



PRESS RELEASE

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EU mobilises two million euros in response to the drought emergency in Lesotho

Maseru - In response to the declaration of a drought emergency by the Government of Lesotho and the related appeal for international support to contribute to wider efforts to mitigate the very serious impact of the El Niño weather phenomenon, the European Union has now mobilised two million euros (approx. 34 million maloti) from its humanitarian aid budget.

This EU funding is provided for two projects which will be implemented through our UN partners in Lesotho - the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). These two projects will help vulnerable households adversely affected by the severe drought.

"The current El Niño weather phenomenon is the most severe on record. It is having devastating humanitarian consequences around the globe. Populations that are already vulnerable, as is the case in Southern Africa, are hit particularly hard. They are losing all means of subsistence they have. Today, with the help of our partners from the WFP and the FAO, the EU will help bring much needed food assistance to the people of Lesotho. Together, we will deliver emergency relief to thousands of people affected by the drought," said European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides.

The FAO and WFP will each receive funding of 1 million euro (approx. 17 million maloti) for the projects, which will be implemented in close coordination with Lesotho's Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and relevant line ministries.

The project to be implemented by the WFP will, over a period of six months, provide unconditional food assistance through cash transfers of LSL 1,020 per month to 1,250 vulnerable households, comprising around 6,250 beneficiaries, who are not receiving any support through social protection programmes.

The second project, to be implemented by the FAO over a period of 12 months, will target vulnerable households who currently receive social protection cash transfers through the Child Grants

Programme (CGP), an intervention that is also supported by the EU working in partnership with the Government of Lesotho and UNICEF. The new EU funded project with FAO will provide complementary support to 5,000 households, comprising around 25,000 beneficiaries, who will receive training and kits for home gardening and nutrition, including 300g of vegetable seeds (of six varieties) and a shade net. Another 1,750 households will receive a food production package which is expected to include 10kg of maize and 5kg of bean seeds, 5kg of grazing vetch seeds and 300g of vegetable seeds. Recipients of these packages will also be trained in integrated sustainable farming practices. This response builds on previous activities implemented by the FAO with support from the European Union and other donors.

The European Union is confident that this humanitarian assistance will make a meaningful contribution to meeting the urgent needs of people most at risk due to the drought and will also help build the resilience and capacity of beneficiaries to face any similar disasters in the future.

- For more information on sustainable farming practices in Lesotho: www.lesothocsa.com
- For more information on EU humanitarian aid to Southern Africa:
http://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/sub-saharan-africa/southern-africa_en

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