



STATEMENT

BY

**THE PRESIDENT, HIS EXCELLENCY,
DR E. D. MNANGAGWA**

**ON DECLARING A “STATE OF DISASTER”
FOLLOWING EL NIÑO-INDUCED DROUGHT**

STATE HOUSE

2nd APRIL, 2024

My Fellow Zimbabweans;

The current Agricultural Season of 2023 to 2024 has not performed according to expectations due to the El Niño-induced drought. As a result, more than 80 percent of our country received below normal rainfall. The country had put a total of 1 728 897 hectares under maize crop and other cereals. Ordinarily, this would have guaranteed a bountiful harvest. Further worsening the situation characterised by poor rainfall was the outbreak of Fall Army Worm across the country.

The Zimbabwe Livelihoods Assessment Committee Report for 2023 revealed that approximately 2.7 million people were expected to be food insecure from April 2023 until end of March 2024. While we have been able, so far, to fend for this food insecure population, the El Niño drought has now compounded our current situation, with food insecurity levels raised beyond the projected 2.7 million.

Following our multi-pronged Agricultural and Food Systems Strategies, we are ordinarily a nation capable of feeding ourselves. The Strategic Grain Reserve, holds 189 568 metric tonnes of cereals. This constitutes 145 604 metric tonnes of maize, and 43 964 metric tonnes of traditional grains. My Administration has made a decision to allocate 138 905 metric tonnes of surplus wheat towards our Strategic Grain Reserve. This will give a combined total of about 356 000 metric tonnes of cereals in our Strategic Grain Reserve.

We expect 868 273 metric tonnes from this season's harvest, hence, our Nation faces a food cereal deficit of nearly 680 000 metric tonnes of grain. This deficit will be bridged by imports. Measures to encourage private sector participation, in this regard, are already in place.

Top on our priority is securing food for all Zimbabweans. No Zimbabwean must succumb to, or die from hunger.

Adequate resources will, therefore, be mobilised and re-directed towards national food security, including through supplementary grain imports.

All available grain in the country will be secured through competitive prices and prompt payment towards encouraging farmers to release and sell available grain, including to the Grain Marketing Board. A robust and responsive mechanism has been put in place to guarantee that food reaches needy communities timely.

Meanwhile, the Winter crop programme for 2024 now assumes added importance and urgency. The shift to wheat-based food security means the land we put under wheat from this month must expand to cover all available irrigable land with secure water sources.



Equally, winter maize projects in areas such as Chiredzi, Muzarabani and Binga, must be reactivated towards drought mitigation.

The agriculture mechanisation and modernisation programme will continue until the majority of small-holder farmers upgrade their operations, in line with the our ongoing Rural Development Agenda.

Fellow Zimbabweans;

Linked to food security is water security at household, community and national levels. My Government will continue to roll out comprehensive interventions to ensure that drinking water is adequate for our people, livestock and wildlife.

Safe water sources which are drying up in many areas have to be replaced through an accelerated exploitation of our ground water. More boreholes continue to be drilled under the Presidential Borehole Drilling Programme to ensure adequate water, sanitation and hygiene, to avert water-borne diseases, including cholera, typhoid and dysentery.



An equal priority is the need to save our livestock. Farmers, will be supported to prevent deaths or distress sales of livestock. The rebuilding of our National Herd will remain ongoing, in spite of the drought.

The country's hydro-power generation capacity has drastically reduced, thereby increasing reliance on thermal and solar power. Thankfully, investments in thermal energy have relieved stress on power availability, thus, enabling the economy to run reasonably smoothly.

Dear Zimbabweans;

The foregoing situation of the climate change induced drought requires measures and interventions as provided for in our laws. To that end, I do hereby declare a nationwide State of Disaster, due to the El Niño-induced Drought.

Accordingly, I now invoke Section 27, Subsection 1 of the Civil Protection Act (**Chapter 10:06**), which provides that:

“If at any time it appears to the President that any disaster of such a nature and extent that extraordinary measures are necessary to assist and protect the persons affected or likely to be affected by the disaster in any area of the country, the President may, in such a manner as he considers fit, declare that, with effect from a date specified by him, a state of disaster exists within an area or areas specified by him in the declaration”.

By this Declaration, I also call upon all Zimbabweans of goodwill, including those in the diaspora; the international community, United Nations Agencies, Development and Humanitarian Partners, International Financial Institutions; the private sector, churches and other faith-based organisations, as well as individuals to generously donate towards ameliorating this State of National Disaster.

Preliminary assessments show that Zimbabwe requires in excess of US\$2 billion towards various interventions we envisage in the spectrum of our national response.

Once again, let me assure you, my Fellow Zimbabweans, that our national response will be broad, comprehensive and all-encompassing. No one and no place will be left without sustenance.

Let us remain united, peaceful and supportive of each other, from the family and household levels and within communities, throughout these challenging times. Together in unity and love, the people of our beloved motherland, Zimbabwe shall endure.

God bless you.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.