

Impact of El Nino in Southern African Nations

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Context

The southern African nations like Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe declared a state of disaster due to severe drought conditions because of the **impact of the El Nino weather phenomenon**.

About the El Nino

- It is a naturally occurring climate sample associated with the warming of the ocean surface temperatures in the imperative and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.
- It occurs irregularly at two to seven year periods.

Current Crisis

- According to the **United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)**, February 2024 was the driest month in 40 years for Zambia and Zimbabwe, and raised concerns late last year that several nations in southern Africa were on the brink of a hunger crisis because of the effect of El Niño.
- Malawi, Mozambique, and parts of Angola had 'excessive rainfall deficits'.
- Millions in southern Africa depend upon the food they grow to live on.
- Corn, the region's staple food, has been badly tormented by the drought.
- The WFP said that there were already nearly 50 million people in southern and elements of relevant Africa dealing with food lack of confidence even before one of the

driest spells in a decade hit.

Impact of El Nino on Global Weather

- It can appreciably affect weather patterns, ocean conditions, and marine fisheries worldwide.
- In 2016, the world noticed its hottest year on record because of a strong El Nino.
- It brought an intense drought for southern Africa, the area's worst in 35 years in 2015-16.
- Meteorologists say that this El Niño, coupled with excess warming from climate change, will see the world grapple with record-high temperatures.
- According to a study posted within the journal Science, El Niño should lead to global financial losses of \$3 trillion in 2024.

Impact on India

- In India, El Niño is often associated with weak monsoons and drought-like conditions.
- It can cause reduced rainfall, dry spells, and heatwaves, resulting in crop disasters and water scarcity.
- It is because of intense weather decimating agricultural production, manufacturing, and helping spread disease.

About La Nina

- It is a climate pattern that is part of the **El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO)** cycle.
 - The aggregate of El Niño, La Niña, and the Neutral state between the two opposite consequences is referred to as the ENSO.
 - It is characterized by cooler than common ocean surface temperatures in the relevant and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.
 - During La Niña events, trade winds are even more potent than regular, pushing greater warm water in the direction of Asia.
 - Off the west coast of the Americas, upwelling will increase, bringing cold, nutrient-rich water to the surface.
 - These deviations from the normal surface temperatures can probably have a large-scale impact on global climate conditions,
- **Impact on Global Weather**
 - La Niña has the alternative effect of El Niño.
 - It can cause drought in the South American countries of Peru and Ecuador, heavy floods in Australia, high temperatures in the Western Pacific, Indian Ocean, off the Somalian coast.
 - It also influences the climate patterns over the Indian peninsula.
 - **Impact on India**
 - In India, La Niña is mainly related to better monsoon rains which could result in a good agricultural yield, benefiting the economy.

- However, the heavy floods in Australia can lead to loss of life and property, negatively impacting the economy.

Source: The Hindu

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q.Drought has been recognized as a disaster in view of its spatial expanse, temporal duration, slow onset and lasting effects on vulnerable sections. With a focus on the September 2010 guidelines from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), discuss the mechanisms for preparedness to deal with likely El Nino and La Nina fallouts in India. (2014)