



Environment Digest 2 **December 2015**

Where is the Water?

South Africa is facing its worst drought since 1992, after one of the driest rainy seasons on record. This continuous lack of rain has placed a strain on water supplies across the nation, affecting approximately 2.7 million households. The hardest hit are those living in rural areas, where residents have to collect water in buckets once a day. The government has now declared five of its nine provinces drought disaster areas for agriculture. A change in ocean temperatures, the El Niño effect, has been seen to have a dramatic effect on the weather around the world. This anomaly happens at irregular intervals of two to seven years, and lasts nine months to two years. The current El Niño episode is one of the strongest on record, and is still strengthening. This is bad news for the outlying areas of the Northwest, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Mpumalanga, the provinces worst hit by the drought. The El Niño is forecast to continue until mid-2016, increasing regional concerns that several countries will experience below-average rainfall during the season. The effects of this drought include the deaths of numerous livestock, decreased crop yields, and water restrictions, which have been imposed in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

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The following links provide an idea of the scope of the problem, and of efforts to deal with it.

- <http://pmg-assets.s3-website-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/MONITOR - Nov 2015.pdf>
- <http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2015/10/27/RainMustFall>
- <http://www.citizen.co.za/849329/sas-worst-drought-since-1960s/>
- <http://www.polity.org.za/article/s-african-govt-allocates-another-r966m-to-drought-relief-efforts-2015-11-19>
- <http://www.polity.org.za/article/kzn-farmers-hardest-hit-by-drought-2015-11-19>
- <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Danish-govt-to-assist-SA-with-water-challenges-20151102>
- <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Despite-water-crisis-dept-fails-to-spend-R2bn-of-its-budget-20151102>
- <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Itsoseng-runs-dry-despite-reservoir-20151107>
- <http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/agri-sa-calls-for-urgent-action-to-address-south-africas-drought-conditions-2015-10-27>
- <http://mg.co.za/article/2015-09-24-00-drought-predictions-for-southern-africa>
- <http://www.timeslive.co.za/thetimes/2015/11/19/Swartland-staring-at-devastation>
- <http://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/r114m-aid-for-drought-hit-kzn-farmers-1.1949586#.VmAt53YrLIU>
- <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/drought-grips-south-africa-20151115>