

EL NIÑO AND HEALTH - UPDATE

Global Overview - April 2016



World Health Organization

GLOBAL HEALTH IMPACTS

- Severe drought and associated food insecurity, flooding, rains and temperature rises due to El Niño 2015-2016 are causing a wide range of health problems, including disease outbreaks, malnutrition and disruption of health services.
- El Niño 2015-2016 is affecting more than 60 million people, especially in Eastern and Southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific.
- Although adverse weather effects of El Niño are expected to wind down by mid-2016, the health impacts are expected to last throughout 2016 and beyond. Urgent attention is needed now.
- WHO and partners are working closely to support nearly 30 countries to prepare and respond to this El Niño event, but significant funding gaps must be closed to prevent avoidable deaths and illnesses.
- La Niña may follow in the second half of 2016, causing further extreme conditions and more health problems. Regardless of El Niño and La Niña, WHO urges countries to prepare for all climate risks.

HEALTH EFFECTS CAN BE PREVENTED

WHO is working with Ministries of Health and other health partners in affected countries to address the health needs and effects caused by El Niño. Priority activities include:

- 1 **Management of medical consequences of malnutrition.**
- 2 **Continued access to health services.**
- 3 **Disease surveillance, early warning and outbreak response.**
- 4 **Safe water and sanitation services for communities and health facilities.**
- 5 **Vaccinations for epidemic-prone diseases (e.g. measles).**
- 6 **Emergency health supplies.**
- 7 **Coordination of health response efforts.**

HEALTH SECTOR NEEDS

Out of USD 3.6 billion required, the health sector needs an estimated USD 459 million. The Health Cluster needs USD 185 million, and **WHO requires USD 51 million**. Funding needs and the number of people affected are expected to increase.

EL NIÑO EFFECTS AND HEALTH CONSEQUENCES





EL NIÑO HEALTH CONSEQUENCES HIT SOME COUNTRIES HARDER

The tropical regions of Africa, the Asia-Pacific, and Latin America are affected most severely by the 2015-2016 El Niño. Some places have received more rain than normal (e.g. in Paraguay and Tanzania) while others have received almost none. As a result, severe droughts are occurring in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Malawi, Papua New Guinea and Pacific Island countries.

In Ethiopia, the number of people in need of emergency health interventions nearly doubled in three months – from 3.6 million people in December 2015 to 6.8 million in March 2016. WHO is deploying its Early Warning and Response System (EWARS) in a Box kits which provide durable, field-ready equipment needed to establish and manage disease and nutrition surveillance, alert and response activities with the aim of serving as many as 10 million people.

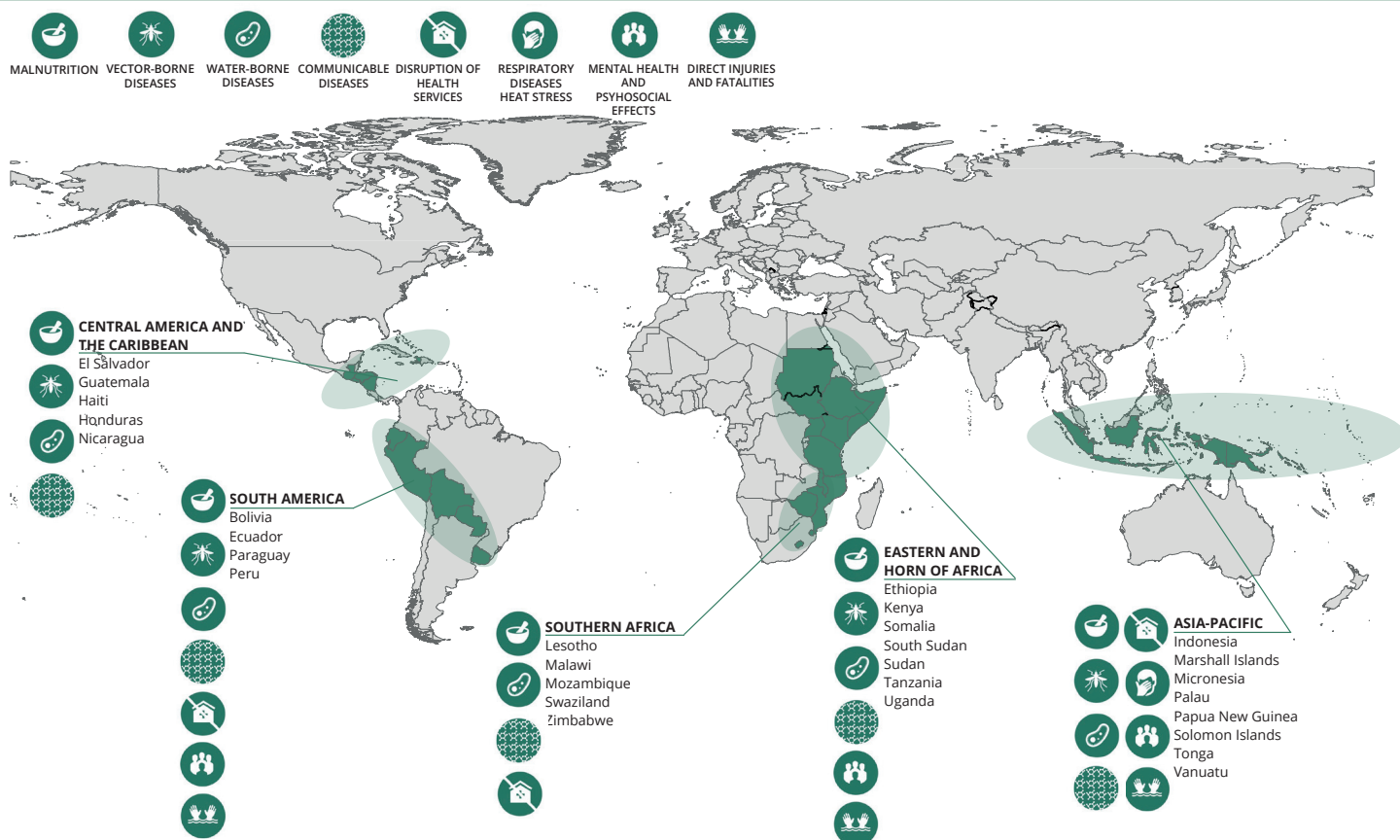
Above-average rainfall caused by El Niño in parts of **South America** has caused floods and increased diseases spread by mosquitoes, including malaria, dengue, chikungunya and the Zika virus.

In Guatemala and Honduras, two years of drought and El Niño have left 2.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in meeting their food, health care and livelihood needs. By May 2016, one in five households will face critical food consumption gaps and acute malnutrition.

In southern Africa, in addition to increasing malnutrition and disease risks, there are growing concerns about the interruption to anti-retroviral therapy (ART) for people living with HIV, including some 360 000 people in Lesotho.

Between November 2015 and March 2016, parts of **Papua New Guinea** received only 30% of normal rainfall. With nearly 1.5 million people feeling the effects of El Niño, the Papua New Guinea health sector is focused on providing access to water and medical supplies to ensure health facilities can continue to provide life-saving services.

In countries affected by cholera, such as **Tanzania** with over 23 000 cases reported, WHO and partners' high priority activities include cholera treatment services, disease surveillance and water quality monitoring.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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