



NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT CENTRE

CIRCULAR NO.17 OF 2026

EL NIÑO ADVISORY FOR DISASTER MANAGEMENT STAKEHOLDERS

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Advisory is aimed to provide strategic guidance to Disaster Management Stakeholders regarding the potential impacts associated with El Niño conditions during 2026.
- 1.2 Stakeholders are encouraged to use the Advisory to strengthen preparedness, risk reduction, contingency planning and coordinated response measures.

2. SITUATION OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The El Niño conditions are commonly associated with a warmer central and eastern Pacific Ocean and may influence Seasonal Climate Patterns across Southern Africa.
- 2.2 South Africa may experience below-normal rainfall in some Regions, elevated temperatures, water stress, increased veld and forest fire risk, agricultural impacts and localized socio-economic consequences.
- 2.3 Conditions should be continuously monitored through official Meteorological and Sectoral information sources.

3. POTENTIAL KEY RISKS

- 3.1 Reduced water availability;
 - 3.2 Drought impacts on agriculture and livestock;
 - 3.3 Increased wildfire activity;
 - 3.4 Pressure on energy;
 - 3.5 Health and Municipal Services;
 - 3.6 Food security concerns in vulnerable communities; and
 - 3.7 Environmental degradation in drought-prone areas.
 - 3.8 Increase in number of extremely hot days (Heatwaves)
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4. PROJECTED RISK TIMELINES

Period	Risk Level	Expected Situation
July–August 2026	 Low	Existing water resources remain adequate.
September 2026	 Moderate	Seasonal transition; monitor SAWS outlook updates closely.
October–December 2026	 High	Highest probability of rainfall suppression and heat impacts if El Niño continues strengthening.
January–March 2027	 High	Potential peak impacts on agriculture, water availability, and drought conditions if rainfall deficits persist.

5. PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS

- 5.1 Review and activate Drought and Climate Contingency Plans;
- 5.2 Enhance Intergovernmental Coordination Structures;
- 5.3 Monitor Dam Levels, Water Demand and Supply Systems;
- 5.4 Strengthen Wildfire Prevention and Response Capacity;
- 5.5 Support Climate-Smart Agricultural Practices;
- 5.6 Conduct Public Awareness Campaigns; and
- 5.7 Ensure Readiness of Emergency Response Resources.

6. SECTOR-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Priority Area	Recommended Action
Water Security	Implement Conservation Measures and Monitor Critical Infrastructure.
Agriculture	Strengthen Advisory Services and Drought Mitigation Interventions.
Wildfire	Increase Readiness, Awareness and Suppression Capacity.
Municipalities	Update Risk Assessments and Business Continuity Measures.
Community Preparedness	Risk Communication and Support to Vulnerable Groups.

7. COORDINATION AND REPORTING

- 7.1 All Spheres of Government and Disaster Management Structures should maintain regular information sharing, submit situation Reports where required.
- 7.2 Align Actions with applicable Legislation, Policies and Disaster Risk Management Frameworks.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Preparedness Measures implemented before severe impacts occur significantly reduce disaster losses.
- 8.2 Stakeholders are requested to maintain a High-Level of readiness and continue monitoring official Forecasts and Advisories issued by relevant Institutions throughout 2026.

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