



# Anticipating El Niño: A mitigation, preparedness and response plan

August 2023 – January 2024

## Key messages

- An approaching El Niño climate event has the potential to negatively affect 1.2 million people in Somalia this year, action must be taken now to protect lives and livelihoods.
- Riverine communities in Somalia are most at risk, an estimated 1.5 million hectares of land are at risk of flooding - anticipatory action can prevent the worst.
- With timely support and information, rural communities in rain fed and riverine areas can replenish water sources and boost food security following five consecutive seasons of poor rainfall.
- There is a short window of opportunity to intervene and prevent a large-scale humanitarian disaster – it's not too late to take action.

## FAO's plan at a glance

A plan to save lives and livelihoods and accelerate disaster recovery.



**1 million rural and riverine people**  
*(along Juba and Shabelle Rivers)*



**11.8 million**  
*(Programme requirement)*

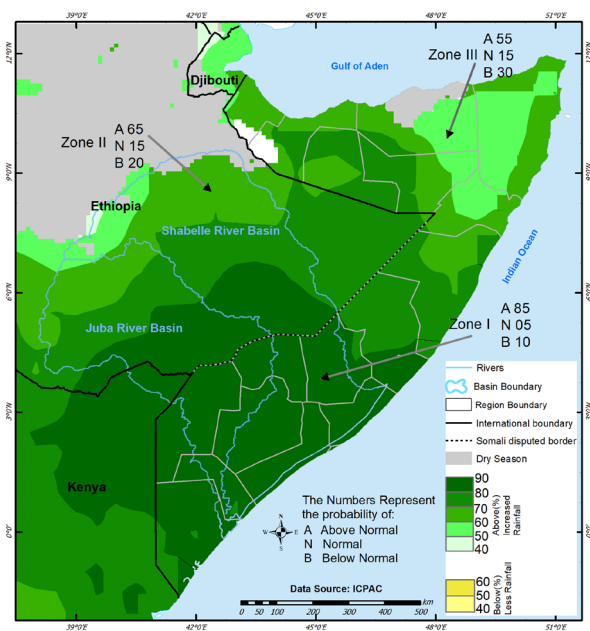
## Four priorities

- 1 The provision of timely and reliable early warning information** saves lives giving people time to move out of harm's way and make informed decisions to safeguard their livelihoods;
- 2 The rehabilitation of critical flood defence infrastructure in high-risk areas** will mitigate the impact of flooding on riverine populations and buy time, allowing those most at risk to move to higher ground;
- 3 Enhancing community and institutional preparedness and coordination** helps people brace for impact, and gives them the tools and knowledge to better prepare and respond when disaster strikes;
- 4 Safeguarding livelihoods by helping the most vulnerable** to protect their assets and make informed decisions allows those affected by crisis to recover faster, reducing the cost and duration of response operations.

## Overview

FAO's El Niño Mitigation, Preparedness and Response Plan is an urgent appeal to be implemented in close collaboration with government partners and other humanitarian actors in Somalia. The plan complements the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which focuses on drought recovery as the international community in Somalia seeks to support the 6.6 million people facing acute food insecurity due to drought and conflict. Within this context, there is now a new threat to lives and livelihoods in the country in the form of a 'Super El Niño', the conjunction of two weather events that poses new challenges for Somalia in the coming months.

The plan aims to save lives and help communities and institutions better absorb the impact of flooding on their livelihoods. The plan responds to four overarching priority needs in riverine communities and surrounding areas **(1) early warning information, (2) flood defence infrastructure, (3) preparedness & coordination and (4) safeguarding livelihoods.**



Source: FAO SWALIM

It contributes to FAO's global El Niño Anticipatory Action and Response Plan, which aims to deliver immediate support in several identified countries around the world, based on analysis of historical trends, latest seasonal forecasts, agricultural seasonality and the vulnerability of populations at risk.

**A 'Super El Niño' in Somalia.** There is now a firm consensus amongst meteorologists that the conjunction of an El Niño and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole phenomenon in the third quarter of 2023 will result in a rare 'Super El Niño' weather event, characterized by above average rainfall in Somalia with a high likelihood of flooding in riverine areas and flash flooding in other parts of the country. Based on available data and the most likely flood scenario, FAO is advocating for a no regrets approach to anticipatory action that will prevent loss of life and property.

Figure 1 (left): Rainfall probabilistic forecast for October to December 2023

## Geographic focus

The target areas for intervention have been informed by SWALIM's flood model, river breakage and river level monitoring using very-high resolution satellite imagery, combined with on-ground observation and post-Gu assessments carried out by FAO engineers.

Target locations include **Belet Weyne, Afgoye, Jowhar, Baardheere, Luuq, Dollow, Kismayo, Belet Xawa, Jalalaaqasi** and **Balcad** districts. The intended direct beneficiaries of the

programme include vulnerable rural and riverine farming and herding communities as well as urban areas at heightened risk of flooding. Of particular concern are internally displaced families who already face acute food insecurity and possess limited access to services or resources to endure such a disaster. This programme focuses on short term actions in these areas to achieve the greatest impact in the short time available before the onset of the rains.

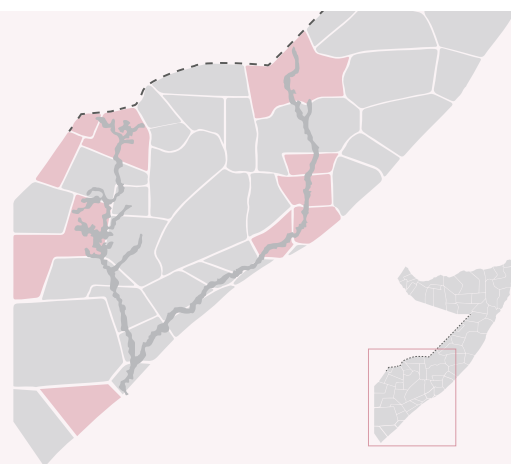


Figure 2: Target districts in riverine areas of southern Somalia. Map conforms to UN, 2011. Map of Somalia. [www.un.org/geospatial/content/somalia](http://www.un.org/geospatial/content/somalia)



### Priority 1 Early warning information

**Location:** Juba and Shabelle rivers  
**Beneficiaries:** Approximately 1 million individuals living in highest risk areas  
**Funding requirement:** USD 1 020 044



### Priority 2 Flood defence infrastructure

**Location:** Belet Weyne and surrounding area  
**Beneficiaries:** Approximately 280 000 people at risk of direct impact of flooding.  
**Funding requirement:** USD 5 394 424



### Priority 3 Preparedness & coordination

**Location:** Belet Weyne, Afgoye, Jowhar, Baardheere, Luuq and Dollow  
**Beneficiaries:** Approximately 600 000 individuals living in riverine and urban areas  
**Funding requirement:** USD 1 738 930



### Priority 4 Livelihood support & recovery

**Location:** Kismayo, Luuq, Belet Hawa, Jowhar, Belet Weyne, Jalalaaqasi and Balcad districts  
**Beneficiaries:** 81 600 individuals (13 600 households)  
**Funding requirement:** USD 2 059 730

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