

HIGHLIGHTS

- The effects of El Niño-driven rainfall shortages and above average temperatures pose a significant risk to cereals production in Mozambique.
- 1.25 million people were already food insecure (IPC3+) in areas that have been impacted by severe drought conditions during the 2023/24 rainy and agricultural season. These people will likely see their food insecurity situation deteriorate and fall into severe and emergency food insecurity (IPC4+).
- FEWSNET warns that Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected to emerge in semiarid districts of Gaza, Inhambane, Manica, Sofala, and Tete.
- Anticipatory actions by the Government of Mozambique, with support of humanitarian partners, are mitigating the effects of the drought, but the coverage is insufficient as compared to the needs; more resources are needed to scale-up interventions.
- There is a window of opportunity to rescue the upcoming short planting season (May to July) and to alleviate the effects of El Niño, but it requires immediate investment. Key priorities include providing urgent and extensive support to vulnerable households to safeguard this short agricultural cycle and enhance off-season agriculture production.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

In Mozambique, the 2023/24 rainy season predominantly manifested in persistent dryness, with many areas receiving less than half of their typical rainfall's quantity.

According to INAM, from November 2023 to February 2024, the southern and central regions of the country registered a deficit in precipitation. In January 2024, there were more than 23 consecutive days without significant precipitation in the southern and central parts of the country. Severe seasonal deficits were recorded in Manica, Nampula, Sofala, Tete and Zambezia.

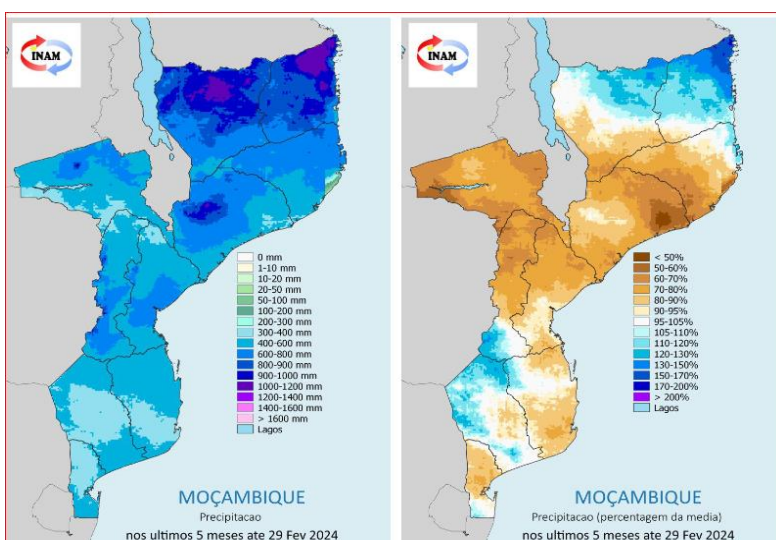
The irregular distribution of rains resulted in contrasting sowing conditions across the country. In parts of key cereal producing central provinces of Sofala and Zambezia, the onset of planting was delayed by up to three weeks. Cumulative rainfall deficits persisted, notably in

Zambezia, where cropped areas received about 70 per cent of the long-term average rainfall amounts between October 2023 and January 2024. Unusually high temperatures further aggravated the situation. These weather patterns led to deteriorating vegetation conditions and crop wilting in parts of central provinces.

The first quarter of the year was marked by high temperatures in central and southern parts of the country. The situation was particularly critical in Tete province where temperatures soared 8°C above average. Higher temperatures are projected to last until the end of April.

The convergence of El Niño-induced drought, record dryness in January 2024, and anticipated food insecurity may result in below-average maize production for Mozambique in 2024. All provinces are

commenced under the influence of El Niño which



October 2023 to February 2024 precipitation. Source: INAM

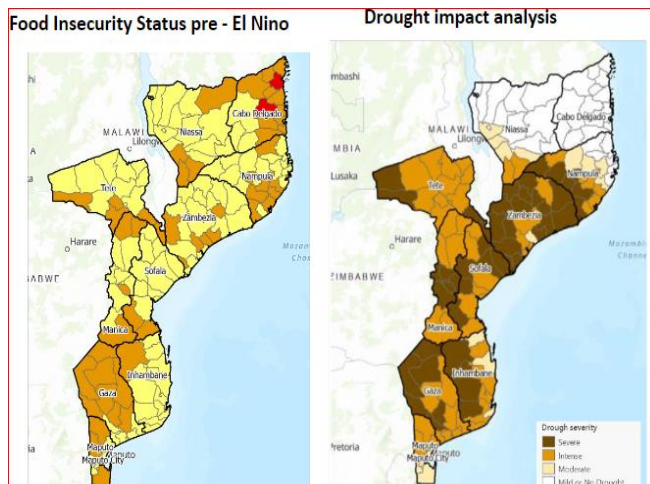
predicted to attain yields lower than the five-year average, except for Sofala and Cabo Delgado (though conflict may impact production).

According to the last Food Security Outlook of FEWSNET, Crisis (IPC Phase 3) or Stressed (IPC Phase 2) outcomes are expected through September 2024 due to the negative effects of El Niño. Some Stressed (IPC Phase 2) areas may worsen to Crisis (IPC Phase 3) around August due to the expected rapid depletion of the imminent below-average harvest, limited access to income, and above-average food prices.

The drought impact analysis conducted by the WFP estimates that over 20 million people in Mozambique are residing in areas that have been affected by the drought due to El Niño.

The results indicate that 2.7 million people in drought affected areas were already food insecure (IPC3+) before the impact of El Niño, and they could see their food insecurity situation further deteriorate. 1.25 million food insecure people (IPC 3+) living in districts severely impacted by drought conditions are particularly at risk to fall into severe and emergency food insecurity (IPC4+).

A post-shock assessment of El Niño affected districts will be conducted in April and May 2024. The nutritional status of women and children, food consumption scores and other food insecurity-related indicators will be assessed. The results of the assessments will inform a targeted joint response by WFP and FAO focusing on IPC3+ and targeting IPC4+ populations.

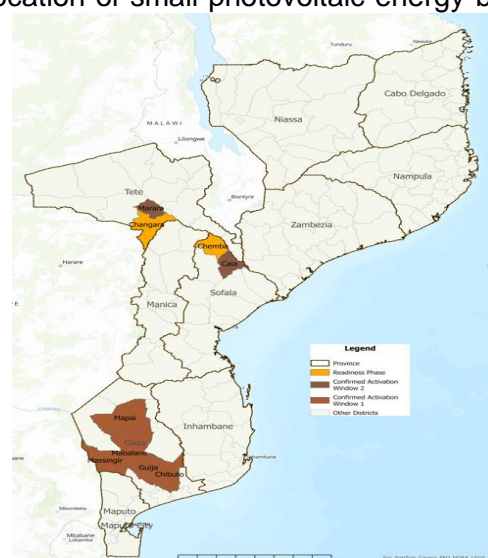


El Niño impact: Composite drought index combined with field observations Source: WFP.

RESPONSE

The Government of Mozambique and its partners are implementing Anticipatory Actions (AAs) for the drought in the districts of Chibuto, Guija, Massingir, Mapai and Mabalane (Gaza Province), Caia (Sofala province) and Marara (Tete province), having so far mobilized a total of 26 million MT (approximately \$408,000), with a focus on:

- Rehabilitation of sources and water supply systems and allocation of small photovoltaic energy-based irrigation systems;
- Allocation of drought-tolerant seeds and vegetative material, associated with promotion of cultivation in low-lying areas;
- Promotion of small animals, particularly dual-purpose chickens (meat and eggs);
- Training communities to strengthen the nutritional value of food for children and farmers in animal supplementation techniques;
- Implementation of the Direct Social Support Program (PASD) which consists of monthly subsidies worth 2,500 meticals/month, for the most vulnerable households, for three months which will benefit 59,000 beneficiaries in nine districts of Gaza provinces.
- Dissemination of messages on drought reaching 270,000 people in the affected districts of Gaza, Sofala and Tete.



AAs areas of coverage Source: WFP

Distribution of seeds and drought-tolerant vegetative material to 2,600 farmers in Gaza province and construction of water storage and small animals in Guijá and Mabalane. Electronic subsidy transfers (e-voucher) for 2,437 beneficiaries in Gaza Province.

Under the anticipatory action framework – which aims to mitigate the impacts of below average rainfall in Gaza, Sofala and Tete provinces – INAM, INGD, MADER, and ICS (Instituto de Comunicação Social) with support from FAO and WFP are reaching around 270,000 people with early warning messages. INGD (in partnership with WFP and FAO) has been providing drought-tolerant seeds via e-voucher and in kind for around 3,020 households in the districts of Guija and Chibuto since October 2023.

Under the same framework, the National Institute for Social Action (INAS) with WFP have been carrying out cash transfers equivalent to MZN 2,500 per household for around 11,800 households for 3 months (which will be finalized by March 2024) in nine districts (5 in Gaza, 2 in Tete, and 2 in Sofala). FAO has contributed to the construction of 18 cisterns that harvest rainwater.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In southern and central Mozambique, poor households are set to continue relying heavily on purchasing food from markets. However, an anticipated decrease in food availability in Mozambique and across the region is likely to lead to elevated prices, further straining the financial burden on already vulnerable families. This situation not only heightens economic pressure but also increases the risk of food insecurity and malnutrition.

Scarcity of essential resources may exacerbate existing health challenges, such as the spread of diseases like cholera, particularly in areas lacking adequate sanitation infrastructure. The socioeconomic strain is also anticipated to have ripple effects, including disruptions to education and an increase in gender-based violence (GBV) and other protection risks, amplifying the multifaceted impact on communities already grappling with significant adversity.

Urgent action is needed before the start of the lean season to assist vulnerable households, as follows:

- Government, donors, and humanitarian partners must prepare for increased demand for humanitarian support, focusing on immediate support to agriculture production to support rural livelihoods recovery in the short planting season, resilience building, and food assistance to cover the gap until the next harvest as well as on nutrition, WASH and protection.
- Enhanced multi-risk monitoring, livestock feeding, improved water management for agriculture purposes, community watering points, pest control, boosting of crop and horticulture production in the incoming planting seasons, and support post-harvest preservation are urgently needed.
- Urgent collective action and increased resources are necessary to address these gaps and ensure no one is left vulnerable to the effects of El Niño.

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