

THE DANISH EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND

ALERT NOTE

Section A: Basic information

Organisation:	Dreamtown, Denmark Justice for Children, Zimbabwe
Title of alert:	El Niño-linked drought in Zimbabwe
Type of crisis:	• <i>Slow onset humanitarian crisis (please fill out section C)</i>

Section C: Slow onset humanitarian crisis

C.1 Where is the crisis? *Describe the areas affected*

Zimbabwe is currently facing the impact of an El Niño-induced drought. According to The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), crisis outcomes (IPC Phase 3) are expected throughout the whole country from October 2024 to May 2025.

C.2 What is the nature of the crisis?

The current crisis is primarily attributed to climate change-induced drought, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities in Zimbabwe. Prolonged dry spells have led to environmental degradation, diminished water sources, and diminished agricultural productivity. The ongoing macroeconomic issues in Zimbabwe are expected to further compound the impact of the poor harvests across the country through the post-harvest period as households largely remain dependent on market purchases for food.

C.3 What information do you have about the situation? What is the source of that information?

According to The Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), following the 2023/24 El Niño-induced drought, own-produced food stocks are widely unavailable, even in typical surplus-producing areas, while high prices and below-average income are constraining access to markets. According to FEWS NET analysis, Zimbabwe is projected to see an increase of 2.5 million people (a 15-percentage-point rise year-on-year) facing Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3 or above) levels of acute food insecurity, reaching up to 6 million people by March 2025. The Rural Livelihoods Assessment (RLA) carried out by The Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee (ZimLAC) projects that the peak hunger period is from January to March 2025. UNICEF confirms in its latest humanitarian situation report that the most severe impacts of the drought will be felt in the period from January to March 2025. As the drought intensifies, its cumulative effects will overwhelm households' coping mechanisms in the first quarter of 2025, leading to a peak in the severity of water insecurity and the deteriorating nutrition status of people, including children.

- a) UNICEF (2025): [Zimbabwe-2025-2024-12-04](#)
- b) FEWS NET (2024): [Zimbabwe | FEWS NET](#)
- c) SADC (2024): [SADC Regional Humanitarian Appeal](#)
- d) World Food Programme (2024): [WFP Zimbabwe Country Brief, September 2024 - Zimbabwe | ReliefWeb](#)

C.3.1 Provide as strong as possible evidence of why there is a change in the current slow onset crisis. Describe also when the change occurred (*mention specific dates if possible*).

The effects of the El Niño on the drought in Zimbabwe started October 2023. April 3rd 2024, Zimbabwe's government declared a state of disaster over the drought sweeping across Zimbabwe. In FEWS NET's food security outlook report covering October 2024 – May 2025, widespread crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes are expected from October 2024 through May 2025 across Zimbabwe, mainly driven by significantly below-normal 2024 crop harvests and constrained household incomes. Prices of food and other basic commodities and services will likely remain

higher than average, constraining market access, especially for poor households. Although seasonal improvements in income are expected with the beginning of the main agricultural season in November and December 2024, and although green harvests are likely to begin in January or February 2025, outcomes are not expected to improve (IPC Phase 2) until April or May 2025 with the arrival of anticipated near-normal harvests.

C.3.2. How could DERF grants make a difference for the crisis affected population?

Through the previous DERF intervention (24-5625-DERF-RR) JCT, Hope for Kids and CARC have responded to the humanitarian crisis unfolding in the Manicaland Province. UNICEF has also been actively involved in providing humanitarian assistance in the Manicaland Province, focusing on delivering life-saving services in health, nutrition, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), education, and child protection. A new DERF intervention will fill a funding gap. The United Nations has launched appeals for international support to address the humanitarian needs arising from the drought. The overall funding requirement for the drought response from January to April 2025 is \$143.1 million. These funds will enable the provision of essential, life-saving assistance while supporting ongoing Government-led response efforts and strengthening national relief measures.

C.4 Are you already responding to this emergency? In which locations/sectors? For which target group? Through which forms of local presence? What is the outcome of your latest assessment and what have you done since then?

Yes, we have responded to this emergency. Through the DERF intervention (24-5625-DERF-RR), the immediate food aid needs, health related issues, and protection needs of the vulnerable groups and communities in Manicaland Province (Buhera District and Mutare Rural District) has been addressed. The key components were the provision of cash transfers, a school feeding programme, agricultural support, and the initiation of income generating projects through micro grants. The response also supported access to clean drinking water and essential health services whilst at the same time ensuring provision of legal services and community-based protection safeguards addressing vulnerabilities exacerbated by the crisis such as PSHEA issues. The target group was vulnerable people, and priorities were given to pregnant and lactating women, people with disabilities, children, and young people below 24 years from vulnerable families as well as the elderly aged 65 and above. The intervention has had a strong emphasis on local presence with the two CBOs CARC and Hope for Kids physically present in the wards, and thus in constant touch with the affected people.

The intervention ended by December 31, 2024, and has met its targets. It was clear from Dreamtown's recent monitoring visit to the affected districts from November 20 to November 22, 2024 that the intervention was well-planned and has delivered on the key outcomes. Under Outcome 1, 1.667 people have accessed direct food support. The PDM survey shows that the cash transfer program effectively meets the basic needs of the beneficiaries as the majority of the beneficiaries have purchased the intended basket of goods and enabled them to address other essential needs, such as hygiene and child nutrition, which was also a priority to them. 1.592 have received agricultural inputs whereby they potentially can improve their livelihoods. 750 people were reached through 30 groups by receiving micro grants for them to initiate alternative income-generating activities. Under Outcome 2, 8.084 have benefitted from combatting water borne diseases. 5.355 people accessed health services. Under Outcome 3, 3.528 people accessed legal aid services, and 199 people had access to strengthened community-based protection mechanisms and access to community-based protection.