



SIMPLIFIED EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL ACTIVATION

Malawi | Pluvial Floods

7 January 2026

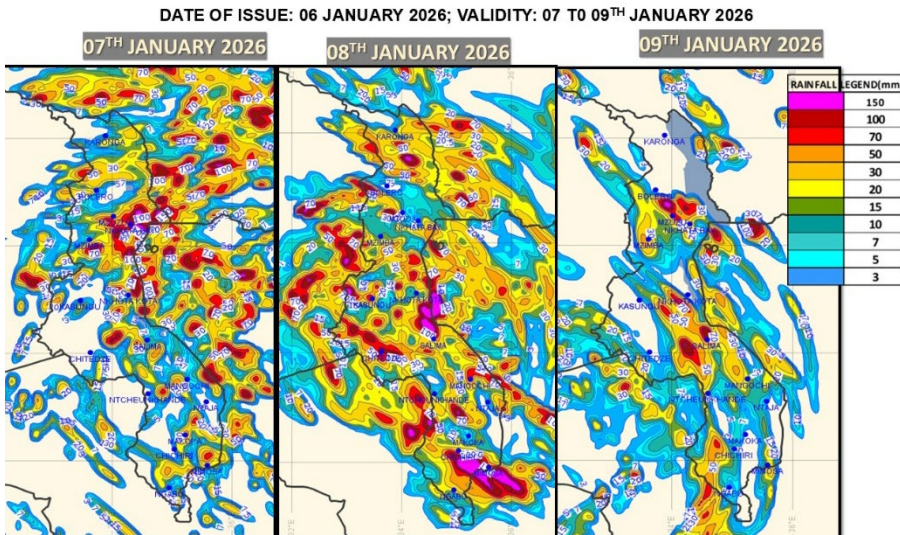


MRCs team enroute to Nkhotakota to conduct distribution of relief items following disasters caused by extreme rainfall in January 2026

EAP №: sEAP2024MW01	Operation №: MDRMW023	EAP approved: 17/10/2025	EAP revised timeframe: 17/10/2025 - 30/04/2026
Trigger date: 05/01/2026	Early action lead time: 5 days	Early action timeframe: 3 Months	

Budget: CHF 76,768
To assist: 12,500 people

EARLY ACTION PROTOCOL ACTIVATION



Parts of the districts in Malawi showing areas forecasted by DCCMS to be affected by heavy rains in the next 3 days.

Activation Overview

Following the forecast issued by the Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services (DCCMS) on 5 January 2026, which indicated the likelihood of extreme heavy rainfall across several parts of the country,

the Malawi Red Cross Society (MRCS) has activated its Simplified Early Action Protocol (sEAP) for Pluvial Floods.

Since the onset of the 2025/2026 rainfall season in November 2025, MRCS has been closely monitoring trigger thresholds using forecasts generated by DCCMS through both global and localized models (CoSMO). During this period, extreme rainfall events were recorded in several districts, with reported impacts in Nsanje, Chikwawa, and lakeshore areas including Nkhatakota. However, despite these observed impacts, MRCS was unable to activate the sEAP at that time due to limited forecast lead times.

According to the trigger statement, the Simplified Early Action Protocol is pre-activated when DCCMS issues an alert followed by a warning, thereby initiating Tier 1 – Forecast-Informed Readiness. This is based on the following criteria:

- A rainfall forecast of ≥ 100 –150 mm within 72 hours in key basins (including the Shire, Linthipe, and Lake Chilwa basins), with a lead time of 3–5 days;
- A cyclone forecast predicting ≥ 100 mm of rainfall within 24 hours in flood-prone districts, with a lead time of 3–5 days;
- A rainfall forecast combined with exposure analysis indicating that $\geq 30\%$ of households are at risk, with a lead time of 3–5 days.

The sEAP is fully activated under Tier 2 – Observational and Activation when the following conditions are met:

- River gauge readings exceed the alert stage at two or more monitoring stations (real-time trigger);
- Inundation modelling projects that $\geq 30\%$ of households in flood-risk zones will be affected, with a lead time of 2–5 days.


In line with these trigger thresholds, the current forecast meets the criteria for both Tier 1 and Tier 2 activation. This places MRCS in a position to implement early actions in prioritized districts classified as being under severe risk (Category 10). These districts include Nkhatakota, Salima, parts of Nkhata Bay, Chitipa, Mulanje, and Phalombe. However, based on observed conditions in Salima District where soils are already highly saturated, the flood risk is expected to be particularly high. Consequently, MRCS will prioritize Salima District for early action activation.


For the prioritized early actions, MRCS will carry out dissemination of the messages through van publicity and door-to-door using the volunteers in addition to supporting 500 direct beneficiaries (Households) with provision of plastic sheets to protect their shelter as highlighted in the table below:


Planned Intervention	Prioritized Early Actions	Targeted Direct Beneficiaries
Shelter and Settlement	Provision of shelter materials (Plastic Sheets)	500 HHs
Community Engagement and Accountability	Production of Jingles and Dissemination of EW messages through radio and van publication	Over 100,000 people across Salima district
Multi-purpose Cash Transfer	Cash distribution	1,000 people
Risk reduction, climate adaptation and recovery	Drainage and embankments	Over 100,000 people across Salima district

Early Action Overview

PLANNED OPERATIONS


 Shelter, Housing and Settlements	Total number of people to be reached	500 HHs	1,566 CHF
Indicator:	# of people reached with shelter, housing and settlement interventions in advance of a hazard		
Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out distribution of plastic paper rolls to households for them to strengthen their houses before the rain starts. 2. Pitching tents in strategic evacuation areas. 3. Support evacuation of people to upland areas when 3-day lead time alerts have been issued by DCCMS of persistent rains in high-risk areas. 		

 Multi-purpose Cash	Total Target	1,000	49,664CHF
			AP Code: AP007
Indicator:	# of people reached with multi-purpose cash in advance of a hazard		
Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FSP conduct Resource and funding mobilization. 2. Conduct cash distribution to support 1,000 targeted HHs with a transfer value of MWK 100,000 three days before peak of the floods (the transfer value might be adjusted in line with the National Cash Technical Working Group recommendations). 		

 Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and recovery	Total Target	10,000 people	835 CHF
			AP Code: AP104
Indicator:	# of people reached with risk reduction and/or climate adaptation interventions in advance of a hazard		
Priority Early Actions:	1. Clean and clear drainage systems in the communities to allow safe passage of storm water		

 Community Engagement and Accountability	Total number of people	>50,000	4,697 CHF
			AP Code:102
Indicator:	# of people reached with community engagement and accountability interventions in advance of a hazard		
Priority Early Actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support van publication to disseminate alerts and warnings 2. Support 200 volunteers conducting meetings and door-to-door dissemination of alerts 3. Buy airtime for community radio alert on flood risk, preparedness and general advisories through Jingles. 		

Enabling approaches

 National Society Strengthening	Total Target	23	12,439 CHF
			AP Code: AP124
Objective:	Support effective implementation of early Actions		
Priority Early Actions:	1. Deployment of 8 NRT to support coordination and implementation of Early Actions in Salima districts.		

Contact information

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