



A plan to strengthen
community resilience
**to drought in
southern Africa**

Concept note – May 2016

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Saving lives, changing minds.



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. With our 190 member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we are in every community reaching 160.7 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes, as well as 110 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes. We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve the lives of vulnerable people. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by *Strategy 2020* – our collective plan of action to tackle the major humanitarian and development challenges of this decade – we are committed to saving lives and changing minds.

Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards, as partners in development, and in response to disasters. We persuade decision-makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

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Cover photo: Juozas Cernius/IFRC – *Food security programme, community garden. Distribution of seeds along with training on crop management are aimed at improving resilience to food insecurity in vulnerable areas.*

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Leading institution	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
Countries and geographic administrative units	<p>Lesotho: Qacha's Nek, Thaba Tseka, Mafeteng</p> <hr/> <p>Malawi: Nsanje, Phalombe</p> <hr/> <p>Mozambique: Magude, Manhica, Massingir, Chibuto, Funhaloro, Panda</p> <hr/> <p>Namibia: Kavango, Kunene, Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Zambezi</p> <hr/> <p>South Africa: To be identified</p> <hr/> <p>Swaziland: To be identified</p> <hr/> <p>Zimbabwe: Binga, Chipinge, Kariba, Mudzi, Mwenezi, Muzarabani, Lower Gweru, Gwanda Rural</p>
Plan	Strengthening community resilience to drought for communities in southern Africa
Total funding requested	110 million Swiss francs
Period	2016 – 2019
People to be reached	One million
Strategic objectives	<p>1. The IFRC will more than double its emergency response efforts in southern Africa.</p> <hr/> <p>Resilience to drought, food and nutrition insecurity is improved with targeted programmes in every country of intervention in the next five years.</p> <hr/> <p>Seven National Societies and the 90,000 Red Cross volunteers in southern Africa are better prepared to respond to emergency needs and to build more resilient communities.</p> <hr/> <p>Resilience to climate change and food insecurity in targeted communities is sustained and replicated through a coalition of partners.</p>

Situation description:

More of the same is no longer enough

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Southern Africa is currently in the midst of an intense drought, driven by one of the strongest El Niño episodes on record. An estimated 31.6 million people in the region are currently food insecure, and this figure is expected to climb to more than 49 million people by the end of 2016. Rains that are normally expected from October through April did not arrive until late February. The current rainy season has been the driest in 35 years across large swathes of all ten countries in the region. Humanitarian needs that are already high will continue to grow, as will the cost of sustaining that response. Our answer cannot simply be more of the same. We need to change, to take a longer view, and to more effectively use our collective resources, if we are to truly strengthen resilience and break the cycle of food insecurity in the region.

Assessments are ongoing to determine the full impact of El Niño on the main April harvest, but it is known that it will be severe. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates¹ that **more than 49 million people in the region (40 million in rural areas and 9 million in urban areas) are at risk of being affected by El Niño**. Four countries – **Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe** – have declared states of emergency and are appealing for international support to complement the local response efforts of Governments and partners. In addition, in April, Mozambique declared a 90-day institutional “Red Alert” for the southern and central regions of the country in an effort to expand current response actions and mobilize additional resources.

The impact of the drought on food and nutrition security is already being felt, and is taking the heaviest toll on vulnerable groups. In southern and eastern Africa it is estimated that more than 1 million children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition. In addition, southern Africa sits at the centre of the global HIV epidemic with the highest prevalence of HIV in the world. As food and nutrition security worsens it is expected that people living with HIV will have their health further jeopardized and be at greater risk of developing AIDS-related illnesses.

Building a coalition

The IFRC and its member National Societies believe that shocks and stresses are just some of many factors driving vulnerability. Families affected by food and nutrition insecurity need longer-term support to improve their livelihood opportunities and enable them to escape poverty. Building the resilience of affected populations in a holistic way is effective, cost efficient and sustainable.

Only an unprecedented commitment from humanitarian organizations, business and Governments to mobilize the potential of our collective networks and to coordinate our actions can bring about meaningful change at the scale that is needed, and create a region where people are safer, healthier and can thrive, even in the face of adversity.

Through the [One Billion Coalition for Resilience](#) (1BC), the IFRC and National Red Cross Societies in southern Africa will convene a coalition of partners that share a

1. <https://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/growing-concern-about-el-ninos-impact-southern-africa-planting-window-closes>

common vision of communities that are better able to cope with and recover from shocks like the current drought.

The 1BC is an opportunity to build on, strengthen and expand existing networks and initiatives for community resilience. Partners will shape national and local coalitions, as well as design and implement practical initiatives in coordination. Under the 1BC they will be connected to a global coalition, providing greater access to tools and expertise at the local level.

In parallel to these longer-term efforts to strengthen community resilience, communities across southern Africa remain in need of life-saving humanitarian assistance. Efforts to provide this assistance must be brought to scale, and the IFRC and National Societies will at **least double** the number of people targeted for Red Cross emergency assistance, along with its existing Emergency Appeals. The IFRC is currently working with the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of [Lesotho](#), [Malawi](#), [Mozambique](#), [Namibia](#) and [Zimbabwe](#) to provide immediate emergency support to more than **80,000 people** facing severe food shortages. An estimated 9 million Swiss francs (approximately 9.3 million US dollars) is needed to fund these interventions.

Breakdown of current beneficiaries

Country	District	Number of beneficiaries
Lesotho	Qacha's Nek, Thaba Tseka, and Mafeteng.	9,000 people
Malawi	Nsanje and Phalombe	10,000 people
Mozambique	Magude, Manhiça, Massingir, Chibuto, Funhaloro and Panda	14,767 people
Namibia	Kavango, Kunene, Oshikoto, Ohangwena and Zambezi	11,500 people
Zimbabwe	Binga, Chipinge, Kariba, Mudzi, Mwenezi, Muzarabani, Lower Gweru and Gwanda Rural	38,330 people
Total	24 districts	83,597 people



Proposed interventions

This plan aims to reinforce community resilience to food insecurity by strengthening the following areas: access to and availability of food; household food security and nutrition and livelihoods; community-based disaster risk reduction; access to safe water and hygiene, and health awareness.

The plan will unite and support the efforts of partners and contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 2, to end hunger and achieve food security, as well as priority actions of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Outcomes

1. Immediate food needs of targeted families are met over a period of 12 months
2. Communities, especially in disaster- and crisis-affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods
3. Communities are mobilized to prevent further life-threatening deteriorations in the nutritional status of the population
4. Communities in high risk areas are prepared for and able to respond to future shocks, such as droughts or floods
5. Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water-related diseases
6. Strengthened capacity for the IFRC to provide critical data and support to humanitarian operations in Africa through an emergency operations room.

General activities

The proposed activities are in line with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) member states' Regional Vulnerability Assessments' long-term recommendations to address food insecurity in the region. SADC Governments recommended the promotion and scaling-up of appropriate technologies, including climate-smart agricultural practices and interventions aimed at building resilience to food insecurity.

Short-term activities

In recognition of the severity of the humanitarian crisis gripping southern Africa, the IFRC and National Societies **will at least double** existing emergency response operations in the region.

Meet immediate food needs

Building on ongoing emergency operations, the National Societies of Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe will continue to implement cash transfers to cover immediate food needs. Continuous monitoring and assessments of families' coping mechanisms will determine the necessity to extend the Emergency Appeals to March 2017 to cover the entire lean season. Direct food assistance will be considered when necessary.

Strengthen livelihoods

Strengthening of food and nutrition security will focus on the promotion of nutrition-sensitive and climate-smart agriculture. To further increase household food production, families will receive one-off vouchers exchangeable for commodities or services such as livestock, irrigation or farming implements, small grain seeds, and fertilizer.

The plan is to leverage the already existing “lead farmer” approach to increase agricultural productivity through building skills in conservation agriculture and livestock management. The lead farmer concept, which recognizes the skills of farmers at the local level and uses these skills to promote effective horizontal learning as an approach to food security, has been extremely successful (you can read more about this approach on page 16).

Strengthen nutrition security

Community Management of Acute Malnutrition programmes in the targeted communities will strengthen health systems and community management of acute malnutrition in children under five years by ensuring that Red Cross volunteers have the skills to identify and initiate treatment for children with acute malnutrition before they become seriously ill. Poor food security is not only about supply and access to nutritious food at the household level, but also extends to inadequate knowledge of patterns of food storage, preparation and consumption.

Medium- to long-term activities:

Resilience to drought, and food and nutrition insecurity

National Societies will work with communities to improve livelihoods and promote resilience by establishing and/or strengthening community-based disaster risk reduction committees, enhancing risk awareness and mapping, including awareness about nutrition and the importance of changing behaviour in food diversification, preparation and consumption. Community Disaster Risk Reduction Action Plans will be supported using a cash for assets approach that results in productive resources such as rehabilitated or new irrigation schemes, fish ponds or reclaimed land, and acts as a strategy to get vital cash in the hands of vulnerable households, vocational training and off-farm income-generating activities.

Reduction of waterborne and water-related diseases

National Societies will be involved in the provision of safe water through borehole drilling or rehabilitation, for consumption, as well as for gardening and livestock. Prioritization of the boreholes for rehabilitation will be done in collaboration with local authorities. In addition, water point committees will be trained to maintain the boreholes and ensure that water points are managed in a sustainable manner.

Training in participatory health and hygiene will be carried out to reinforce hygiene and other related health messages as well as in the prevention of gender-based violence. Volunteers will deliver hygiene and health messages, including HIV informa-

tion, through community meetings, public gatherings, and household visits. Families with vulnerable groups such as children under five and people living with HIV will be specifically targeted and given priority.

Influence decisions

National Societies can draw on a unique network of volunteers that, when equipped with mobile phones, can quickly access and disseminate situation information and mobilize resources at all levels. National Societies will be supported to increase visibility, strengthen resource mobilization, enhance partnerships and ensure appropriate funding to conduct relevant interventions.





Implementation approach: Local roots, global solidarity

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The plan builds on an integrated, cross-cutting approach to strengthen household-level resilience. Implementation arrangements are designed to ensure effective coordination, implementation support, partnership with other agencies for leverage, and use of local service providers. The IFRC's southern Africa Country Cluster Support Team will lead the overall management and coordination of the different projects. The IFRC will ensure that National Red Cross Societies have the appropriate technical capacity and will provide the technical support needed to deliver the projects effectively. The IFRC will facilitate peer-to-peer support among implementing National Societies, document case studies and profile of the project within and outside the Red Cross. Partnership with key actors, including the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the World Food Programme (WFP) will be strengthened, and will be cascaded down to the country level to facilitate new or strengthen existing opportunities for technical support.

At the country level, National Red Cross Societies will implement and coordinate relevant projects through their targeted branches. National Societies, established by Acts of Parliament, have specific and distinctive partnerships with their public authorities.

This unique identity of National Societies is reinforced by their unparalleled networks of community-based volunteers. National Red Cross Societies are permanently present in communities, before, during, and after a crisis. They are able to accompany communities to address the challenges they face. They speak the same language as the communities they are supporting, understand local customs, and are able to draw on this knowledge and deep-rooted familiarity to ensure that interventions address the real needs of communities.

Particular attention will therefore be paid to reinforcing the long-term capacities of National Societies as relevant, legitimate, accountable and sustainable local humanitarian actors with long-term roots in communities. A particular focus of the organizational development aspect of programming will be to ensure that scaling up of National Society operations does not negatively impact their long-term image and positioning.

The IFRC's Country Cluster Support Team for southern Africa will be reinforced so that it can provide necessary technical support in disaster risk reduction, monitoring and evaluation, health, food security and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, organizational development and coordination.

Key aspects and innovation

1. Convene coalitions of partners

The IFRC will convene coalitions of partners at the national and local levels for mutual support and a coordinated response to both emergency needs and long-term efforts to build resilience. Governments, UN agencies, academic and private sector representa-

tives, the Red Cross, community-based organizations and coalition members will work to define a collective response. Joint activities will include use of joint needs assessments, common messaging in calls to policy makers and donors, and support to bring to scale interventions from coalition members.

With every new member, the coalition will become more effective, drawing from a larger pool of expertise, ideas and participants all working towards a common goal of improved resilience. The coalition will be part of the 1BC, offering global platforms to provide tools and resources to support operations, advocacy, civil society partnership development, business continuity, and a digital ecosystem to connect coalition members, kick-start initiatives and break down obstacles to building resilience.

2. Operations room

In a disaster situation, Red Cross volunteers are often the first to respond, as they live in the communities being affected. As such, they are best placed to understand what the risks are, and what resources are needed before, during and after a disaster. It is at the community level that stronger investment is needed to ensure that this insight and knowledge is captured and shared with decision makers so that they can take more effective action.

In recent years there has been an increase in efforts to make use of new technology to improve humanitarian responses to disasters. We believe that by combining the use of these new approaches, with the unmatched reach of our volunteers, we can take steps to improve the collection of essential and real time feedback about how communities are being affected by disasters. This will help us better design operations that not only help respond to them when they happen but also to address the underlying issues that contribute to them.

In Africa, the IFRC will establish an operations room linked to the Emergency Operations Centre being developed at the IFRC secretariat in Geneva, and which will provide a platform for volunteers located at the community level across the region to quickly provide data on disasters as they unfold. This will be piloted in response to the current food insecurity situation

in southern Africa to help enable efficient and effective decision making, and thus to improve Red Cross preparedness and response actions.

Monitoring and evaluation

Operational monitoring of activities and progress in the project will be done in an integrated manner by all IFRC technical teams, led by the disaster management unit, with the support of the monitoring and Evaluation department, which will be supporting field staff in the programme countries.

To achieve the overall objective of increased resilience of the population, projects will need to adapt closely to the reality of the communities in an integrated nature. Planning, evaluation and monitoring will be key to the success of the proposed interventions. As mentioned above, a more efficient data collection system will also feed into the intended operational room. This initiative will rely on the use of technologies such as mobile phone data collection system (e.g. ODK, Magpi). Training of National Society staff and procurement of the necessary equipment will be included in the various programmes. IFRC will build on existing National Society knowledge – as Zimbabwe and Malawi have staff and volunteers already experienced in ODK – and will recruit an IT/monitoring expert at the cluster level to support the implementation of the various training and the operational room.

CALL TO ACTION

The IFRC intends to raise the visibility of the effects of climate change and the need for the humanitarian community to unite its efforts and respond at a scale that reflects the needs and risks that millions of people are facing in southern Africa. This call seeks greater investment in efforts to strengthen resilience to specific threats such as climate change and food insecurity.

The IFRC aims to support **one million people** who are food insecure through a strong coalition of partners in **seven countries: Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe**. Food insecurity will be addressed through **cash transfer programmes** or direct food aid when needed in 2016; **resilience to drought and food insecurity will be increased** through targeted programmes in community-based disaster risk reduction over the next five years; **National Red Cross Societies will be better equipped to respond** to emergencies and support communities in their respective countries; humanitarian actors **will be united in building resilience to food insecurity** with vulnerable communities in the region.

The IFRC will work with national Governments and international and national humanitarian organizations to identify communities not yet reached with humanitarian assistance. The target will be the worst-affected districts as per the findings of food insecurity assessments carried out by the National Vulnerability Assessment Committees (NVACs) in the seven countries in 2015/16, and other further assessment by humanitarian agencies. National Red Cross Societies, as members of NVACs, take part in national vulnerability assessments.

The plan is to target vulnerable families, with priority given to: labour-constrained households; households with malnourished clients; child, female and elderly-headed households; people living with HIV, people receiving treatment for tuberculosis; pregnant and breast-feeding women and children under five years, and people with disabilities.

Experience of National Red Cross Societies in resilience-building interventions

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The mission of the IFRC is to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it is found. In part, this means ensuring immediate support is available to those affected by major disasters. However, given the effects of climate change resulting in yearly drought and floods, the provision of emergency relief is not sufficient to adequately address the humanitarian needs caused by these events. Most economies in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) are largely dependent on climate conditions, and any reduction or increase in rainfall often has a negative effect on socio-economic development. In order to maintain development gains made, National Red Cross Societies must help create stronger communities by building their resilience.

As part of its contribution to the resilience agenda, the IFRC has been supporting the National Societies of Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe to strengthen the resilience of communities living along the Zambezi River through the Zambezi River Basin Initiative (ZRBI). This initiative focused on:

- Fostering community preparedness, including disease prevention and water and sanitation development.
- Strengthening vulnerable communities and household livelihoods against the risk of food insecurity and agriculture losses.
- Increasing institutional capacities for disaster preparedness, response and recovery operations.

A clear positive impact in terms of response and preparedness has been realized with communities taking ownership of early warning information dissemination and early relocation to camps. These successes affirm the validity of the community-based to disaster preparedness and management.

The *lead farmer* concept, introduced under the ZRBI, recognizes the skills of farmers at the local level and uses these skills to promote effective horizontal learning as an approach to food security. The number of follower farmers per lead farmer increased beyond expected figures in 2014 with each lead farmer mentoring an average of ten other farmers. Surveyed households are making an average 300 US dollars profit per month from the sale of garden produce. New gardens have also had a positive impact on the availability of food and have increased the variety of food available, which encourages better nutrition. Diversification of livelihood sources by families has also been noticed as families have more resources from their gardens and livestock to invest in establishing alternate income streams.

KNOWLEDGE AND SEEDS SOW DISASTER RESILIENCE



Gister Kampamba, 45, is married with four children. His family lives in Lusu village about 30 kilometres west of Sesheke district in Zambia. He is one of the lucky farmers whose household has been spared from the 2015 hunger crisis. Through the Zambezi River Basin Initiative (ZRBI), supported by IFRC and implemented by the Zambia Red Cross Society, Kampamba has been taught how to notice signs of looming drought or floods, and how to prepare for such disasters and thereby reduce their impact on his family.

He also learned various methods of improving soil fertility, such as conservation farming to maximize the yield, and was taught ways to manage vegetable crops in order

to prevent diseases and pests. He was then given vegetable seeds to help him start his garden. With his acquired knowledge, Kampamba was able to notice the early warning signs at the beginning of this year's rainy season and decided to focus on vegetable gardening instead of upper land crop cultivation.

“For me, when I noticed signs of drought at the onset of this rainy season, I immediately decided to embark on vegetable gardening near the river because I could easily water my vegetables using the nearby river. It was easy for me to start gardening because of the assistance of the seed packs and knowledge I obtained from this programme,” said Kampamba.



The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

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