

# Southern Africa Operational Update

1 December 2021 – 31 January 2022

## Highlights

**Tropical Storm Ana:** UNHCR engaged in assessments and response to assist those impacted by wind, rain and flooding.

**Voluntary repatriation:** Refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Rwanda were supported to return home.

**COVID-19:** Fully vaccinated refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) doubled over two months.



*A voluntary repatriation convoy departing Mantapala refugee settlement, Zambia, in December 2021. © UNHCR/Bruce Mulenga.*

## In December and January:



**61,235** refugees and IDPs received core relief items (CRIs) and dignity kits in the **DRC**



**6,726** people received CRIs, and **617** shelters constructed in **Mozambique**



**4,939** refugees supported with multipurpose cash assistance in **Zambia**



**1,000** households received livelihoods support in **Malawi**



**394** students supported with remote study packs in **Zimbabwe**



**377** hygiene kits distributed in the refugee settlement in **Angola**

## Persons of concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa

**9,042,319** persons of concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa, including:



**784,485** refugees and **295,189** asylum-seekers



**6,884,376** internally displaced persons (IDPs)

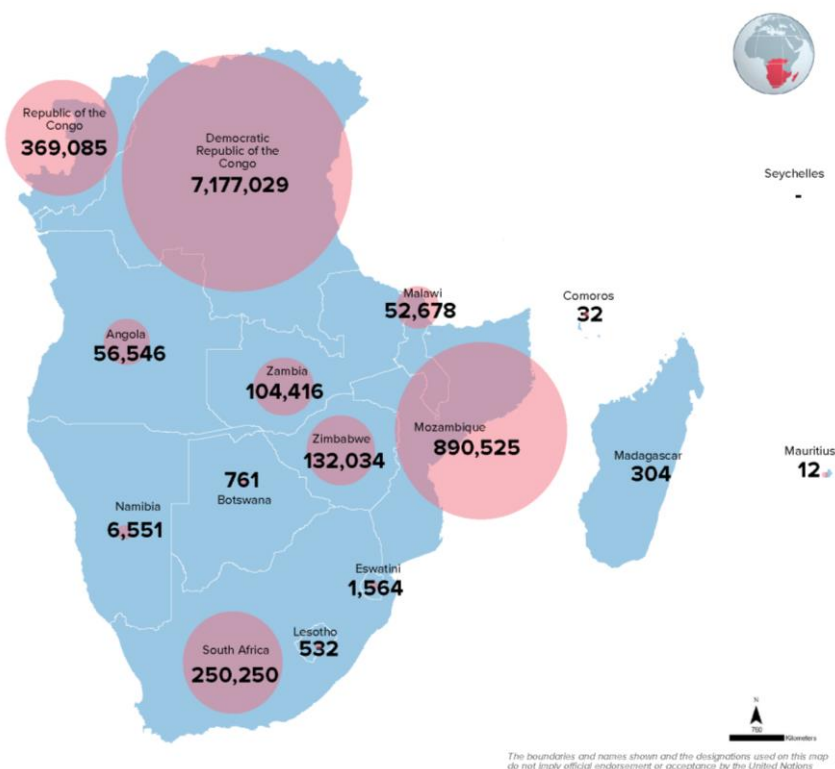


**1,041,729** returnees



**36,540** other persons of concern

(as of 31 December 2021)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations

## Regional context: Key developments

**Tropical Storm Ana** made landfall in Southern Africa on 24 January, moving westward inland. The storm brought strong winds, rains, and flooding, causing significant damage to infrastructure, homes, and other property. UNHCR operations in affected countries are engaged in the response through UN and Government coordination mechanisms, participating in joint assessment missions and providing emergency assistance to those affected by the storm.

- In **Malawi**, Tropical Storm Ana destroyed road networks, homes and shelters, farms and livestock, as well as food stocks and household supplies. Hundreds of thousands of people have reportedly been affected, with assessments ongoing to determine more specific impacts. On 26 January, the President declared a state of natural disaster emergency and appealed to the international community for support as it finalizes a 3-month plan for early recovery. UNHCR is preparing to support the response in the most affected areas with shelter, CRIs and protection interventions.
- In **Mozambique**, Tropical Storm Ana reportedly affected more than 180,000 people. UNHCR has worked closely with local authorities, humanitarian Clusters, partners, displaced and host communities, and community leaders to assess damage and provide emergency assistance, particularly in Cabo Delgado and Nampula Provinces. UNHCR has prepositioned a stock of CRIs including blankets, sleeping mats, and plastic tarpaulins to cover the needs of about 2,000 affected families.

- In **Zambia**, several parts of the country have been inundated by heavy rains due to Tropical Storm Ana. Though no serious flooding has been reported in the three refugee settlements, heavy rains have damaged some parts of access roads to the settlements, and there is potential for disrupted transport of supplies to the settlements from elsewhere in the country. Some displacements have been reported in the country due to the storm. UNHCR, other UN agencies and the Government are discussing a joint response and continue monitoring for potential weather and climate-related emergencies that could further affect refugees and host communities in Zambia.
- In **Zimbabwe**, UNHCR contributed 300 refugee housing units (RHUs) to the Government of Zimbabwe's Department of Civil Protection to support relief efforts. The RHUs served as temporary shelters for families whose homes were affected by the rains and floods brought by Tropical Storm Ana. A team of refugees travelled to Mbire District, about 700 kilometres from Tongogara refugee camp in Chipinge District, to assist the Department of Civil Protection to install the RHUs, demonstrating the positive contribution refugees can make in their host country.

## Operational highlights

### Angola

- **Refugee inclusion in the formal economy:** On 14 December, UNHCR joined the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MINDCOM) in organizing a roundtable for business associations and development partners to discuss inclusion of small informal traders in the formal economy. As an outcome of the roundtable, UNHCR is engaged with MINDCOM to develop a joint strategy for improving access for refugees and asylum-seekers to the formal economy and has identified areas for coordinated advocacy with UN partners on inclusion of refugees in the government's social protection programmes.
- **School uniforms by refugee tailors:** On 19 and 20 January, school uniforms tailored by refugee women were distributed to 35 Angolan students in Viana and Bairro Popular, as part of the quick impact projects (QIPs) started in 2021. In total, 154 vulnerable refugee and Angolan students have benefitted from this QIP.
- **Health and hygiene:** A total of 377 hygiene kits were distributed to refugees living in Lóvua settlement, while 165 refugees were tested for HIV in Lunda Norte, including 28 in Dundo and 137 in Lóvua refugee settlement.
- **Livelihood support:** Business start-up kits were provided to 31 refugees in the capital city Luanda, to support their engagement in income-generating activities and progress toward self-reliance. Also in Luanda, 158 refugees enrolled in various technical vocational training opportunities including tailoring, hairdressing, pedicure/manicure and catering. In addition, 100 farmers received training on organic farming techniques to increase food security and household incomes as well as environmental conservation.

### Democratic Republic of the Congo

- **New arrivals from the Central African Republic (CAR):** Between 10-20 January, in North Ubangi Province, local authorities reported an influx of about 3,090 asylum-seekers from CAR in the locality of Limasa near Yakoma. The majority were women, children, and elderly persons. A protection mission was deployed by UNHCR and found the newly arrived asylum-seekers in need of urgent multisectoral assistance, including CRIs. UNHCR will conduct a biometric registration exercise to confirm the number of new arrivals and to inform the response strategy.

- **Voluntary repatriation:** Between December and January, UNHCR and the Government's National Commission for Refugees (CNR), facilitated voluntary repatriation for 171 Rwandan refugees and 296 Burundian refugees to their countries of origin from North and South Kivu. In 2021, a total of 1,920 Rwandan refugees and 7,296 Burundian refugees were repatriated from the DRC. Also in December, UNHCR and its partners facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 298 Congolese from Zambia to their home in Pweto Territory, Haut Katanga Province. Returnees were welcomed in a transit centre set up by UNHCR and partners.



*A convoy with Burundian refugees travels from the Kavimvira transit centre to the border post between the DRC and Burundi.*  
 © UNHCR/Antonia Vadala

- **Gender-based violence (GBV):** In Ituri Province, UNHCR's protection monitoring partner recorded 2,842 protection incidents in December. Of these incidents, 270 cases of GBV were reported, including 96 cases of rape. All rape survivors received medical assistance, including a post-exposure prophylaxis kit and psychological counselling. Also in December, UNHCR and partners documented 28 cases of GBV among Central African refugees in North Ubangi, South Ubangi and Bas Uele Provinces, for a total of 570 cases recorded in 2021. Most incidents took place during flight or prior to flight from CAR and include rape, physical assaults, forced marriages, psychological violence and sexual assault. UNHCR and partners have been providing multi-sectoral assistance to survivors.
- **CRIs and cash assistance:** in South Ubangi Province, UNHCR and its partner distributed CRIs in December including blankets, soap, mosquito nets, solar lamps and buckets to 1,888 Central African refugees who had recently relocated to the Wenzé development hub, one of the pilot villages where UNHCR is implementing its Alternative to Camp policy in South Ubangi Province. In North Kivu Province, UNHCR and partners distributed CRIs and dignity kits in 17 IDP sites in Masisi and Rutshuru Territories reaching 57,347 persons, with a special focus on girls and women as well as host communities. In Ituri Province in January, UNHCR handed over emergency CRIs to local authorities in Aru Territory for approximately 2,000 displaced persons in the Ndevu area. In addition, cash assistance was provided to refugees, IDPs and host communities in various locations to support the purchase of shelter materials, household items and sanitary materials. This included 6,688 individuals in South Ubangi Province, 3,911 households in North Ubangi Province, 1,375 individuals in South Kivu Province, 2,046 people in Kasai.
- *For more detailed reports on UNHCR's work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, visit [Global Focus](#).*

## Malawi

- **Livelihood strengthening:** UNHCR scaled-up livelihoods interventions for refugees with additional support provided by the World Food Programme (reaching 800 and 200 households, respectively). One thousand households were thereby able to increase their incomes and savings, strengthen their food security, and improve their access to markets and financial services. Moreover, agricultural livelihood initiatives were enhanced by two new solar-powered irrigation systems covering 50 hectares each, along with an extension to an existing irrigation system covering 30 hectares. UNHCR also rolled-out the livelihood innovation project for refugees in Malawi, promoting agro-processing and value addition.
- **Water system improvements:** UNHCR completed installation of inline chlorination systems in December for five motorized borehole reticulated water supply systems in Dzaleka refugee camp. In addition, materials for borehole fencing were delivered to Dzaleka refugee camp in December, to be used for fencing 14 boreholes in the camp. Fencing construction has so far been completed for one borehole.



- **Accountability to affected populations (AAP):** As part of UNCR commitment and ongoing efforts to ensuring APP, UNHCR embarked on a pilot partnership with two refugee-led organisations, focusing on youth engagement and support to women and girls at risk. UNHCR will work closely with the organizations, to provide capacity building and guide implementation in line with UNHCR standards.

## Mozambique

- **Protection and community engagement:** In the Community Engagement and AAP Working Group in Cabo Delgado, UNHCR presented a protection monitoring report covering September to December. During this period, 11,856 households were interviewed, of which 1,543 reported protection incidents that are being followed-up by UNHCR and partners. UNHCR also distributed information on GBV and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) to 69 Protection Focal Points (PFPs) to support community engagement in Chiure, Mecufi, Metuge, Montepuez and Pemba Districts. With these materials, PFPs directly engaged with 693 people and reached some 3,500 persons with information. Additionally, UNHCR and its partner launched a GBV safety audit in Corrane IDP site, which included training 20 PFPs and government staff on GBV, conducting service mapping, and holding focus group discussions.
- **Camp coordination and camp management (CCCM):** UNHCR provided CCCM induction training for UN and NGO partners and local authorities in Montepuez District, to develop a shared understanding of site management roles and responsibilities in line with international protection standards. The main goal of the training was to contribute toward protection mainstreaming in site management. UNHCR is also following up on 252 submissions received through complaints and feedback mechanisms, related mostly to availability of services and site infrastructure.
- **Shelter and CRIs:** UNHCR and partners continued providing CRIs and shelter to conflict-affected and displaced persons. In Cabo Delgado, CRIs were distributed to 6,000 people in hard-to-reach Lyanda IDP site, including blankets, sleeping mats, plastic sheets, buckets, jerry cans, mosquito nets, and kitchen sets. Solar lamps were distributed to 1,300 women and girls in Chiure, alongside GBV and PSEA awareness sessions. Construction was completed for 122 transitional shelters in IDP sites in Montepuez, and 115 shelters in Mueda, while distribution of shelter materials and construction of 390 transitional shelters was completed in IDP sites in Metuge District. In Nampula Province, CRIs were distributed to 729 people in Corrane IDP site, where construction was also completed for 60 permanent shelters, seven tent slabs for health services, and rehabilitation of the Health Centre Maternity Ward.
- **Inclusion of IDPs in African Development Bank (AfDB) project:** In January, AfDB approved the Pemba-Lichinga Integrated Development Corridor Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone Project, to be implemented over five years from 2022 to 2026. Through advocacy efforts led by UNHCR, the project will also allocate land to interested IDPs, within the scope of the USD 47 million project that seeks to improve agricultural productivity and agribusiness development in Niassa Province.
- *For more detailed reports on UNHCR's work in Mozambique, visit [Global Focus](#).*

## Republic of the Congo

- **IDP enrollment:** Beginning on 27 December, UNHCR supported the Government in IDPs enrolment, where 8,208 IDPs were enrolled (54 per cent female and 46 per cent male). The IDP enrollment exercise collects specific protection needs, documentation concerns, and socio-economic data. This collaboration is framed by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of the Republic of the Congo and UNHCR. The MoU intends to frame protection concerns inherent to personal data protection and other areas of assistance for the targeted group.

- **Nutrition survey:** On 22 December, UNHCR presented preliminary results of the 2021 Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) 2021 to the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Statistics, NGO partners and UN agencies including WFP and UNICEF. The survey was conducted between 12 November and 12 December amongst refugees and asylum-seekers in Likouala and Plateaux Departments, including children under 5 and women of childbearing age. Once validated, the 2021 SENS Survey will provide reliable data on the nutritional status of refugees and asylum-seekers living in the Republic of the Congo.
- **Water, sanitation and hygiene:** UNHCR and its partners completed rehabilitation of 57 latrines at the Bouemba site, for a total of 132 latrine and shower blocks rehabilitated. Overall, the Bouemba site now has 169 functional latrines, which have contributed to a reduction of diarrhoeal diseases observed at the health post. In addition, three boreholes were repaired, for a total of nine operational boreholes and improving the supply of drinking water from 54,864 litres to 77,364 litres per day (17 litres per person per day).
- **Refugee inclusion in social safety net project:** As a result of discussions with the Government, it was concluded that Moungoungi village, hosting Central African refugees who arrived in 2021, would be included in the roll-out of the World Bank's Lisungi Safety Nets System Project. The new refugee arrivals had not been included in the geographical coverage of the original project, and will now be included in the roll-out of conditional cash transfers and income generating activities support. More than 350 refugee families, alongside vulnerable Congolese, will receive first allocations in February.

## South Africa Multi-Country Office (SAMCO)

Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa

- **High-level UNHCR visit to South Africa:** UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Gillian Triggs, visited South Africa and held a High-Level Dialogue with Minister of Home Affairs, Aaron Motsoaledi, to discuss legislative reform, judicial engagement, GRF pledges, social assistance and other mutual areas of interest and cooperation. A final outcomes document was published by UNHCR and the Government which maps out to new areas of collaboration in 2022 and beyond.
- **Durable solutions:** By the end of 2021, 86 individuals had departed on resettlement to Australia, Europe and North America. Regarding voluntary repatriation, UNHCR facilitated 656 individuals to return home in safety and in dignity in 2021, including 161 individuals departing from Botswana and 495 individuals departing from South Africa
- **Townhall meeting in Namibia:** On 26 January, a townhall meeting was held in Osire refugee settlement to facilitate feedback and information-sharing between service providers and persons of concern to UNHCR. It was the first townhall meeting of 2022, with participation from the acting Refugee Commissioner, focal points from different government agencies, and NGOs. UNHCR highlighted ongoing activities in the camp and responded to questions from the community.



UNHCR Senior Legal Officer addresses the townhall meeting in Osire refugee settlement, Namibia. ©UNHCR

- **Eswatini and Namibia showcased at the High-Level Officials' Meeting (HLOM):** UNHCR held the HLOM in Geneva from 14 to 15 December, where Eswatini and Namibia showcased their fulfilment to date of pledges made during the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF). The HLOM, chaired by UNHCR's High Commissioner Filippo Grandi, brought together government, humanitarian, and development leaders from across the globe who reviewed progress made on the implementation of the GFR pledges. Eswatini's Minister of Home Affairs, Princess Lindiwe, told delegates via video broadcast that the Government had made available over 1,000 hectares of arable land for agricultural use, with infrastructure around the land, including a dam that powers a water irrigation system. Namibia's Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, Daniel Kashikola, appearing in person, told the HLOM that his government had implemented pledges it made on education and health, noting that education had been made mandatory for refugees and asylum-seekers.

## Zambia

- **Voluntary repatriation:** In mid-December 2021 and first week of January 2022, UNHCR and the Government facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 300 Congolese refugees from Mantapala settlement to Pweto Territory in the DRC, via three separate weekly convoys. *For more details on voluntary repatriation from Zambia to the DRC, [read the Briefing Note here](#).*
- **Scholarships for tertiary education:** In January, UNHCR put in place modalities to begin rolling out 200 scholarships secured through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Cavendish University in Lusaka. The UNHCR-Cavendish University MoU will allow refugee students to enrol in tertiary studies at a 50 per cent reduction in tuition, covered by UNHCR.
- **Agricultural support:** UNHCR, in partnership with Harvest Plus, a private sector company, distributed 8,700 orange sweet potato vines to 3,173 farmers in Mantapala, Mayukwayukwa and Meheba refugee settlements. The initiative aims at strengthening food security and nutritional status among refugees and in the host community.
- **Cash assistance:** In December, UNHCR supported 4,939 refugees through multipurpose cash assistance totalling USD 225,000. This included 397 people in Lusaka, 3,863 in Meheba refugee settlement, and 679 in Mayukwayukwa refugee settlements. The cash assistance promoted and contributed to improved wellbeing of refugees by increasing financial resources to meet their basic needs.

## Zimbabwe

- **High-level UNHCR visit:** UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Gillian Triggs, travelled to Zimbabwe from 19 to 22 January. She met with the Government to discuss pertinent issues facing refugees in the country, as well as with various heads of UN agencies, the UN Resident Coordinator, and ambassadors and representative of the donor community. The Assistant High Commissioner carried out a field mission to Tongogara refugee camp, where she engaged with local authorities, NGOs and refugees. She also visited projects promoting livelihoods and self-reliance. Her visit to the country contributed to a positive operating environment in Zimbabwe, including strengthening collaboration with the Government, partners and donors.
- **Education materials:** Due to a rise in COVID-19 cases, schools remained closed in January with only distance learning available. In collaboration with the schools in Tongogara refugee camp, UNHCR and its education partner provided remote learning study packs for students to work from home. This initiative benefitted 257 learners at the early childhood development centre, 72 primary school students; 65 secondary school students; and 48 English language class students.

- **Fishery project:** A refrigerator, 10,000 fish fingerlings, and other fishing materials were procured for the Samak Fishery Project. The project is supporting refugee-led initiatives and aims to demonstrate that self-reliance – one of the key objectives in the Global Compact on Refugees – can be a reality.
- **Biogas initiative:** Seven biogas digesters and fencing were installed at Tongogara refugee camp and activated with a mixture of cow manure and water. When the content of the digesters matures, gas will be consistently produced. Biogas is an eco-friendly form of energy production, and its introduction at Tongogara refugee camp is intended to reduce pollution, deforestation, and environmental degradation.



*Members of the fishery project in Tongogara refugee camp, Zimbabwe working in one of the ponds. © UNHCR/Sonia Gonzalez Suarez*

## Spotlight: DAFI scholarship students set goals for the year ahead at a workshop in Harare, Zimbabwe



*Bijoux Mwanakisi Mbalasa at the DAFI Workshop in Harare. © UNHCR/Sonia Gonzalez Suarez*

Bijoux Mwanakisi Mbalasa, 19, is a refugee from the DRC. She studies financial mathematics at the University of Zimbabwe and wants to help her family and the refugee community solve financial problems through innovative instruments.

For her, "learning is a never-ending journey", and education is "the powerful weapon that liberates minds to make the world a better place to live in." She believes that education could improve by encouraging youth to think for themselves and engage in their passions.

She was one of the participants at the workshop for refugee students with DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative) scholarships organized by UNHCR in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 20 to 21 December. The workshop objective was to reflect on students' progress in 2021; set targets for 2022; and share information on sexual and reproductive health, mental health awareness and workplace readiness. The workshop aimed at encouraging and mentoring the students as well as discussing how they could contribute through community engagement.

Globally, only 5 per cent of refugees are enrolled in tertiary education compared to 37 per cent of non-refugee students. The DAFI scholarship programme offers qualified refugee and returnee students the possibility to earn an undergraduate degree in their country of asylum or home country. Through the support of the governments of Germany, Denmark and the Czech Republic, UNHCR and other private donors, the programme has supported over 18,500 young refugees globally to undertake tertiary studies since 1992.



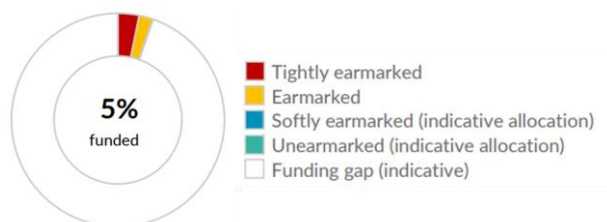
## COVID-19

There were more than 5.29 million reported cases of COVID-19 in the 16 countries of the Southern Africa region as of 31 January 2022. Some 1,480 cases of COVID-19 have been reported among persons of concern to UNHCR since reporting began in 2020. Lack of testing facilities and reliance on voluntary reporting in urban areas means that case numbers may be higher. The surge in COVID-19 cases triggered by the Omicron variant began subsiding in December and into January, and related travel restrictions that has been placed on several countries in the Southern Africa region started to be lifted.

The vaccination rollout continues across the region. As of 31 January, more than 27,000 persons of concern to UNHCR confirmed receiving at least one dose, with more than 12,000 being fully vaccinated. This is a notable increase over a two-month period, with twice as many persons of concern reported to be fully vaccinated, as compared to 6,000 at the end of November 2021. These numbers mainly reflect people in camps and settlements as it is difficult to track vaccination in urban areas. While vaccination rates are increasing, vaccine hesitancy continues to compromise uptake among refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs. UNHCR and partners are continuing efforts to address hesitancy and are running awareness-raising programmes across the region, with a focus on areas where misinformation is contributing to slow vaccine uptake.

## Financial Requirements

UNHCR's financial requirements for the Southern Africa region in 2022 total **USD 436.5 million**. As of 25 January, **5 per cent** of needs have been funded. UNHCR is grateful to donors who have supported operations in Southern Africa so far in 2022, including<sup>1</sup>:



UN Peacebuilding Fund 2.7M | Giuliana Lagetto 2M | Education Cannot Wait 1.8M | European Union 0.9M | Republic of the Congo | Qatar | Germany | Migration MPTF | UN Trust Fund for Human Security

**Flexible financial support** greatly facilitates UNHCR being able to kick-start an emergency response, bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises, and enable the fullest possible implementation of programmes. They enable UNHCR to plan and manage its resources efficiently and effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is transformed and saved. UNHCR is grateful to the donors that have provided unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions in 2022, including:

**Other softly earmarked contributions (USD)<sup>2</sup>:** Norway | Education Cannot Wait | Private donors

**Unearmarked contributions (USD)<sup>3</sup>:** Sweden 77.6M | Netherlands 37.2M | Denmark 35.6M | Germany 27.6M | Switzerland 18.4M | Belgium 11.9M | Ireland 11.8M

*Notes: 1. Where a donor has contributed USD 500,000 or more, the total amount is shown. 2. Due to their earmarking, other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used in Southern Africa. 3. Donors contributing USD 10M or more are listed.*

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