



GIEWS Update

Prevailing La Niña conditions heighten risks to agricultural production and food security

Highlights

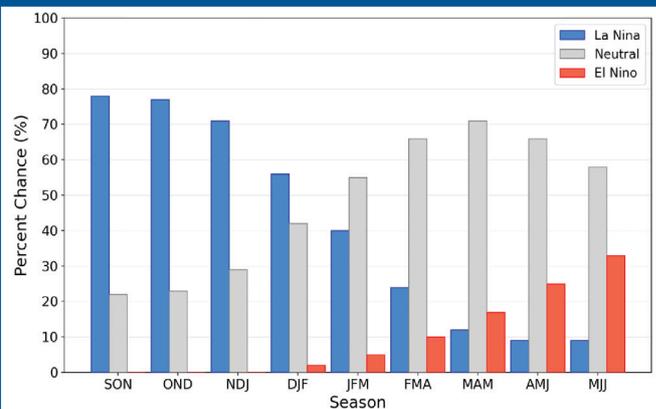
- La Niña conditions emerged in September 2025 and are projected to continue into early 2026, heightening the risk of extreme weather events that could damage crops and worsen local food security conditions.
- Dry weather conditions are forecast in parts of East Africa, Central Asia, the Near East and southern parts of South America. In Central America, Southern Africa and Southeast Asia, above-average rainfall amounts are expected, which could benefit 2026 cereal crop production but also heighten the risk of localized flooding, with potential agricultural losses and population displacement.

La Niña conditions

According to the latest weather forecasts,¹ La Niña conditions emerged in September 2025 and is expected to be a weak-to-moderate event and persist into early 2026 (Figure 1). The La Niña phenomenon is typically associated with below-average rainfall amounts in parts of **East Africa**, **Central Asia**, the **Near East**, southern parts of **South America** and **the United States of America** (Map 1). By contrast, above-average precipitation amounts and flooding are generally expected in parts of **Southern Africa**, **India**, **Southeast Asia**, **Australia**, **Central America** and northern areas of **South America** (Annex for country-specific details).

In **East Africa**, especially the Horn of Africa, La Niña is expected to bring below-average rainfall amounts during the October to December secondary *short-rains* rainy season. This will likely affect both area planted and yields, with consequent reduction in crop production. In addition, prolonged dry conditions are anticipated to further impact crop and livestock production, reducing food availability, diminishing income opportunities for vulnerable households and exacerbating the already high food

Figure 1: Official NOAA CPC ENSO probabilities (issued October 2025)



Note: Official ENSO probabilities for the El Niño 3.4 sea surface temperature index (5°N-5°S, 120°W-170°W).

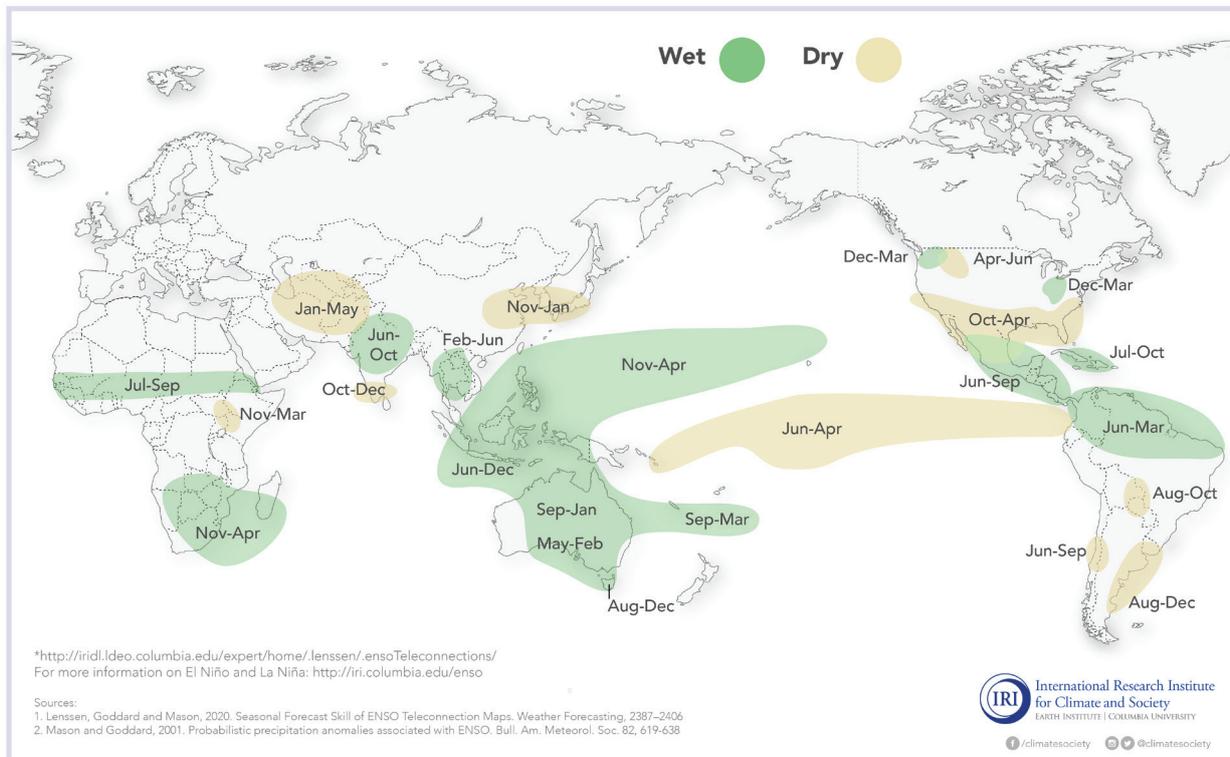
Source: NOAA. 2025. *El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) - diagnostic discussion*. NOAA, Climate Prediction Center, National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), National Weather Service (NWS). Maryland. 9 October 2025. https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.shtml.

prices. In **Ethiopia**, the food security situation has generally improved since last September following the 2025 *Meher* harvest, which has increased domestic food availability. However, in southern and southeastern pastoral areas, forecasts point to

Map 1: Typical precipitation patterns under La Niña conditions (teleconnection)

La Niña and Rainfall

La Niña conditions in the tropical Pacific are known to shift rainfall patterns in many different parts of the world. The regions and seasons shown on the map below indicate typical but not guaranteed impacts of La Niña. For further information, consult the probabilistic information* that the map is based on.



Source: IRI. 2025. *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies: Forecasts in Context - What Changes in Rainfall are Typical during La Niña?* Data Library. International Research Institute (IRI). Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, New York. Cited 4 November 2025. <https://iridl.ldeo.columbia.edu/maproom/IFRC/index.html#tabs-3>.

below-average precipitation amounts during the October to December *Deyr/Hageya* rainy season, which should negatively affect livestock body conditions and the availability of livestock products and likely raise the level of acute food insecurity. The expected poor performance of the October to December rains is likely to adversely affect the food security situation also in northern and eastern parts of **Kenya** and in central and northern parts of **Somalia**. The number of people facing severe acute food insecurity is projected to increase in **Kenya** from 1.8 million between July and September 2025 to 2.1 million between October 2025 and January 2026, and in **Somalia** from 3.4 million between July and September 2025 to 4.4 million between October and December 2025.ⁱⁱ

In the **Near East** and **Central Asia**, weather forecasts indicate a heightened risk of below-average precipitation between November 2025 and April

2026. The anticipated rainfall deficit is likely to constrain planting operations and reduce yields of the 2026 main wheat crop, a key staple in the subregion, given that adequate moisture is essential to ensure proper crop emergence and early growth. In addition, snow accumulation is likely to be below average, increasing the risk of winterkill as crops will lack protective adequate snow cover and reducing the availability of irrigation water for spring and summer crops. In **the Syrian Arab Republic**, if the forecast of below-average precipitation amounts between November 2025 and March 2026 materializes, cereal production in 2026 will likely remain below average for the second consecutive year, exacerbating the already critical food insecurity conditions, with about 9.1 million people acutely food insecure in 2024, including 5.4 million people at risk of hunger.ⁱⁱⁱ

In southeastern parts of **South America** and **the United States of America**, projected dry weather

conditions could affect soybean, maize and rice crops during the vegetative to harvest stages. Although in some areas precipitation amounts are forecast to be above average with likely benefits to crops, excessive rainfall amounts may raise the risk of flooding, which could affect standing crops, wash away stored seeds, increase mortality of livestock, damage agricultural infrastructures and cause population displacement. Excessive humidity levels could further elevate the risk of pest and disease infestations, potentially reducing yields and causing outbreaks of animal diseases.

In **Southern Africa**, current weather forecasts indicate a higher likelihood of above-average rainfall through the start of the season. Based on historical episodes of La Niña events, production prospects for the 2026 cereal crop are generally positive in central and southern areas. However, the elevated likelihood of excessive rainfall, coupled with a likely intense cyclone season from November 2025 to April 2026, could result in increased flood-related crop losses, particularly in **Madagascar** and **Mozambique** where cyclones most frequently make landfall. In **Southeast Asia** and **Australia**, La Niña typically triggers excessive rains and an increased risk of flooding and landslides from October to March, raising concerns over planting activities and the early development of the 2026 main rice and maize crops. In **Central America and the Caribbean**, above-average precipitation amounts and increased cyclone activity are forecast between October and November 2025, which could have serious implications for the agricultural sector.

In several parts of the world, countries are already experiencing La Niña-like conditions. Between late August and September, floods affected parts of **West and Central Africa** as well as in **Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, South Sudan** and **the Sudan**, while early signs of drought are evident in some parts of **Near East** and **Central Asia**, including **Afghanistan, Lebanon** and **the Syrian Arab Republic**.

FAO will continue to closely monitor the evolution of La Niña and other weather anomalies in the coming months to assess the potential impacts on crop production and food security.

To anticipate and mitigate the impacts of droughts and floods on the agriculture sector, countries can implement a range of measures. Listed below, is a non-exhaustive list of key actions that could be adapted to the specific situation of the country.

Recommended anticipatory actions:

Drought:

- Distribute farming tools and seeds of drought-tolerant crop varieties well ahead of planting seasons.
- Provide livestock feed and animal health support, with particular emphasis on chemicals for a regular dipping regime and vaccines to prevent diseases.
- Rehabilitate irrigation intakes, canals and other communal water points to improve water access.
- Strengthen farmers' capacity in water-harvesting techniques and water management.
- Develop capacity of farmers and provide support in post-harvest management and processing to minimize losses.

Floods:

- Establish food storage sites and provide storage equipment (e.g., hermetic bags) to reduce post-harvest losses.
- Monitor cyclone activity, prepare of actionable advisories and deliver early of humanitarian assistance (such as unconditional cash transfers) to vulnerable households upon early warnings and ahead of landfall.
- Support livestock evacuation from areas exposed to flood risks, supply fodder to evacuation centres and provide vaccines and supplements for livestock.
- Identify dry-docks and safe havens to host boats and store fishing gear and agriculture tools.
- Promote early harvesting of crops as soon as floods or cyclones are forecast and before the peak impacts occur.

Multiple hazards:

- Strengthen community-based early warning systems and develop the capacity of communities on linking warnings to anticipatory action.
- Distribute vegetable gardening inputs, short-cycle seeds and micro-irrigation systems to ensure availability of food ahead of the harvesting period.
- Provide cash for work (ideally via government social protection systems) to support the rapid construction/reinforcement of community infrastructures (e.g., evacuation centres for livestock, water drainage systems).
- Provide of Cash+ through government targeting system (with the "+" component to be tailored to community needs).
- Provide unconditional cash transfers between the issuance of a hazard forecast and the peak of its impacts on the local populations.

Annex: Countries and subnational areas at risk of excessive or below-average precipitation amounts between November 2025 and March 2026, largely reflecting the anticipated influence of the ongoing La Niña event

Countries at risk of excessive rains and increased risk of flooding

Australia (east and north)
 Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
 Botswana (east)
 Cambodia (east)
 Colombia
 Costa Rica
 Côte d'Ivoire (south)
 Democratic Republic of the Congo (north and west)
 Dominican Republic
 Ecuador (east)
 El Salvador
 Eswatini
 Fiji
 Guatemala
 Haiti
 Honduras
 Indonesia
 Jamaica
 Lao People's Democratic Republic (south)
 Lesotho
 Madagascar
 Malawi (south)
 Mexico (south)
 Mozambique
 Myanmar (north)
 Nicaragua
 Panama
 Papua New Guinea
 Philippines
 South Africa
 Timor-Leste
 Trinidad and Tobago
 Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (west)
 Viet Nam
 Zimbabwe

Countries at risk of dry conditions

Argentina
 Armenia
 Azerbaijan
 Brazil (northeast and south)
 Ecuador (west)
 Ethiopia (south)
 Islamic Republic of Iran
 Iraq
 Kazakhstan
 Kenya (central and east)
 Kyrgyzstan
 Mexico (central and north)
 Pakistan (north and west)
 Paraguay
 Peru (west)
 Somalia
 Syrian Arab Republic
 Tajikistan
 Turkmenistan
 Türkiye
 Uganda (south)
 United Republic of Tanzania
 United States of America (south)
 Uruguay
 Uzbekistan

Notes

- i. **NOAA**. 2025. *El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) - diagnostic discussion*. NOAA, Climate Prediction Center, National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), National Weather Service (NWS). Maryland. 9 October 2025. https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.shtml.
- ii. **IPC**. 2025. *Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)*. IPC Global Support Unit (IPC GSU). Rome. [Cited October 2025]. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/en/?maptype=77106>.
- iii. **FAO**. 2025. GIEWS Country Brief: Syrian Arab Republic. FAO/Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture (GIEWS). Rome. 18 August 2025. <https://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=SYR>.

This report was prepared by the **Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS)** of the Markets and Trade Division of FAO. The updates focus on developing anomalous conditions aimed at providing early warnings, as well as latest and more elaborate information than other GIEWS regular reports on the food security situation of countries, at both national and sub-national levels. None of the information in this report should be regarded as statements of governmental views.

For more information visit the **GIEWS Website** at: <http://www.fao.org/giews/en/>

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