

PRESS RELEASE

Welthungerhilfe Provides 300,000 Euros in Emergency Assistance for Madagascar Drought, Coronavirus, Famine - The Worst Drought in 40 Years Threatens People in Madagascar

Bonn/Berlin, 2021-05-08. The worst drought in 40 years is affecting people in the south of Madagascar particularly badly, devastating whole swathes of land. If rapid emergency assistance is not provided, there is a risk that the famine will spread, endangering the lives of up to a million people. There are already 70,000 children who are acutely malnourished, and these disastrous figures are rising daily. Between November 2020 and January 2021, there was less than half the normal quantity of rainfall, following other droughts in recent years. It is expected that people will lose up to 60 percent of their harvests in the coming months. The COVID-19 pandemic is expanding, further exacerbating the situation, as transport routes and delivery chains are being interrupted and the food price is rising continuously. The regional lockdowns are also making it harder for people providing assistance to gain access to the affected areas, which means that day labourers, who live from hand to mouth, can no longer find work and cannot adequately feed their families.

"Our colleagues in the south report that some fields have turned to dust and sand because of the lack of rain. The small farmers normally harvest their crops at this time of year to feed their families. Instead, the children must go hungry because they are not getting enough to eat. People are feeding on leaves, berries, and locusts. The small farming families have no way to get enough healthy food, or to earn an income. The people in the south are experiencing the worst drought for 40 years, and they have no reserves left. Without rapid assistance from outside, they are threatened by starvation. The people in the south of Madagascar already need a lot of support and time, to get back on their feet", says Marlene Müller, Welthungerhilfe Programme Director, explaining the dramatic situation in the south of the country from the capital Antananarivo.

Due to the hunger crisis, Welthungerhilfe is extending its support in current areas of activity in the south of the country, and helping the most severely affected families to gain access to food and water. In coordination with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the National Disaster Management Authority of Madagascar, Welthungerhilfe is working to expand life-saving assistance to other districts that urgently need humanitarian assistance.

Welthungerhilfe urgently requests donations for people in need: <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/spenden-madagaskar/hunger-in-madagaskar-jetzt-spenden-und-helfen/>

Our German-speaking colleague Marlene Müller is available for interviews in Madagascar.

For more information and photos to download see www.welthungerhilfe.de/presse.

Welthungerhilfe is one of the largest private aid organisations in Germany, without political or religious affiliation. It is fighting for "Zero Hunger by 2030". Since it was founded in 1962, more than 9,830 overseas projects in 70 countries have been supported with 3.95 billion euros. Welthungerhilfe works on the principle of help for self-help: from fast disaster relief to reconstruction and long-term development cooperation projects with national and international partner organisations.

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