may include provision of emergency shelter, food, or cash assistance, improving access to water and sanitation or distributions of hygiene kits, nutrition and health support, protection services, livestock interventions, and support to restore livelihoods, small businesses, and essential services.

The appropriate package will vary depending on the country and hazard and will be adapted to actual forecasts, evolving needs, operational capacity, and available funding.

Overall, we aim to assist up to 1 million people.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRAM ACTIVATION

No minimum. No delay. There is no minimum funding threshold: contributions of any size trigger immediate action. Every Euro received is allocated directly to activities - from the first payment to the final phase of the program.

Each of the eleven Country Programs has already drafted a response scenario, with continuous monitoring and adaptation as forecasts sharpen. In our work, **90% of funds go directly to project activities:** multipurpose cash assistance, in-kind support, and low-cost, high-impact measures such as Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE).

Rapid, evidence-based decision-making.

An internal allocation committee, drawing on forecasts, situation reports, local capacities, and assessed needs, decides where funds go first and redirects them as conditions evolve. This enables rapid, evidence-based reallocation within days. Global coordination is steered through WHH's existing structures, supported by dedicated Finance and MEAL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning) expertise, without creating an additional administrative layer.

We are not starting from zero.

Programs are already underway: emergency responses in Uganda and Myanmar are addressing the impacts of drought and flooding respectively, while Anticipatory Action Plans in Somalia and Zimbabwe have been activated ahead of predicted drought and riverine flood impacts. These have been initiated with WHH's available funds, and existing program infrastructure. However, the scale of negative effects predicted for 2026 El Niño far exceeds the financial capacities of WHH's internal funds and existing programs.

That's why we need our different partners to come together and bridge the gap.

With this **appeal**, we call for contributions to fund the El Niño Global efforts by WHH and partners. We are looking for **flexible or earmarked funding**, interested in joining strategic partnerships and networks leading to **enhance anticipatory action and rapid response** to support those hit hardest by climate change and correlated El Niño effects.

Call to Action

We invite you to reach out to

Markus Diemon

Humanitarian Directorate

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Our approach to Anticipatory Action - explained in 2 min.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0loumcO9TRs>

Download our Appeal at



www.welthungerhilfe.org/global-el-nino-appeal
www.reliefweb.int

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