
CONCEPT NOTE

SUN MOVEMENT COUNTRY DISCUSSION *TELECONFERENCES ON EL NIÑO*

SUMMARY

This note presents the background and objectives of the SUN Movement discussion on El Niño, which will be organized in 3 teleconferences, one for Latin America, one for the SADC region and one for the IGAD region. The teleconferences will provide an opportunity for Governments and their partners dealing with the impact of El Niño to exchange experiences on how they are mobilising stakeholders across sectors to ensure nutritional needs are being met. These experiences will be shared with UN Special Envoys on El Niño, for advocacy and resource mobilisation purposes. It is anticipated that lessons from the El Niño response will inform future discussions on strategies to build resilience of communities affected by recurrent crises, and the capacities of the Movement's stakeholders working to ensure a central place for nutrition-security in emergency preparedness, response and recovery plans.

BACKGROUND

- 1) **The 2015–2016 El Niño weather phenomenon has been one of the most intense and widespread in the past one hundred years.** The agriculture, food security and nutritional status of 60 million people around the globe has been severely affected by El Niño-related droughts, floods and extreme hot and cold weather.¹ The regions most affected include the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa, the Dry Corridor of Central America and the Caribbean Islands, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands. SUN Countries that are reporting significant impact include: Ethiopia, Somalia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Haiti, Peru and Papua New Guinea. Eight governments have declared a national state of emergency.
- 2) **Whilst El Niño has now officially ended, the full impact on the food and nutrition security of vulnerable populations has yet to be felt,** and the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator continues to sound the alarm.² Analysis from the World Food Programme projects that food insecurity in the most affected regions will not peak before December 2016. The nutritional status of vulnerable communities is already declining³, and the impact could be magnified by any El Niña event that follows.

¹ https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OCHA_ElNiño_Overview_13Apr2016.pdf (as of 13th April – based on 13 countries)

² <https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/USG%20ERC%20OBrien%20opening%20remarks%20El%20Niño%20event%2026.04.16.pdf> (26th April 2016)

³ <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/el-ni-o-overview-impact-projected-humanitarian-needs-and-response-02-june-2016>

THE RESPONSE TO EL NIÑO IN SUN COUNTRIES

- 3) **SUN Country governments are leading the response to the impact of El Niño.** They are being supported by many of the SUN Movement's members. The UN System's agencies are playing a critical role in supporting preparedness and planning, implementing programmes, coordinating humanitarian stakeholders, providing analytical and modelling capacity, raising awareness and mobilising funds. At the global level all have El Niño Focal Points to facilitate coordination, and in some countries the cluster system has been activated. Donors are providing technical and financial assistance, with contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) providing some \$120million to 19 affected countries since mid-2015. Civil Society Organisations, as implementers and advocates, remain essential to the delivery of life saving support. Business, in partnership with humanitarian agencies, are playing their part.
- 4) **Worldwide, eight countries have requested international assistance and 19 countries have specific El Niño response plans in place,** including joint plans with the UN Humanitarian Country Teams. These costed response plans total almost \$3.9bn. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates a funding shortfall of \$2.5bn.

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- 5) **The SUN Movement Secretariat is organizing a discussion with interested SUN countries** to better understand the challenges that Governments and their partners face in managing the impact on nutrition caused by El Niño, and the opportunities they see. The experiences shared during the discussion will be used to brief the UN Secretary General's Special Envoys on El Niño and Climate Change, Ms. Mary Robinson and Mr. Macharia Kamau.
- 6) **SUN countries will be invited to reflect on their response to El Niño's impact and the lessons that are being learned;** stakeholders from the SUN Movement Networks will be offered a chance to comment on how they are contributing. The discussion will be facilitated by the SUN Movement Secretariat.
- 7) **The discussion is intended to facilitate the exchange of experiences between countries responding to the El Niño crisis.** It will explore ways in which multiple stakeholders are working across sectors to ensure improved nutrition outcomes for affected communities. It will *not* be a discussion on how to manage nutrition programmes in emergencies.
- 8) **The teleconference will also contribute to ongoing work to develop the SUN Movement's focused support to countries facing recurrent crises in the future.** With El Niño events anticipated every two to seven years, and predications of increased intensity as a result of climate change, stakeholders within the SUN Movement are seeking to catalyse support to countries efforts in building resilience, preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk, strengthening preparedness capacities and accelerating recovery. Indeed, these areas are core goals of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 that, together with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change, provide pathways for addressing future El Niño events.

Possible areas of discussion:

- What steps is the Government taking to manage the response to El Niño?
 - What warning systems and what plans have been activated, and how are these being resourced? How well is the goal of ensuring access to adequate nutrition integrated across sectors or ministries, and in plans (for response, preparedness, disaster risk reduction)?
 - What coordination mechanisms are in place and how are those responsible for nutrition involved?
 - How are governments and partners adapting 'normal' ways of working to an emergency setting?
- How are partners from civil society, the UN System, donors and businesses involved in this response, and what more can be done by global actors to support?
- How has learning from previous crises being applied? What are the new lessons emerging from the current crisis? How are experiences being shared and with whom?

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