

# Alert

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## Southern Africa – 04/2011

### Flooding threatens Southern Africa

Geneva, January 28, 2011

#### 1. Brief description of the emergency

Flooding is threatening most countries in Southern Africa. ACT members in South Africa and Mozambique are monitoring the situation and responding to the floods. In South Africa the government has declared a national state of disaster covering seven provinces and 28 municipalities countrywide. In Mozambique the government has declared a red alert for the affected river basins of southern and central regions.

Flooding in South Africa started early December 2010 but escalated into torrential flooding in mid-January. The government has declared a total of 33 municipalities across the nine provinces disaster areas. There is a danger some dams may burst their walls. This situation will compel the Department of Waters Affairs to open the wall gates to ease pressure on dam walls. The looming danger is that the Mozambique floods of 2000 will re-occur.

The most affected areas in South Africa are the Kwazulu Natal, the Free State into the Northern Cape along the Vaal and the Orange Rivers, and Gauteng Province, with Pretoria worst hit. The most affected communities are farm workers, informal settlements and some rural villages. Due to the La Niña effect on the global climate situation, the rains are expected to continue up to May and even beyond.

#### 2. Impact

A total of 123 people have lost their lives so far in South Africa and six million have been left homeless. The farming community has already lost over two billion rand in damages to crops, livestock and land. Water continues to rise in rivers and dams and almost all major dams are over-flowing. The government has made an urgent call to civil society to come in and join hands in alleviating the stress on affected communities.

In the operational areas that ACT Alliance members work in Mozambique, like Caia in Zambezi and Massingir in Limpopo river basins, people are being evacuated to safe areas and some have lost belongings. Roads are blocked and shops closed. The Ministry of Agriculture has reported that about 10,700ha of maize, rice and beans have been submerged by high waters in Gaza and Maputo provinces of Mozambique.

### **3. National and International response**

In South Africa the government is concentrating on infrastructure repairs and calls on civil society to address the needs of those affected. According to the Department of Social Development, assistance has been provided to 6256 families throughout the country and a further 2420 families still require assistance. A team to co-ordinate humanitarian assistance has been established. Government has appealed for assistance from the private sector and civil society. Some companies and organisations who are already responding to the plea include ABSA Bank, Vodacom, Nestle, Food Bank and Gift of the Givers.

In Mozambique some national and international NGOs are responding individually, for example Save the Children is providing blankets, tents, food etc. in Gaza/Chokwe district to affected families. The United Nations and different clusters, of which Mozambique ACT Forum is part, are coordinating meetings to organize for any response if needed. Existing resources are not enough to respond in case the situation worsens.

### **4. ACT Alliance response**

In South Africa, ACT member Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) Development Service has assisted affected families with shelter in church halls and buildings. It is also providing meals through soup kitchens. In collaboration with local churches, ELCSA has been helping with resources but the situation has now become so serious that additional help is needed. Teams of church workers from ELCSA are working on the assessment and the Development Service intends addressing the situation.

In Mozambique the ACT Forum has met and discussed the situation and reached a conclusion to monitor the situation and to get more information from its members in the affected districts.

### **5. Planned activities**

ELCSA Development Service is planning to assist communities with food parcels which would include maize meal, samp, beans, salt, cooking oil, soup and milk. It also plans to give out toiletry parcels to include toothpaste, toothbrushes, face soap as well as blankets and clothes, and continue to run soup kitchens.

ELCSA Development Service is planning to appeal for ACT Alliance Rapid Response funding. The ACT Alliance Forum in Mozambique is continuing to monitor the situation.

**Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to ACT Chief Finance Officer Jean-Daniel Birmele ([Jean.Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org](mailto:Jean.Daniel.Birmele@actalliance.org)).**

**Thank you for your attention.**

For further information please contact:

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