



FACT SHEET

October 28, 2016

The U.S. government response and status of the current drought in southern Madagascar

The southern region of Madagascar has been experiencing a prolonged drought, amplified by the effects of climate change and the El Niño climate phenomenon, since 2013. The United States is especially concerned about the alarming levels of food insecurity in southern Madagascar where 900,000 people need emergency food assistance. The U.S. government is ramping up its response as needs continue to escalate during the lean season into early next year.

The United States is the largest humanitarian donor to the drought response in Madagascar. This latest announcement of an additional \$5 million in humanitarian assistance brings the total U.S. government contribution to over \$36 million since 2014. USAID has been funding food security and health activities in southern Madagascar for many years and since 2014 has provided emergency food and relief assistance in response to the worsening drought.

The impacts of the drought are being felt across the Southern African region. The U.S. government, through USAID, has provided over \$308 million in FY 2015-2016 to mitigate the effects of the drought and protect development gains in the Southern Africa region.

This fact sheet identifies U.S. assistance efforts to southern Madagascar and the current situation as of October 28, 2016.

U.S. GOVERNMENT DROUGHT-RELATED EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO MADAGASCAR

U.S. Emergency Relief Funding Since 2014

Year	Emergency Relief Funding (USD, in millions)
2014	\$784,660
2015	\$3,749,069
2016	\$32,148,651
TOTAL	\$36,682,380

WORKING THROUGH OUR PARTNERS

The U.S. government, through USAID, funds eight organizations providing emergency food aid and other relief services to the most drought-affected regions of Southern Madagascar. Here is a summary of the USAID-funded activities conducted by each partner:



<p>Catholic Relief Services (CRS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seed distribution - Farm supplies and tools - Life-saving food aid - Food for work and protective ration for severely drought-affected people - Supplemental feeding to pregnant and lactating women and children under 5 	<p>Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life-saving food aid - Targeted supplementary food rations - Nutrition and hygiene training - Seed distribution - Rehabilitation of water infrastructure - Hygiene promotion and safe water storage
<p>World Food Programme (WFP):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Targeted unconditional food transfer - Supplemental feeding to pregnant and lactating women and children under 5 - Treatment of moderate acute malnutrition 	<p>Land O'Lakes (LOL):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of small livestock - Training producers and a network of para-vets - Rehabilitation of water points for livestock
<p>Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life-saving food aid - Food for work and protective ration for severely drought-affected people - Supplemental feeding to pregnant and lactating women and children under 5. - Cash for work and cash voucher - Seeds distribution - Rehabilitation of water infrastructure - Village saving and loans programs 	<p>Action Contre la Faim (ACF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rehabilitation, upgrading, and construction of water points - Distribution of hygiene kits - Hygiene promotion - Technical support to health actors for prevention, screening and treatment of malnutrition
<p>Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distribution of seeds, fertilizer, small farm tools - Training and capacity building of agriculture technicians and farmers - Restart local seed production group 	<p>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cash transfer to mothers and care takers looking after children with acute malnutrition - Screening and treatment of malnutrition - Training of health staff on managing malnutrition - Rehabilitation of water infrastructure - Hygiene promotion

THE EL NIÑO EFFECT

The El Niño phenomenon (a climate cycle in the Pacific Ocean with a global impact on weather patterns) and mounting climate change effects have deepened the impacts of the drought on the Malagasy people. Southern Madagascar is hotter, there is less rain, and when rain does fall it is erratic.

Rising temperatures and less predictable rainfall patterns have combined with pre-existing drought conditions to produce one of the driest rainy seasons in 35 years, resulting in significant crop failures and a food shortage.



The situation also has further societal impacts. A lack of adequate nutrition and access to clean water for sanitation brings higher numbers of childhood illnesses (diarrhea, upper respiratory infections, fever, malaria), and school attendance is affected as children are forced to collect food and water from sources that are now further from home.

SITUATIONAL FORECAST FOR SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR

(SOURCE: [FEWS NET September 2016 Report](#))

High levels of acute food insecurity are expected in the south through the end of the lean season in February 2017 due to the effects of last year’s drought. In worst-affected areas, particularly in Tsihombe and parts of Beloha districts, poor households are expected to face large food consumption gaps, in line with Emergency (IPC Phase 4) food insecurity. Meanwhile, Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected in other southern areas.

[The Integrated Phase Classification \(IPC\) scale](#) describes the severity of food emergencies. The scale ascends from Phase 1 (minimal) to Phase 2 (stressed), Phase 3 (crisis), Phase 4 (emergency), to Phase 5 (Catastrophe).

IMPACTS FROM THE DROUGHT

Hierarchy of Coping Strategies

Many families at the margins of survival have moved through a progression of increasingly desperate stages to cope with the effects of the drought and are now left without many options. People are now begging, searching for leaves and unpalatable red cactus fruit to eat, or eating seed stocks intended to produce the next harvest. Children have been removed from school to assist with finding money, food or water and high numbers of people are fleeing the region in hopes of finding opportunities elsewhere.

HOW THE DROUGHT IS AFFECTING PEOPLE

The drought crisis has led to large percentage crop losses, a lack of food, and depleted stocks of seed. Forced into a corner, people do what they must to survive. This hierarchy of coping strategies is shown to the right, with initial actions to eat less preferred foods or eat less. Many people in Southern Madagascar are now driven to taking more extreme actions, like eating the seeds that are intended to provide future crops, or migrating out of the area, often to large urban centers where they face limited possibilities for employment.





Stunting and Childhood Development

A serious long-term risk of the drought is how it will impact the healthy development of young children. At 49.2%, Madagascar has the [fifth highest rate of stunting](#), or impaired childhood development, resulting from chronic malnutrition during the first 1,000 days of life.

Stunting affects children's physical and cognitive development. Stunted children are generally shorter, with weaker immune systems leaving them exposed to health issues, and their brains are less developed.

Addressing stunting and malnutrition is not just about providing more food. It is also important that children have access to clean water and toilets and cleaning products. That is why USAID is also operating programs to provide water access, sanitation and hygiene.

FINDINGS OF THE OCTOBER 12, 2016 IPC REPORT

Since 2014 USAID has been responding, providing emergency food assistance to families in the areas identified as being in the greatest danger in the most recent [IPC \(Integrated Food Security Phase Classification\) Report](#).

That report found that over 840,000 people, or 52% of households in the eight most-affected regions, are severely food insecure and are rated as being in 'Crisis' or 'Emergency' levels of drought impact. 20% of those people are in the IPC Phase 4 'Emergency' classification meaning they likely have lost all crops, do not have any animals and do not have any way other than agricultural activities to make an income. Agricultural activities have been failing across the region since 2014.

The IPC report states that, "The level of food insecurity is alarming in 8 districts of 3 regions of the Grand Sud of Madagascar and is expected to deteriorate by early 2017, unless the affected populations are able to recover their livelihoods; and access to food and income drastically improves."

"The main causes of the severe situation in the most affected districts are the devastating effects of El Niño, including poor rainfall, which have resulted in insufficient household agricultural production (corn, cassava and rice) and depletion of food stocks. Rising food prices have further exacerbated the situation and significantly affected households' purchasing power in a context of limited resilience to climate and natural shocks."

"The prospects for the period January to March 2017 indicate that the situation might further deteriorate if humanitarian assistance is not scaled up."



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PHOTO CAPTIONS

IMG_2034: A child collects her family's drinking water from a muddy puddle in the middle of the road. A lack of access to clean water is driving families to increasingly desperate acts, or forcing them to walk long distances for water.

Credit – PHOTO: USAID / A.G. Klei

IMG_2396: A child waits for a meal at a USAID-funded food distribution site. Many children in the region are suffering from moderate and acute malnutrition, increasing their risk of stunting, or impaired physical and mental development resulting from chronic malnutrition.

Credit – PHOTO: USAID / A.G. Klei

IMG_2028: Residents are digging deep into dry river beds, chasing after find receding sources of ground water.

Credit – PHOTO: USAID / A.G. Klei