



Danh Thi Mai (right), 58-year-old grandmother, stands beside a water container provided by UNICEF for water storage in in Biền Bạch Commune, southern Ca Mau Province. © UNICEF/UNI1018406/Pham Lan Anh

Reporting Period: 20 August 2026 – 12 October 2026

Situation Highlights

- **El Niño is intensifying and expected to persist into early 2027.** Viet Nam is preparing for a severe, prolonged event, with humanitarian risks expected to rise from late 2026 and peak during the January - May 2027 dry season.
- **Children and vulnerable households face growing risks** of water insecurity, food and livelihood losses, higher costs, and disruption to essential WASH, health, nutrition, education, child protection and social protection services.
- **Those most at risk** include children under five, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children with disabilities, ethnic minorities, migrants, and communities in remote, coastal, drought-prone and water-insecure areas.
- **A critical window for early action remains.** No widespread humanitarian needs have been confirmed. Priorities include risk communication, frontline readiness, continuity of essential services and multi-hazard preparedness for typhoons, extreme rainfall, flash floods, landslides and urban flooding.
- **Prevention can reduce future humanitarian and recovery costs.** Every **US\$1** invested in disaster risk reduction can save up to **US\$15** in recovery costs, while less than 1% of humanitarian funding supports anticipatory action.
- **UNICEF is working with Government counterparts, development partners and the Viet Nam Red Cross** to strengthen local preparedness, risk communication and the positioning of essential supplies.

Viet Nam Country Office

El Niño 2026–2027 Cycle Early Warning and Preparedness Situation Report No. 2

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FORECAST AT A GLANCE

- El Niño could reach record strength, with Pacific sea-surface temperatures projected at **+3.7°C above average** during October–December 2026, **exceeding** the 2015–2016 record (**+2.6°C**). The event is expected to persist into early 2027, increasing drought, heat and water scarcity risks in Viet Nam. (Source: WMO, 8 October 2026.)

PRIORITY REGIONS

- **South-Central Coast and Central Highlands:** Main **drought hotspots** in Jan–May 2027, with **rainfall 20–40% below average** and **river flows 30–55% lower**, exceeding 80% on some rivers, threatening water supplies, agriculture and livelihoods.
- **Mekong Delta:** Inflows could **fall 25–30%** and **rainfall 20–50% below average**. In Apr–May 2027, salinity could reach **90–125 km inland** along the Vàm Cỏ river system, **threatening drinking water and agriculture**.

DAMAGE AS OF 30 SEP 2026

- **68 deaths and missing; 78 injuries.**
- **Estimated economic losses: VND2,689 billion (US\$103.4 million).**

IMPACT OF THE 2015–2016 EL NIÑO¹

- **2 million people** lacked sufficient domestic water.
- **27,500 children and 39,000 women** were affected by malnutrition.
- **400,000 people** were at risk of water-related disease outbreaks.
- **1.1 million people** needed food assistance.
- **1.75 million people** lost livelihoods.

¹ Government of Viet Nam, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and United Nations Country Team in Viet Nam, *Viet Nam: Emergency Response Plan 2016/17*, 26 April 2016, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/viet-nam/viet-nam-emergency-response-plan-201617>



Nguyen Nhu Y, 6, drinks water at her home. Her household received a UNICEF-supported water storage tank with a capacity of 1,000 litres to help them prepare for drought, saltwater intrusion and water shortages. © UNICEF/UNI1018407/Pham Lan Anh

Situation Overview and Risks

As of 30 September 2026, natural hazards during the current storm season had caused **68 deaths or missing persons and 78 injuries** in Viet Nam, with losses estimated at **VND2,689 billion (US\$103.4 million)**. Though unrelated to El Niño, these impacts underscore Viet Nam's exposure to multiple hazards.

El Niño has reached severe levels and is expected to persist through early 2027. Based on WMO forecasts that it will continue through February 2027, the Government is preparing for a severe, prolonged cycle under Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Decision No. 3510/QĐ-BNNMT.

The **South-Central Coast, Central Highlands and Mekong Delta** face the highest drought, water-shortage and saltwater-intrusion risks, compounded by **higher temperatures, prolonged heatwaves and delayed rainfall**.

These conditions threaten **water security, food, livelihoods and essential services**, particularly for children and vulnerable households. With no widespread El Niño-related humanitarian needs confirmed, there is still time for monitoring, preparedness and anticipatory action.

Multi-hazard preparedness remains essential because El Niño does not reduce the risks of typhoons, extreme rainfall, flash floods, landslides or urban flooding.

Impacts on Children and Case for Early Action

The 2026–2027 El Niño threatens children's health, nutrition, learning, protection and wellbeing. Drought, heat, water scarcity, salinity and livelihood losses can deepen household vulnerability and disrupt essential services. **Early, coordinated, child-centred action can prevent these risks from escalating.**

- **Child Protection:** Water scarcity, livelihood stress, migration and prolonged school absence may increase **child labour, violence, neglect, family separation and psychosocial distress**, especially among children with disabilities, ethnic minority children, those without adequate family care, and children in poor or drought-prone communities. Priorities are family and community support, accessible referral pathways, child-friendly risk communication and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS).

- **Health:** Extreme heat, water scarcity and climate-sensitive diseases increase risks for **pregnant women, mothers, infants and young children** and strain health services. Priorities are resilient health systems, prepared health workers, uninterrupted essential supplies and stronger referrals.
- **Education:** Heat, water shortages, salinity and limited school WASH may disrupt **attendance, learning and wellbeing**. Priorities are early warning and awareness, continuity-of-learning plans, safe and water-secure schools, teacher preparedness and school-based MHPSS.
- **Nutrition:** Food and livelihood losses, higher prices and unsafe water may increase **undernutrition, including wasting and micronutrient deficiencies**, especially among young children and pregnant and breastfeeding women. Priorities are surveillance and screening, pre-positioned supplies, breastfeeding and safe infant and young child feeding support, and prevention of disease-related malnutrition.
- **WASH:** Drought and salinity may reduce **safe water availability and quality**, while other hazards may damage or contaminate water systems. Risks are highest for remote communities with limited water sources, especially children, persons with disabilities, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and ethnic minority communities. Priorities are alternative water sources, contingency supplies, resilient systems and uninterrupted WASH services.

UNICEF in Action

UNICEF is prioritizing the following preparedness and anticipatory actions and supporting coordination in various sectors:

Risk monitoring and triggers: Monitor reports from Government and international forecasts, including on drought, salinity and water availability; identify priority locations, vulnerable groups and critical facilities; and establish agreed triggers linked to preparedness, anticipatory action and response measures.

Early warning and risk communication: Lead development and implementation of a joint social and behaviour communication (SBCC) plan with Government, Viet Nam Red Cross and partners, delivering accessible early-warning and life-saving messages and incorporating community feedback. UNICEF's El Niño preparedness package has reached 28.9 million people and engaged 72,000 through UNICEF Viet Nam social media channels.

WASH: As WASH sector lead, support risk mapping, trigger monitoring, contingency planning and costed preparedness measures, with a focus on alternative water sources, treatment and storage capacity, partner readiness and pre-positioning of supplies. UNICEF is already supporting high-risk communities and schools in the Mekong Delta and Central Highlands with water-storage equipment and risk communication.

Health and nutrition: Strengthen surveillance, referral systems, frontline capacity and stocks of essential medicines, vaccines and nutrition supplies, including small-quantity lipid-based nutrient supplement (SQ-LNS), ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) and micronutrients. UNICEF is supporting MOH and the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) to strengthen preparedness in high-risk provinces, including nutrition-in-emergencies training for health workers in Can Tho, Ca Mau and Vinh Long and guidance on protecting health from extreme heat.

Education: As Education Sector co-lead, support risk monitoring, early warning and contingency planning for high-risk schools, alongside continuity of learning, teacher preparedness and safe, water-secure learning environments. An initial coordination meeting with partners was held in August to strengthen joint preparedness and emergency education support.

Child protection: As Child Protection Sector co-lead, strengthen identification, referral and case management for children at heightened risk, alongside child-friendly communication, parenting support and MHPSS. UNICEF is supporting development of practical guidance on child protection in disasters and climate change, with two pilot trainings in October 2026 for provincial officials from all 34 provinces.

Social protection: Develop processes for anticipatory cash assistance, including vulnerability criteria, triggers, pre-agreed financing and payment mechanisms, followed by simulation exercises to test digital registration and payment systems and ensure rapid scale-up when triggers are reached.

MHPSS: Integrate MHPSS across education, child protection and community preparedness, strengthening the capacity of teachers, social and community workers to identify and respond to psychosocial needs and ensuring referral and surge arrangements are in place for rapid support.

Supplies: Long-term arrangements for emergency supplies and services are in place. WASH readiness covers household water-treatment and safe-storage, hygiene supplies, water-treatment chemicals, mobile storage and treatment equipment, pumps, generators, pipes and emergency water transport. Water purification tablets will be pre-positioned for rapid deployment.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

UNICEF Viet Nam is mobilizing resources for priority preparedness and anticipatory action while maintaining readiness for other hazards. It is monitoring risks and coordinating with Government and partners to refine priority locations, triggers and early actions.

UNICEF has completed a costed El Niño Preparedness, Anticipatory Action and Response Plan setting out priority actions and resource needs. Flexible funding supports water storage, nutrition supplies, preparedness training, risk communication and partner readiness. UNICEF is mobilizing additional resources through internal mechanisms and development and humanitarian partners to close gaps and enable timely scale-up before the January–May 2027 peak-risk period.

Budget breakdown [preparedness, anticipatory action, response priorities]

Sector	Preparedness total USD	AA total USD	Response total USD	Overall total USD	Funded USD	Gap USD
Cross-sectoral Preparedness (incl. emergency preparedness & response training)	90,000	-	10,000	100,000	77,062	22,938
SBC / RCCE	35,000	5,000	60,000	100,000	-	100,000
Health and Nutrition	143,000	304,000	333,000	780,000	228,355	551,645
WASH	80,000	530,000	240,000	850,000	205,550	644,450
Cash / Social Policy	38,900	330,000	431,100	800,000	56,400	743,600
Education	72,000	30,000	165,000	267,000	17,000	250,000
Child Protection (incl: GBVIE & PSEA)	75,000	25,000	100,000	200,000	22,904	177,096
TOTAL	533,900	1,224,000	1,339,100	3,097,000	607,270	2,489,730

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

The Government leads national preparedness and any humanitarian response. The Resident Coordinator's Office coordinates UN support through the Disaster Risk Reduction Partnership, which brings together Government, development partners, UN agencies and NGOs.

UNICEF works with national and subnational government counterparts, the Viet Nam Red Cross and partners to advance coordinated, child-centred preparedness and anticipatory action. UNICEF co-leads Government coordination for WASH, Nutrition, Education and Child Protection, linked to Health, Social Protection, Social and Behaviour Change, Supply and Logistics. Priorities are shared risk analysis; identification of high-risk locations and vulnerable children; agreed triggers and costed early actions; and continuity of essential services.

In WASH, UNICEF is aligning partner monitoring with the Government's rural water-supply information system. It is consolidating commune- and system-level data on water sources, functionality, household access and response capacity to inform preparedness and resource allocation.

Next update: November 2026

Information limitations and primary sources

Forecasts are revised monthly, and validated humanitarian caseloads are not yet available across sectors. Subnational data remain incomplete on WASH functionality and household access; nutrition risks and service capacity; education disruption and school readiness; child protection risks and service capacity; partner presence; pre-positioned supplies; and available funding. Planning thresholds and triggers will align with Government-approved procedures and sector preparedness arrangements as they are finalized. SitRep figures are indicative and will be updated as Government and partner monitoring improves.

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