



UNDP

EL NIÑO ANTICIPATORY CAPABILITY

Global Overview and Strategy

2026–2027 El Niño

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Climate Change Team | July 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2026–2027 El Niño event is not a future risk; it is an unfolding emergency. NOAA confirmed El Niño conditions on 11 June 2026 and assigns a 63% probability of a very strong event by November–January. WMO places onset probability at 80% for June–August, rising to near or above 90% through November. El Niño does not affect countries and regions uniformly. It superimposes severe drought on some regions, catastrophic flooding on others, and extreme heat on nearly all, often simultaneously, often within the same country. In 2026, it arrives compounded by a Middle East conflict driving global fuel, fertilizer, and food price volatility; active armed conflict in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ukraine, and Mozambique; and in many affected countries, a development baseline already weakened by the 2023/24 El Niño event just two years prior.

El Niño is one phase of the wider El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO), a recurrent climate cycle that also includes La Niña and neutral phases; under climate change, ENSO cycles are projected to become more frequent and extreme. UNDP therefore treats El Niño anticipation as development business, not a stand-alone humanitarian exception. Risk management should be embedded in one continuous monitoring–preparedness–response–recovery continuum, anchored in national development planning and budgeting, rather than treated as an episodic emergency that ends once the immediate crisis passes.

The economic case for anticipatory action before impacts materialize is unambiguous: anticipatory action in 2023/24 reached populations 6–10 months earlier than traditional response and delivered a 30% net financial benefit. That window is open now, and it is expected to close progressively from August 2026 onwards as planting decisions are locked in, supply chains tighten, and institutional attention shifts from prevention to crisis response.

This UNDP Global Overview and Strategy consolidates intelligence and intervention frameworks from regional briefs covering 5 regions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe & Central Asia, Latin America & the Caribbean, and Arab States) into a unified brief on UNDP’s risk-informed development approach to El Niño anticipation, preparedness, response and recovery. It makes the case for immediate pre-positioning and deployment of UNDP’s anticipatory capabilities across all affected regions as part of a sustained risk management continuum.

This document is a living resource and will be updated regularly as the 2026–2027 El Niño event evolves, as forecast institutions issue new guidance, and as regional briefs are revised.

80–90%+ WMO probability of El Niño, Jun–Nov 2026	63% NOAA probability of Very Strong event by Nov–Jan 2027	>40M People potentially at food insecurity risk across Africa alone under a strong scenario	USD 4–7 Return on every USD 1 invested in anticipatory action
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1. GLOBAL FORECAST INTELLIGENCE

1.1 The Outlook

The following table summarises current probabilistic guidance from leading global and regional climate institutions, as of May–June 2026:

Institution	El Niño Probability / Status	Severity Projection	Updated
NOAA / US CPC	El Niño confirmed underway (11 Jun 2026); 82% onset probability May–Jul 2026; 63% chance of Very Strong event Nov–Jan	Strong to Very Strong; ONI $\geq +2.0^{\circ}\text{C}$ possible	Jun 2026
WMO	80% probability Jun–Aug; near/above 90% Jul through Nov 2026	Further intensification expected through NH winter 2026/27	May–Jun 2026
IRI (Columbia Univ.)	>70% confirmed onset; persistence through early 2027	Moderate to Strong, consistent with multi-model ensemble	May 2026
AccuWeather	Super El Niño conditions by Oct–Nov 2026	67% chance of very strong event; rivals strongest in history	May 2026
ICPAC (Eastern Africa)	Moderate-to-strong El Niño + positive Indian Ocean Dipole	Wetter-than-normal Oct–Dec short rains likely in East Africa	May 2026
SADC Ministers	77% probability, late 2026; persisting into 2027	Comparable to 2023/24 event or exceeding it	May 2026
Zero Carbon Analytics / Met Office	61% probability May–Jul 2026 onset	Could rival 1982/1997/2015 events	Apr 2026

Sources: WMO El Niño/La Niña Update (May 2026); NOAA CPC ENSO Diagnostic Discussion (11 June 2026); IRI Seasonal Climate Forecasts; ICPAC GHACOF (May 2026); SADC Ministers Meeting, Victoria Falls (May 2026); Zero Carbon Analytics (April 2026).

1.2 Amplifying Factors

The 2026–2027 event does not unfold in isolation. Several compounding dynamics amplify its likely impact beyond what historical analogues alone would suggest:

- **Warmer baseline:** The 2026–2027 El Niño unfolds against a significantly warmer global mean temperature than the 2015/16 or 2023/24 events, amplifying heat stress, soil moisture loss, and wildfire risk globally.
- **Post-La Niña transition:** This El Niño follows directly after a La Niña period, a transition historically associated with compounding heavy rains and flooding followed by rapid drought onset, particularly in Southern Africa and parts of Asia-Pacific.
- **Food and fertilizer price pressures:** Strait of Hormuz instability is driving significant fuel and fertilizer price volatility. FAO estimates 3.3 million tons of rice production already at risk from reduced fertilizer use in Asia alone, rising to 7–8 million tons if disruptions persist alongside El Niño crop stress.
- **Active conflicts:** Armed conflict in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ukraine, and Mozambique, amplifies humanitarian needs. Climate stress is a documented conflict multiplier in all of these settings.

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- **Weakened development baselines:** Many affected countries have not fully recovered from the 2023/24 El Niño. Hydropower infrastructure, grain reserves, social protection coverage, and household asset bases remain depleted entering this new event.
 - **Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD):** A positive IOD is forecast alongside El Niño for 2026, with both factors pushing in the same direction in Eastern Africa, toward a dramatically wetter-than-normal short rains season (Oct–Dec 2026), raising the probability of extreme flood events.

2. GLOBAL RISK LANDSCAPE

2.1 Regional Impact Pathways

El Niño manifests differently across regions. Understanding these distinct pathways is essential for calibrated anticipation and preparedness rather than generic response. The following matrix summarises key impact pathways, risk tiers, and the most exposed countries within each region:

Region	Primary Hazard Pathways	Highest-Risk Countries	Compounding Factors
Southern Africa	Severe drought (Oct 2026–Mar 2027); crop failure; hydropower collapse; cyclones (Mozambique, Madagascar)	Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi — CRITICAL Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho — HIGH	Post-La Niña transition; Kariba Dam dependency; depleted 2023/24 baselines; Mozambique conflict
Eastern Africa	Dual-hazard: drought (Jun–Sep) followed by flooding (Oct–Dec); conflict multiplier	Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan — CRITICAL Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda — HIGH	Active conflict (Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia); positive IOD compounding flood risk; Sudan refugee crisis
Asia-Pacific	Drought, heat stress, wildfire (Indonesia, PNG, Timor-Leste); market shocks across Pacific Island Countries	Indonesia, Timor-Leste, PNG — TIER 1 Philippines, Viet Nam, Thailand — TIER 2	Fertilizer/fuel price shocks; Middle East trade disruption; IOD uncertainty; cyclone risk 2027
Europe & Central Asia	Heatwaves; flash floods & mudflows; glacial melt / water scarcity; agricultural drought; wildfire	Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Moldova, Ukraine — ELEVATED Georgia, Western Balkans, Türkiye — MODERATE	Ukraine active conflict; hydropower cascade risk (90%+ of CA electricity); seismic exposure; fiscal stress
Latin America & Caribbean	Drought and heat stress (Central America, Amazon basin); flooding (Pacific coasts); hurricane intensification	Drought: Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Haiti — HIGH Flooding: Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Argentina — HIGH Colombia (hydropower) — ELEVATED	Dual hazard profile (drought in Central America/Amazonia; floods in Pacific coast/Southern Cone); hydroelectric energy dependency (Colombia); Panama Canal disruption risk; Strait of Hormuz fertilizer/fuel cost pass-through; migration and displacement pressure; depleted fiscal buffers
Arab States	Heat extremes; agricultural drought; water scarcity; flooding risk in Yemen and parts of the Levant	Tier 1: Somalia, Djibouti — highest immediate relevance Tier 2: Sudan, Yemen — elevated compound risk Monitor: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia GCC — indirect/systemic impacts	19 Arab countries below water poverty threshold; Strait of Hormuz disruption driving food/fuel price shock; protracted conflicts (Yemen, Sudan, Syria); IOD and Mediterranean dynamics more influential than ENSO across Maghreb/Mashreq; medican risk in Mediterranean coastal countries

Sources: WMO El Niño/La Niña Update (May 2026); NOAA CPC ENSO Diagnostic Discussion (11 June 2026); ICPAC GHACOF (May 2026); SADC Ministers Meeting, Victoria Falls (May 2026); UNDP Regional El Niño Anticipatory Capability Briefs (June 2026).

2.2 Cross-Cutting Risks

Across all regions, El Niño 2026–2027 threatens to reverse development progress across five dimensions that define the SDG trajectory of affected nations:

Food Security & Nutrition	Crop failures, livestock losses, and food price spikes could push 40–60 million people into acute food insecurity globally, with the severest concentrations in the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa, and parts of Asia-Pacific. Malnutrition impacts in the first 1,000 days of life are irreversible; every delayed response week translates to permanent human capital loss.
Extreme Heat	UNDP regional analysis identifies extreme heat, not only drought and flood, as a defining risk of this El Niño phase, with peak windows of March–June 2027 in South Asia and February–May 2027 in Southeast Asia, consistent with the 2015/16 and 2023/24 events. Heat-specific preparedness should cover labour and productivity, health system surge capacity, energy demand, protection of outdoor workers, and school calendars.
Economic Stability & Growth	GDP contractions are documented in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and other SADC economies following 2023/24. Hydropower shortfalls (Kariba Dam, Central Asian hydroelectric systems) cascade into industrial output losses worth USD 1–2 billion in single events. South Africa's maize shortfalls ripple as food price inflation across all landlocked neighbors.
Human Capital & Education	School dropout during drought is a multi-year development setback. Malnutrition and acute water insecurity impair learning outcomes. The 2015/16 El Niño is associated with measurable multi-year setbacks in enrolment and educational attainment across Southern Africa and parts of Asia.
Conflict & Stability	Climate stress is a documented conflict multiplier: drought intensifies competition over water and pasture; floods displace populations into contested areas; food insecurity amplifies grievances. In Eastern Africa, South Sudan's 2025 experience demonstrated how flood-driven displacement directly reignited farmer-herder conflicts. UNDP's conflict-sensitive programming is not optional in this context — it is structurally required.
Institutional Capacity & Fiscal Space	Governments forced to divert scarce fiscal resources from development budgets to emergency relief lose years of public investment. Debt-constrained countries (including many in Southern Africa) face particularly acute trade-offs. UNDP's role in protecting institutional functionality — keeping health systems, water utilities, education systems, local governance structures, infrastructure services, and social protection programmes operational — is as important as any direct livelihoods intervention.

3. THE STRATEGIC CASE FOR PRE-POSITIONING

3.1 The Window is Open — and Closing

June 2026 represents a moment of unusual development advantage: the 2025/26 harvest has just concluded in the Southern hemisphere, grain is at its seasonal price floor, institutional attention has not yet shifted to crisis management, private sector actors are still open to forward contracts, and donor engagement can still be framed as anticipatory investment rather than emergency relief. This window closes progressively from August 2026 onwards:

Planning Window	Actions
Now – July 2026	Highest-return window: pre-season coordination, grain stock assessment, trigger design, anticipatory financing, pre-positioning of supplies, livelihoods vulnerability mapping. Every week of inaction in this window erodes options in all subsequent windows.
August – September 2026	Supply pre-positioning must be completed; planting advisory systems active; anticipatory cash transfer protocols finalised; SARCOF-33 (Southern Africa) and GHACOF (Eastern Africa) outlooks available for planning confirmation.
October – December 2026	Early season impacts begin. Flood protocols trigger in Eastern Africa; drought stress visible in Southern Africa and Asia-Pacific; all pre-designed instruments activated. Design and supply window is effectively closed.
January – March 2027	Peak impact window. Country offices managing concurrent recovery needs. The development objective shifts from prevention to protection of human capital, institutional functionality, and the evidence base for recovery financing.

3.2 The Economic and Development Return on Anticipatory Action

The investment case is not contested. Anticipatory action in 2023/24 reached populations 6–10 months earlier than traditional response mechanisms and delivered a 30% net financial benefit over reactive alternatives. The Southern Africa Regional Anticipatory Action Working Group (RAAWG) mobilized nearly USD 31 million to protect over 2 million people in seven countries: conservative analysis shows this investment prevented household asset losses, school dropout, and institutional disruption that would have cost multiple times the initial outlay to repair.

The structural argument is equally compelling: households that retain productive assets and market access in a drought do not just need less food aid. They recover to their development trajectory faster. Their children stay in school. Their governments retain fiscal headroom to invest in infrastructure, health, and education. The alternative (waiting until impacts materialise) guarantees both higher response costs and longer development setbacks.

UNDP's specific comparative advantage in this space — disaster risk reduction, governance, institutional capacity, gender-sensitive programming, social protection systems — positions the organisation to fill roles that humanitarian actors cannot: protecting the institutional infrastructure that communities depend on before, during, and after a crisis, and ensuring that recovery is risk-informed rather than simply reconstructing pre-existing vulnerabilities.

4. UNDP'S RISK-INFORMED DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO EL NIÑO

UNDP's corporate positioning treats El Niño risk management as a permanent line of development work rather than interventions that start and end with this event.

4.1 From Humanitarian Response to Risk-Informed Development

El Niño is one phase of the wider El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO), a recurrent climate cycle that also includes La Niña and neutral phases and, under climate change, is projected to become more frequent and severe. Development pathways themselves shape exposure and vulnerability to El Niño: decisions on infrastructure development, urbanisation, natural resource management and social protection coverage determine, years in advance, how severely a given community experiences a given disaster event. Anticipatory action is one specific type of preparedness action; preparedness more broadly requires institutional and capability strengthening over time and in a systemic way, so that investment in preparedness contributes to the resilience of systems, institutions and people.

4.2 Prospective Risk Management

UNDP's risk-informed development approach distinguishes three types of risk management practice: corrective measures that reduce existing levels of risk (e.g., retrofitting infrastructure); reactive measures that foster response, early warning and preparedness; and compensatory measures that absorb the impacts of crises once they occur (e.g., recovery, insurance, social safety nets). Most El Niño operational guidance, including the anticipatory action instruments referenced elsewhere in this brief, sits within the reactive and compensatory categories. UNDP's comparative advantage lies in adding the fourth, prospective dimension: identifying and preventing the creation of future risk in the first place, through risk-informed development planning, investment and governance, so that the next ENSO event, whichever phase it takes, finds institutions, infrastructure and communities structurally less exposed. UNDP Country Offices should map and strengthen existing government-led coordination platforms (national DRR platforms, early warning/risk monitoring cells, anticipatory action working groups, meteorological-agency engagement in agriculture and water) rather than treating El Niño preparedness as a one-time exercise.

4.3 Planning for Recovery Ahead of Time

Recovery preparedness entails pre-identifying likely recovery needs, capacities, coordination arrangements and financing pathways for the sectors and populations most at risk and should be planned in parallel with anticipatory action, not designed from scratch once impacts materialize. Recovery tools need to be pre-positioned ahead of time: recovery financing mechanisms (including access to Integrated National Financing Frameworks and other contingency and risk-financing instruments), institutional recovery coordination arrangements, and damage and loss assessment methodologies.

4.4 Five Strategic Entry Points

UNDP's corporate approach to risk-informed development identifies five strategic entry points through which risk can be integrated into development flexibly and dynamically, all of which apply to programming that addresses El Niño risk:

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- **Knowledge and evidence:** risk assessment, awareness, and monitoring and evaluation.
 - **Policy coherence:** legislation, strategies and plans that address multidimensional risk.
 - **Risk-informed organisations and implementation:** capacities, coordination and portfolio approaches.
 - **People-centred and stakeholder-driven policymaking:** ensuring the most vulnerable have agency in the process and benefit directly from it.
 - **Sustainable financing:** blending public, private, domestic and international resources, including risk financing and insurance.

5. PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR UNDP COUNTRY OFFICES

The following actions are for UNDP Country Offices, organised around UNDP's core role in anticipation, preparedness, response and recovery. UNDP Country Offices should adapt scope and sequencing to their country context, available capacity, and the hazard timing windows identified in their regional brief. The visual companion entitled "Country Office Pathway for El Niño Risk Management" unpacks these suggested priority actions sequentially.

Downstream corporate support to UNDP Country Offices from Regional Bureaux/Hubs and HQ Bureaux can be delivered through three lines: advisory support (technical guidance for reprogramming or new programme development; preparedness capacity support; crisis response packages; recovery preparedness); resource mobilization and external communication (donor round tables and joint appeals); and direct support (deployment of experts and funding for assessment, coordination and programming).

Action	What UNDP Country Offices Should Do	When / Where to Prioritise	Support from UNDP Global, Regional Bureaux, RSCs
Activate El Niño risk monitoring capacity	Assign a focal point and track ENSO and IOD updates, national seasonal forecasts, and regional outlook products.	All Country Offices; immediate light-touch action regardless of risk tier.	Provide global/regional alert, key source list and simple monitoring template.
Join or convene a regular El Niño risk monitoring group	Work with NMHS, disaster management authorities, agriculture and water resource management ministries, UN RCO, UN agencies, other sector groups to maintain a common picture of El Niño risk. Prioritise mapping and strengthening existing platforms.	Higher-risk Country Offices, especially where government or RCO coordination is already active.	Advisory support on risk monitoring; synthesis of regional signals for CO leadership.
Risk communication support	Support government and UN partners to translate probabilistic forecasts into clear, uncertainty-aware messages linked to practical actions.	Country Offices where forecast information is likely to be misunderstood or where government requests communication support.	Develop a short set of agreed messages with the national meteorological service and RCO, identifying what is known, what remains uncertain and what actions are recommended.
Review anticipatory action triggers and readiness mechanisms	Jointly with FAO, WFP, OCHA, etc., identify existing anticipatory action triggers, contingency plans, social protection systems, farmer registries, procurement routes and business continuity arrangements. Test thresholds against 2015/16 and 2023/24 lessons.	Countries with FAO/WFP/OCHA frameworks or likely activation windows.	Trigger review support, readiness checklist, UNDP Preparedness Learning Pathway materials, examples from past El Niño impact.

Action	What UNDP Country Offices Should Do	When / Where to Prioritise	Support from UNDP Global, Regional Bureaux, RSCs
Prepare a short UNDP Country Office risk scan	Overlay seasonal forecasts with vulnerability, displacement and conflict, social protection coverage, livelihoods, water systems, markets, and ongoing UNDP portfolios.	Higher-risk Country Offices; countries in the FAO-WFP appeal.	Advisory support on risk monitoring, risk-scan templates, remote analytics.
Ensure UNDP Country Office operational preparedness and business continuity	Support contingency planning, supplier mapping, stand-by agreements, procurement and pre-positioning, logistics, data-sharing, surge arrangements, risk communication, and local service continuity planning.	Countries likely to face major impacts or rapid-onset floods and cyclones.	Technical assistance on preparedness planning through the UNDP Preparedness Learning Pathway and BCP review/update.
Strengthen preparedness with government counterparts	Support government planning on water management, drought and flood preparedness, irrigation maintenance, fire prevention, livestock planning, urban heat and drainage, and risk communication. Embed measures within national and sectoral development plans.	Country Offices with strong government entry points and sufficient staff bandwidth.	Technical advisory support, preparedness clinic facilitation, UNDP Preparedness Learning Pathway, capacity-development materials.
Urban and local service preparedness	Support municipalities to review continuity of priority services — water, drainage, waste management, local markets, services for vulnerable communities — extending to health, education, and local governance functions.	Municipalities exposed to heat, water shortages, flash floods or displacement pressures.	Select one or two priority municipalities; rapid review of critical services, bottlenecks, responsible institutions and feasible measures.
Identify no-regret actions in UNDP projects	Review existing UNDP projects for adjustments that reduce drought, heat, flood, or market-shock impacts, prioritising measures beneficial across plausible scenarios.	Country Offices with active programmes in exposed districts or sectors.	Portfolio-screening guidance, examples of no-regret measures, remote advice on project adaptation options.
Begin recovery preparedness early	Help clarify assessment arrangements, baseline data, government and partner roles and likely recovery priorities before impacts occur. Pre-position recovery financing pathways.	Countries where drought, flooding or other impacts could create significant recovery needs.	Basic recovery-readiness checklist covering SEIA/PDPA roles, baseline data, priority sectors, assessment partners, financing sources.
Establish heat-health early warning and anticipatory triggers	Work with national meteorological services and disaster management agencies to set heat-index thresholds tied to pre-agreed actions, following the Ahmedabad Heat Action Plan model.	Pilot cities in very-high/high heat-risk tier countries, before their respective 2027 hot seasons.	BRH heat-trigger design guidance; RIMES, SAHHIN/GHHIN and national met-service partnerships.

Action	What UNDP Country Offices Should Do	When / Where to Prioritise	Support from UNDP Global, Regional Bureaux, RSCs
Extend heat protection to social protection, health and livelihoods	Issue practical heat-safety guidance for outdoor and informal workers; embed heat-responsive features into existing social protection systems; assess health-facility readiness for heat surges.	Very-high and high heat-risk tier countries, ahead of their respective 2027 hot seasons.	BRH heat-safety guidance aligned with WHO/WMO standards; adaptive social protection rapid-assessment format.
Apply UNDP's risk-informed development lens across El Niño programming	Use the five risk-informed development entry points to move beyond anticipatory action toward embedding El Niño risk management in Country Programme Documents, national development plans and UN Cooperation Frameworks.	All Country Offices, as an ongoing practice running alongside the anticipatory action window.	UNDP guidance on the five risk-informed development entry points.

6. REGIONAL OUTLOOK

The following section provides a condensed strategic overview of each regional context. Full operational detail — country risk matrices, sector impact scenarios, country profiles, and action tables — is contained in the individual regional briefs.

Southern Africa

CRITICAL — ACT IMMEDIATELY

RISK CONTEXT

Over 70% of the population depends on agriculture. The 2023/24 El Niño caused GDP contraction in Zambia and Zimbabwe, destroyed nearly half of Malawi's maize crop, and drove Kariba Dam to critical levels — cascading into electricity rationing estimated at USD 1–2 billion in lost industrial output. With forecast severity matching or exceeding 2023/24, and a baseline that has not fully recovered, Southern Africa faces a scenario where over 40 million people could face acute food insecurity under a strong event.

KEY RISK INDICATORS

- **Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi:** CRITICAL across food security, agriculture, hydropower, and livelihoods
- **Mozambique:** Critical cyclone risk (Jan–Mar 2027) compounded by drought and conflict in northern provinces
- **Madagascar:** Variable — drought in south, critical cyclone risk in east and north
- **Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, eSwatini:** HIGH — livestock and smallholder agriculture severely exposed
- **Angola:** Moderate
- **South Africa:** Regional food price cascade risk — production shortfalls ripple as import cost inflation across all landlocked neighbors

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Post-harvest grain stock assessment and strategic reserve replenishment before August 2026 price floor closes
- Pre-emptive suspension of import duties on staple grains through COMESA/AfCFTA channels
- Kariba Dam reservoir monitoring and energy cascade contingency planning with Zambia and Zimbabwe
- Livestock early offtake in agro-pastoral zones (Western/Southern Zambia, Matabeleland, Botswana, Namibia)
- Power BI El Niño Response Dashboard deployment across SADC Country Offices by August 2026
- **CRRF Crisis Modifier:** Max USD 50,000 per CO; deadline 31 December 2026

Eastern Africa

CRITICAL — DUAL-HAZARD PLANNING REQUIRED

RISK CONTEXT

Eastern Africa's El Niño produces a dual-hazard sequence: below-normal rainfall in Jun–Sep (drought risk in northern Greater Horn) followed by dramatically enhanced Oct–Dec short rains (flood risk in Kenya, Somalia, Uganda). A positive IOD compounds the flood risk. This is not a single-hazard planning problem. Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan each carry the highest INFORM Risk and Warning ratings globally, and climate stress is a documented conflict multiplier

throughout the region. Every USD 1 of delay in this region costs more than elsewhere, because both drought and flood preparedness windows close simultaneously.

KEY RISK INDICATORS

- **Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan:** CRITICAL across all dimensions — conflict, drought, flood, and food security
- **Ethiopia:** CRITICAL drought risk (NE/central/NW); 10+ million people already acutely food insecure
- **Kenya:** CRITICAL flood risk Oct–Dec; currently exiting drought — hazard transition planning required
- **Uganda:** HIGH — Karamoja drought; Lake Victoria flood downstream risk
- Lake and dam systems (Nalubaale/Kiira, GERD/Roseires, Tana/Seven Forks): transboundary flood risk requiring upstream coordination
- **Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea:** Moderate

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Convene dual-hazard preparedness coordination covering both drought and flood scenario assumptions (by July 2026)
- Predictive flood mapping in Kenya and Somalia river basins (South Sudan 2024 model: 2.71M people, 42 counties)
- Livestock early offtake in NE Ethiopia, southern Sudan, northern Uganda before herd conditions deteriorate
- Engage ICPAC on GHACOF inputs and integrate IOD forecast into country planning
- Apply conflict-sensitivity as a primary design lens in Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, and DRC border areas
- **CRRF Crisis Modifier:** Max USD 50,000 per CO; apply by 1 August 2026

West & Central Africa

HIGH — CONFLICT-COMPOUNDED, CONTESTED FORECAST

RISK CONTEXT

West and Central Africa is the one region in this El Niño cycle where the rainfall response itself is contested: WMO and Copernicus C3S point to below-normal June–September rainfall across the Sahel, while the NMME model ensemble points the other way, toward a wetter-than-average central-eastern Sahel. This is a development warning layered on a region already in crisis: conflict in the Central Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, and eastern DRC is driving some of the world’s largest displacement and food insecurity caseloads, independent of this year’s rainfall outcome. An estimated 41.8 million people across West Africa and the Sahel were already in Crisis or worse between October and December 2025, projected to rise to 52.8 million during the June–August 2026 lean season before any El Niño-specific deterioration is counted.

KEY RISK INDICATORS

- **Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad:** CRITICAL — compound climate and conflict exposure; food security already at Crisis+ across all five
- **Cameroon:** HIGH — Far North carries a drier signal and conflict spillover from the Northwest and Southwest; south near-normal
- **DRC:** HIGH — variable signal (north wetter, south drier); CRITICAL conflict and food security exposure in the east
- **Central African Republic:** HIGH — western CAR flagged for early-season rainfall deficit; HIGH funding gap constrains response
- **Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana:** MODERATE — cocoa belt exposed to genuine model disagreement

- **Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia:** MODERATE — early-season deficits already observed (June 2026 FEWS NET)

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Resolve forecast uncertainty by triangulating AGRHYMET PRESASS, NMME, and national meteorological services (Jun–Sep 2026 monitoring window)
- Integrated climate-conflict vulnerability mapping for the Lake Chad Basin, Liptako-Gourma tri-border area, and eastern DRC
- Treat conflict-sensitive design, Do No Harm analysis, and access mapping as preparedness actions in their own right
- Strengthen interoperability between AGRHYMET, national meteorological services, DRM authorities, and sector ministries
- Gender-responsive preparedness and livelihoods support, including women-led and community-based organizations
- **CRRF Crisis Modifier:** Max USD 50,000 per CO; all funds committed and expended by 31 December 2026

Asia-Pacific

HIGH — COMPOUND CLIMATE AND MARKET SHOCK

RISK CONTEXT

The 2026–2027 El Niño risk in Asia-Pacific is amplified by market stress from Middle East instability. Urea prices more than doubled year-on-year by April 2026 due to Strait of Hormuz disruptions. FAO estimates 3.3–8 million tons of rice production at risk. The strongest climate signals are concentrated in Indonesia, Timor-Leste, and Papua New Guinea (drought, heat, wildfire) with elevated concern in the Philippines, Viet Nam, Thailand, and Pacific Island Countries. Myanmar and South Asia require a more cautious read, as IOD and monsoon dynamics may dominate over direct ENSO signals.

KEY RISK INDICATORS

- **Tier 1 (Highest Concern):** Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea — drought, water stress, wildfire risk
- **Tier 2 (Elevated Concern):** Philippines, Viet Nam, Thailand — delayed drier conditions and high-value crop risk
- **Monitor:** Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, Lao PDR, Cambodia — Pacific Island Countries face outsized vulnerability
- **Mixed/IOD-sensitive:** Myanmar, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Pakistan — economic spillovers even where ENSO signal is mixed
- **FAO-WFP Joint Anticipatory Action Appeal:** USD 25.7M sought for 1 million people (priority: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Philippines, Timor-Leste)

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Assign CO El Niño/IOD focal points and establish regional alert/monitoring cycle
- Prepare CO risk scans overlaying seasonal forecasts with displacement, conflict, social protection coverage, and market data
- Map existing anticipatory action triggers; align with FAO/WFP Anticipatory Action Appeal country priorities
- Screen active UNDP projects for no-regret drought, heat, flood, and market-shock adaptations
- Pre-design recovery analytics (SEIA/PDNA readiness, UNOSAT request pathways) before impacts materialise

Europe & Central Asia

ELEVATED — COMPOUND CLIMATE, CONFLICT, AND ECONOMIC STRESS

RISK CONTEXT

The Oceanic Niño Index could reach as high as +2.6°C in the El Niño 3.4 region under the strongest scenario — a level some forecasters classify as a 'super' El Niño — though this remains a forecast, not a confirmed reading. EC DG ECHO forecasts temperature anomalies of +1.5°C to +3.9°C across ECA for Jul–Sep 2026. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan generate over 90% of electricity from hydropower. Flash floods, mudflows, and glacial melt threaten water systems simultaneously. Ukraine's conflict context requires the longest planning lead times. Several countries (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova) enter with already-elevated fiscal stress.

KEY RISK INDICATORS

- **Tier 1 Elevated:** Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan (energy-water-food cascade); Moldova (drought + food import dependency); Ukraine (conflict + agricultural drought); Armenia
- **Tier 2 Moderate:** Georgia, Western Balkans, Türkiye (seismic + climate compound), Turkmenistan
- **Primary hazard pathways:** flash floods/mudflows/landslides; glacial melt; heatwaves; agricultural drought; wildfire
- **Compound risks:** Strait of Hormuz price volatility; aging infrastructure; seismic exposure; active conflict (Ukraine)

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Convene national preparedness consultations and coordinate with meteorological services and DRR authorities
- Review and update contingency plans against El Niño compound scenarios (conflict, seismic, market shocks)
- Initiate anticipatory financing discussions before fiscal space narrows further — especially Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova
- Scale up social protection coverage in food-insecure and energy-stressed areas ahead of winter peak demand
- Activate hydropower and water monitoring trackers for Central Asian energy systems
- Deploy risk communication packs and a social protection readiness checklist across ECA Country Offices

Latin America & Caribbean

HIGH — MONITORING AND EARLY ACTION

RISK CONTEXT

The LAC region experiences two distinct El Niño risk profiles that demand parallel intervention tracks. In Central America, the Caribbean, Amazonia, and the South American central highlands, El Niño brings reduced rainfall, rising temperatures, and prolonged drought — with agricultural losses exceeding 50% in staple crops across Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala in recent events, and significant hydroelectric energy stress in Colombia. On the Pacific coast (Ecuador, Peru) and the Southern Cone (Paraguay, Argentina), the signal reverses: intense rainfall, flooding, and landslides dominate. These compound risks arrive against a baseline of elevated food insecurity, economic pressure, migration flows, and limited fiscal space.

KEY RISK INDICATORS

- **Drought zone** — Central America, Caribbean, Amazonia, central highlands: precipitation deficits, agricultural losses exceeding 50% in staple crops, forest fires, water scarcity, energy stress, migration pressure
- **Flood zone — South American Pacific coast and Southern Cone:** intense rainfall, flooding, landslides, infrastructure damage, fisheries disruption; peak impact December–March

- **Haiti:** highest humanitarian exposure in the Caribbean; compound climate, governance fragility, and food insecurity
- **Caribbean SIDS:** near-total import dependence on food and fuel; seasonal flood risk (Dec–March) requiring pre-positioned response capacity
- **Colombia energy system:** hydroelectric dependency makes drought a direct energy security risk; Panama Canal disruption risk recurs under strong event

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Deploy Adaptive Social Protection (ASP) and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as the cross-cutting framework for both drought and flood response
- **Drought track:** distribute drought-resistant seeds and climate-adjusted agricultural calendars; rehabilitate wells and water harvesting; activate fire brigades
- **Flood track:** pre-position relief supplies and plan evacuations ahead of Dec–Mar peak; rehabilitate drainage and WASH; strengthen disease surveillance
- Align with CIIFEN and IRI LAC regional forecast products; integrate DPI into targeting and delivery; engage SICA, CARICOM, MERCOSUR
- Prioritise rural, indigenous, and climate-exposed groups; coordinate with CCRIF and regional disaster management bodies for Caribbean SIDS

Arab States

HIGH — MONITORING AND EARLY ACTION

RISK CONTEXT

El Niño's effects across the Arab States are not uniform. The clearest and most immediate risks are concentrated in Somalia and Djibouti (Tier 1), with elevated compound risk in Sudan and Yemen (Tier 2). Across the wider region, ENSO teleconnections are generally weaker and more context-dependent. The 2026 event arrives amid major supply chain disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, creating a "perfect storm" for food insecurity. With 19 Arab countries already below the water poverty threshold, water scarcity is the primary climate-conflict nexus driver, and many nations face depleted fiscal buffers.

KEY RISK INDICATORS

- **Tier 1 — Somalia, Djibouti:** drought, water scarcity, heat stress, pasture and crop losses, livestock impacts, food insecurity, displacement; highest immediate relevance for UNDP
- **Tier 2 — Sudan, Yemen:** compound effects of conflict, displacement, damaged infrastructure, food insecurity, market disruption, limited institutional capacity
- **Monitor — Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia:** rainfall deficits, drought, heat, water stress, wildfire, food-price pressures
- **Monitor — GCC:** extreme heat, higher water/electricity demand, urban flooding, food-import and commodity-price volatility
- **Mediterranean medicanne risk (Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria):** above-normal SSTs can intensify tropical-like cyclones (Storm Daniel 2023 precedent)

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- Prioritise Tier 1 (Somalia, Djibouti) and Tier 2 (Sudan, Yemen) for immediate preparedness support: joint ENSO/IOD monitoring, trigger design, water-system readiness

- **For monitor countries:** develop CO risk scans overlaying seasonal forecasts with water availability, heat, urban flood exposure, social protection coverage
- Review existing UNDP programming entry points — multi-hazard early warning, solar-powered water systems, climate-smart agriculture, urban resilience
- Monitor Mediterranean SSTs and atmospheric precursor conditions from late summer into autumn; align with ACMAD, MedCOF, ECMWF, Copernicus

7. GLOBAL MONITORING SOURCES

This is an anticipatory planning document, not a deterministic forecast. Regional risk tiers are planning signals, not predictions. UNDP Country Offices should consult national meteorological services, ICPAC/SARCOF/Copernicus regional outlooks, FEWS NET livelihood zone analyses, IPC acute food insecurity classifications, and government preparedness plans as the primary planning inputs for their specific country context. This document should be updated as WMO, NOAA, IRI, and regional climate bodies issue new forecasts. The SARCOF-33 seasonal outlook (August 2026) and the GHACOF outlook are particularly important planning milestones for Southern and Eastern Africa respectively. Country Offices should monitor the following platforms for updated forecast intelligence throughout the El Niño event:

Source	Resource / Platform	Coverage	Frequency
WMO	El Niño/La Niña Updates — wmo.int	Global	Monthly
NOAA CPC	ENSO Diagnostic Discussion — cpc.ncep.noaa.gov	Global	Monthly
IRI Columbia	Seasonal Climate Forecasts — iri.columbia.edu	Global	Monthly
ICPAC	Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forum (GHACOF) — icpac.net	Eastern Africa	Seasonal
SADC Climate Services	SARCOF Statements — sadc.int/climate	Southern Africa	Bi-annual
CIIFEN	El Niño outlooks for Latin America — ciifen.org	Latin America & Caribbean	Ongoing
Copernicus C3S / ECMWF	European Climate Bulletins — climate.copernicus.eu	Europe & Central Asia	Monthly
FEWS NET	Food Security Outlooks — fews.net	Africa, Central America	Monthly
IPC	Acute Food Insecurity Classifications — ipcinfo.org	Country-level	Seasonal
FAO-WFP	Joint Anticipatory Action Appeal — openknowledge.fao.org	Global / Regional	Ongoing
OCHA	Humanitarian Response Plans — unocha.org	Regional / Country	Ongoing
INFORM Risk	Risk and Warning Index — drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index	Global	Annual/ongoing
ACLED	Conflict event data and trends — acleddata.com	Global	Ongoing
RAAWG	Regional Anticipatory Action Working Group — contact OCHA ROSEA	Southern Africa	Ongoing
ACMAD	Long-Range Forecast Bulletins — sgbd.acmad.org	Africa / Arab States	Seasonal
MedCOF / ECMWF	Mediterranean Climate Outlook Forum / ECMWF seasonal forecasts	Mediterranean / Arab States	Seasonal

ANNEX — REGIONAL BRIEFS

This Global Overview and Strategy consolidates the following nine regional briefs, each containing full operational detail — country risk matrices, sector impact scenarios, country profiles, and action tables.

Regional Brief 1 — Southern Africa 2026–2027

Prepared by DRT Africa / Resilience Hub for Africa · June 2026

Covers: Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, eSwatini, South Africa, Madagascar, Angola. Includes: three-tier scenario planning, country profiles, SARCOF-33 guidance, CRRF Crisis Modifier application process (Max USD 50,000 per Country Office), Kariba Dam monitoring framework.

Regional Brief 2 — Eastern Africa 2026–2027

Prepared by DRT Africa / Resilience Hub for Africa · June 2026

Covers: Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea. Includes: dual-hazard planning framework, transboundary lake/dam coordination (Lake Victoria, GERD, Tana/Seven Forks), GHACOF integration, CRRF Crisis Modifier, conflict-sensitive programming guidance.

Regional Brief 3 — Western and Central Africa 2026–2027

Prepared by Sub-Regional Hub for West and Central Africa (Dakar) · July 2026

Covers: Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, DRC, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia. Includes: country-level risk matrix combining climate and conflict exposure, three-window investment framework, CRRF Crisis Modifier.

Regional Brief 4 — Asia-Pacific 2026–2027

Prepared by BRH for RBAP · June 2026

Covers: Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Viet Nam, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Pacific Island Countries, South Asia. Includes: Tier 1/2/3 risk groupings, FAO-WFP Anticipatory Action Appeal alignment (USD 25.7M), CO action table with BRH support pathways, IOD monitoring guidance.

Regional Brief 5 — Europe & Central Asia 2026–2027

Prepared by IRH for ECA Country Offices · June 2026

Covers: Central Asia, South Caucasus, Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, Cyprus, Türkiye. Includes: three-tier risk matrix, hydropower cascade risk analysis, Copernicus/ECMWF monitoring framework, recommended action set with timing.

Regional Brief 6 — Latin America & Caribbean 2026–2027

Prepared by UNDP RBLAC · June 2026

Covers: Central America, Caribbean, Amazonia, central highlands, South American Pacific coast, Southern Cone. Organises response around two distinct hazard tracks: drought and flooding, each with tailored instruments.

Regional Brief 7 — Arab States 2026–2027

Prepared by UNDP RBAS · June 2026

Covers: Somalia, Djibouti (Tier 1); Sudan, Yemen (Tier 2); Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia (monitor); GCC countries (monitor). Includes: four-tier risk classification; sub-regional snapshot.

Regional Brief 8 — Extreme Heat and Heatwave Resilience in South Asia

Prepared by UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub · 22 July 2026

Covers: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan (very-high heat-risk tier); Nepal, Sri Lanka (high); Maldives, Bhutan (moderate). Includes regional evidence base and a six-workstream programmatic offer.

Regional Brief 9 — Extreme Heat and Heatwave Resilience in Southeast Asia

Prepared by UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub · 22 July 2026

Covers: Myanmar, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Philippines (very-high heat-risk tier); Indonesia, Viet Nam, Thailand, Timor-Leste (high); Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore (moderate). Includes the same six-workstream programmatic offer adapted regionally.



EL NIÑO ANTICIPATORY CAPABILITY

Global Overview and Strategy