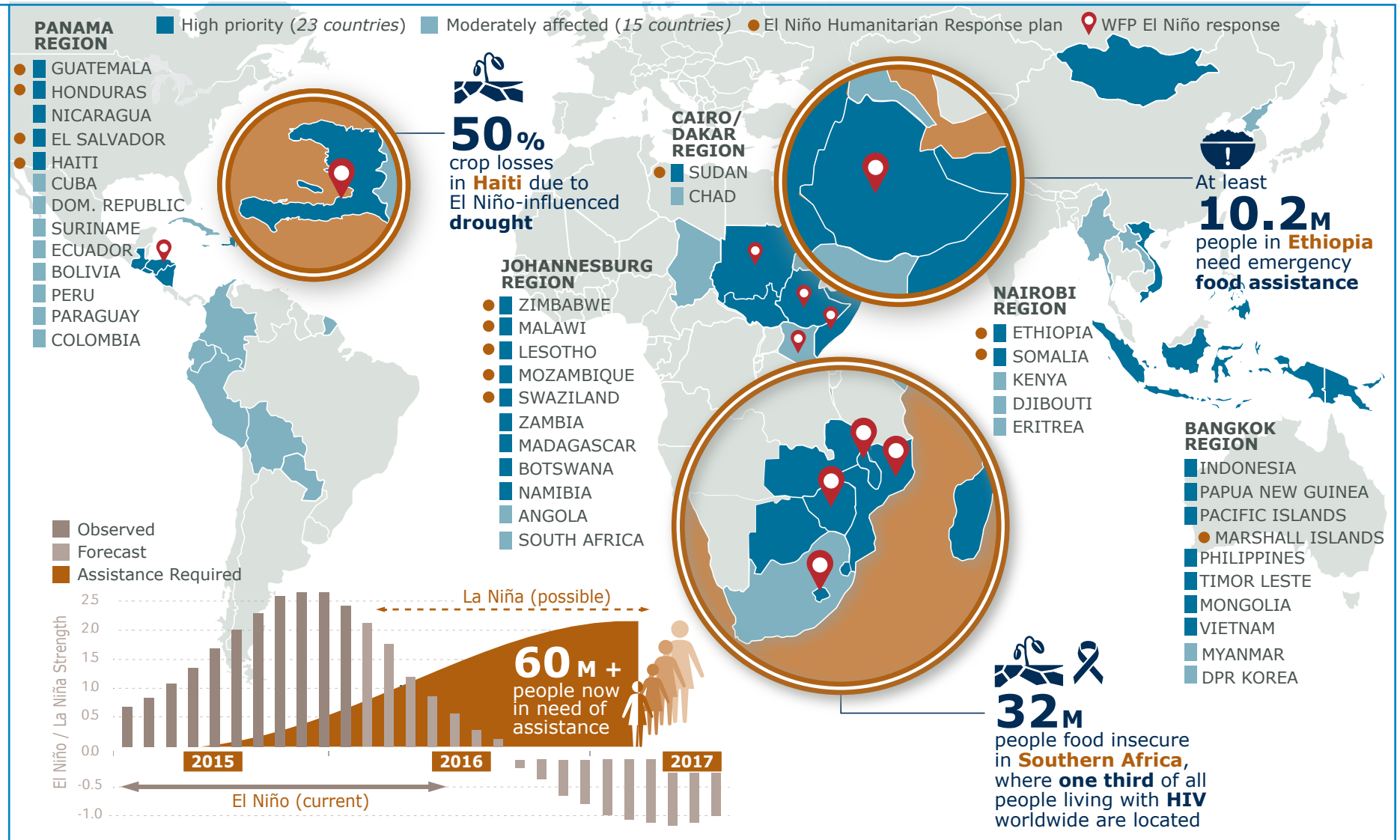


# El Niño

## FOOD SECURITY IMPACT

- El Niño is fuelling a global food security crisis, with more than **60 million people** in need of humanitarian assistance, this number will increase as further assessment details emerge. Although the El Niño event is subsiding, its impacts will be felt for months to come and food insecurity will deteriorate.
- El Niño threatens decades of development progress by making communities less able to absorb and adapt to a changing climate. **Resilience** needs to be at the centre of the El Niño response to curb long term impact.



April 2016. Sources: WFP, UNGIWG, GAUL, GLCSC, OCHA, UNHCR, IOM, INSO. The designations employed and the presentation of material in the map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory, city or sea, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. © World Food Programme 2016

## Global overview



Particular areas of concern include nearly all of **Southern Africa** which is the hardest hit region; Ethiopia and its neighbours Somalia and Sudan in **east Africa**; **Central America**'s 'dry corridor' and nearby Haiti; and many of **Asia**'s island nations including Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines.

In focus:

### Southern Africa Region

El Niño continues to severely affect the Southern Africa region, which is suffering from the driest cropping season in at least 35 years. Needs are likely to peak between the end of 2016 and March 2017, and the food insecure population is likely to at least double compared with current levels. Successive harvest failures will aggravate not only food and nutrition insecurity, but also health and HIV related-issues and calls for stronger regional cooperation to facilitate cross-border movements to the most affected areas.

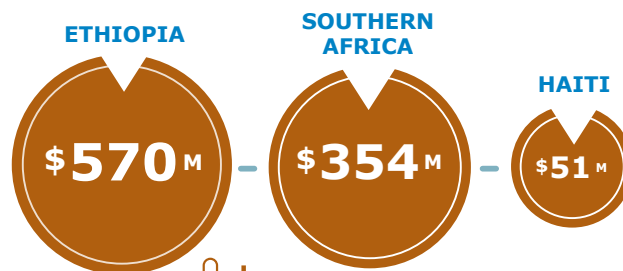
### Ethiopia

El Niño-related drought continues to affect millions of people, deepening food insecurity, malnutrition and water shortages. Humanitarian needs have tripled since early 2015 as severe drought has caused successive harvest failures and widespread livestock deaths. In 2016 so far, WFP has dispatched three rounds of food assistance with distributions ongoing. By the end of the first quarter of 2016, over half a million moderately malnourished children and pregnant and nursing women were assisted through the nutritional-support *Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme*.

### Haiti

The number of food insecure people has doubled in the last six months as a result of a third consecutive year of drought. 3.6 million people currently face food insecurity. Of these, 1.5 million are severely food insecure, and over 130,000 children are suffering from acute malnutrition. In coordination with the Government, WFP has already been distributing food to about 120,000 Haitians since November 2015 in the worst affected areas. WFP is preparing to scale up operations, targeting approximately one million people at an estimated cost of USD 80 million.

To respond to El Niño related needs over the next few months WFP still requires...



### WFP Response

WFP is rapidly **scaling up relief operations** to assist the most vulnerable communities, particularly those already reeling from successive bad harvests. WFP is providing **emergency food** where needed, and **cash to buy food** where markets are functioning. **Nutrition support programmes** such as *Targeted Supplementary Feeding* are being scaled up. **Innovative insurance payouts** have also been triggered in participating countries to help farming families and economies endure El Niño. WFP is assisting governments in strengthening their **Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience plans and response**.

### What is El Niño?

El Niño refers to a pattern of unusually warm water stretching across the surface of the Pacific Ocean. During an El Niño event, the relationship between winds and ocean currents in the Pacific Ocean changes, modifying weather conditions around the world. The resulting changes in rainfall and temperature affect crop and pasture development. The current El Niño was declared in March 2015. The humanitarian impact of El Niño induced major drought events is now increasing towards an expected peak in late 2016, as the consequences of poor harvests translate into worsening food insecurity for millions of people. Although it has been felt mainly as drought, some parts of the world have seen greater amounts of rain than normal, raising the risk of large-scale floods. WFP is monitoring the possibility of a La Niña episode developing in the second half of 2016.

### HIV and Nutrition

People living with HIV are particularly vulnerable to food insecurity, their situation compounded by lack of access to treatment and other health services. There is a correlation between **El Niño-induced drought and HIV prevalence, as infection rates in HIV-endemic rural areas increase by around 11 per cent with every drought**. Food insecurity pressures households into unsustainable coping strategies and can lead to HIV-risk behaviour (e.g. transactional sex), which drives new HIV infections.

**El Niño is expected to aggravate the already serious chronic malnutrition situation in particular for hard-hit communities and for vulnerable groups such as young children and the elderly.** Reduced food access, resulting from falling food production and food price increases, will likely reduce dietary diversity. This will impact the quality of infant and young child feeding and increase the risk of acute malnutrition. Access to essential protein and iron-rich foods may also be reduced, particularly in rural areas, as a result of drought impact on livestock.