

**Forum:** General Assembly  
**Issue:** Measures to address the increasing humanitarian crisis in Southern Africa  
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**Position:** President of General Assembly

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## Introduction

Countries in Southern Africa have been experiencing waves upon waves of humanitarian crises, contending with food shortages, extreme weather events, civil unrest, and displaced populations. Furthermore, COVID-19 is another factor that currently threatens the health of the residents of Southern Africa.

Despite the significant amelioration of the situation in Southern Africa within the past 50 years, climate change and the major civil unrest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique have led to an increase in internally displaced persons. Furthermore, Southern Africa has been a destination for refugees from Burundi, the DRC, Ethiopia, and Somalia. In 2019, Southern Africa hosted 8.9 million forcibly displaced persons, of which 1.1 million are refugees. Specifically, the political violence in Mozambique in June of 2022 led to several deaths, with 10,000 residents fleeing the country. Extreme weather events caused by climate change have led to further harm to the residents of Southern Africa. Within six weeks, the impact of five cyclones resulted in extreme precipitation and floods, affecting more than one million people, and resulting in 230 deaths.

The multiple humanitarian crises in Southern Africa are the result of interdependent and complex factors and require resolutions that consider aspects such as providing shelters for internally displaced persons, tackling political violence, building resilience for extreme weather events, and recovering from food shortages.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Humanitarian crisis

A humanitarian crisis, as defined by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissions, is one or multiple events that threatens a community's health, safety, and/or well-being. In the discussion for this topic, the humanitarian crisis pertains to the recurrent droughts, perennial flooding, food shortages, and attacks that have led to the displacement of the residents of Southern Africa.

### Extreme weather events

An extreme weather event is a weather, climate, or environmental condition that is irregular and aperiodic. Some scientists define such extreme weather events as the 5-10% highest or lowest of previous historical measurements. Some examples of extreme events are irregular and intense precipitation and cyclones (also known as typhoons and hurricanes).

### Food insecurity

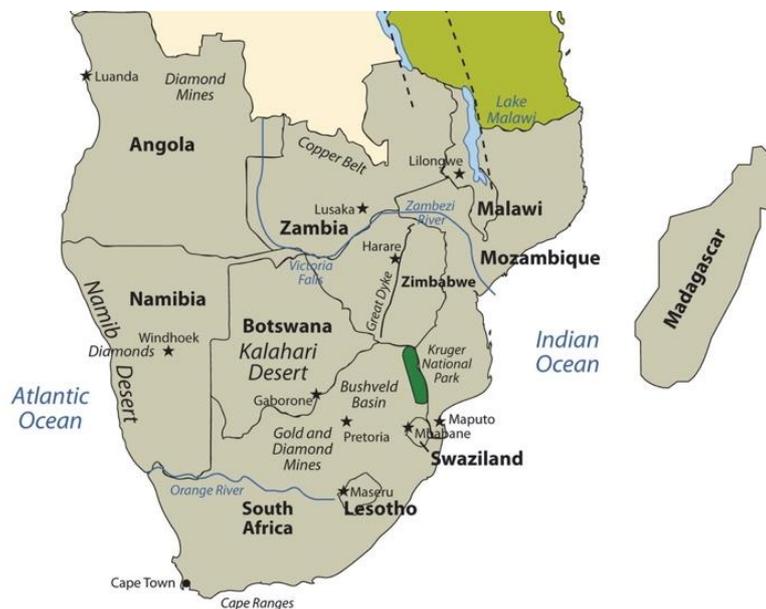
Food insecurity is a condition that describes households with limited or uncertain access to food. There are many indexes used to measure the levels of food insecurity. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) standardizes the scale of food insecurity using 5 phases: minimal, stressed, crisis, emergency, and famine.

### Undernutrition

This term describes a deficiency in energy intake and nutrients. Undernutrition can come in two forms: wasting (low weight for their height) and stunting (low height for their age). Wasting implies that there is a recent and severe weight loss; stunting suggests that there has been chronic undernutrition.

### Southern Africa

Southern Africa is defined as the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



**Caption #1: Labelled map of Southern Africa (University of Texas)**

## Background Information

### Extreme weather events

As global warming continues due to anthropogenic increases of greenhouse gas and various sources of pollution, there are an increasing number of extreme weather events; specifically, droughts, floods, unpredictable rainfall, and heatwaves, all of which threaten the health of the people and the economic development of the country. Specifically, these unpredictable and extreme weather events put people in danger, especially when countries do not have an appropriate and early response to these issues, leading to failed agricultural production or displacements.

Extreme weather events threaten the food security and the economy of African countries. Agriculture is the largest economic activity in Africa, responsible for 60% of employment. With the aperiodic extreme weather, the crop yield will be limited as crops have a limited thermal tolerance and water resistance. Moreover, the lands on which most crops grow are predicted to be drier in the future, meaning that these plants may no longer be harvestable. With the extreme heat, drought, rain, and floods, the World Meteorological Organization predicts that the crop yield will reduce by 8% in Southern Africa, of which rice and wheat are the most vulnerable crops. This suggests that residents of that region will suffer from food shortage, due to the reduced yield of staple foods, but also threaten their income and job as many residents are employed in the agricultural sector. The food shortage will also mean an increase in food prices, increasing the prevalence and severity of food insecurity. However, this can be tackled with the adaptation of agroecological farming and agroforestry which is already being implemented in some African countries.

Furthermore, climate change and extreme events have led to the forced displacement of many people in Southern Africa. It is estimated that by 2030, 700 million people will be displaced due to stressed resources. Currently, Madagascar is suffering its worst droughts, putting 1.64 million people in extreme hunger.

### Food shortage

In March of 2021, it was estimated that 13.7 million people in Southern Africa were grappling with food insecurity, classified as a level three “crisis” by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), specifically in Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The worsening food insecurity issue stemmed from the recent disasters in these countries.

#### Lesotho

Due to recent droughts and unpredictable rainfall, many households have been suffering below-average agricultural production. It is estimated that 755,000 people, around 40% of the population, are projected to experience acute food insecurity.

#### Madagascar

Suffering from droughts, natural disasters, and an economic recession due to the pandemic, Madagascar has suffered from acute food insecurity along with malnutrition. The number of children suffering from malnutrition nearly doubled compared to that of 2021; 135,000 children are

projected to suffer from wasting in 2021. Due to the shortage and low production of food, food prices have raised, and families are subsequently suffering from restricted access to food.

### *Malawi*

Malawi has suffered from extreme weather, consequent poor harvests, and the restrictions of COVID-19 as well. The irregular rainfall has led to flooding in the northern region of Malawi. Additionally, there have been disease outbreaks among livestock, putting more stress on the economy on top of the measures to mitigate the pandemic. The IPC report estimates that 2.6 million people are going to need food aid in 2021. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that there will be more than 65,000 children who will need treatment for wasting.

### *Mozambique*

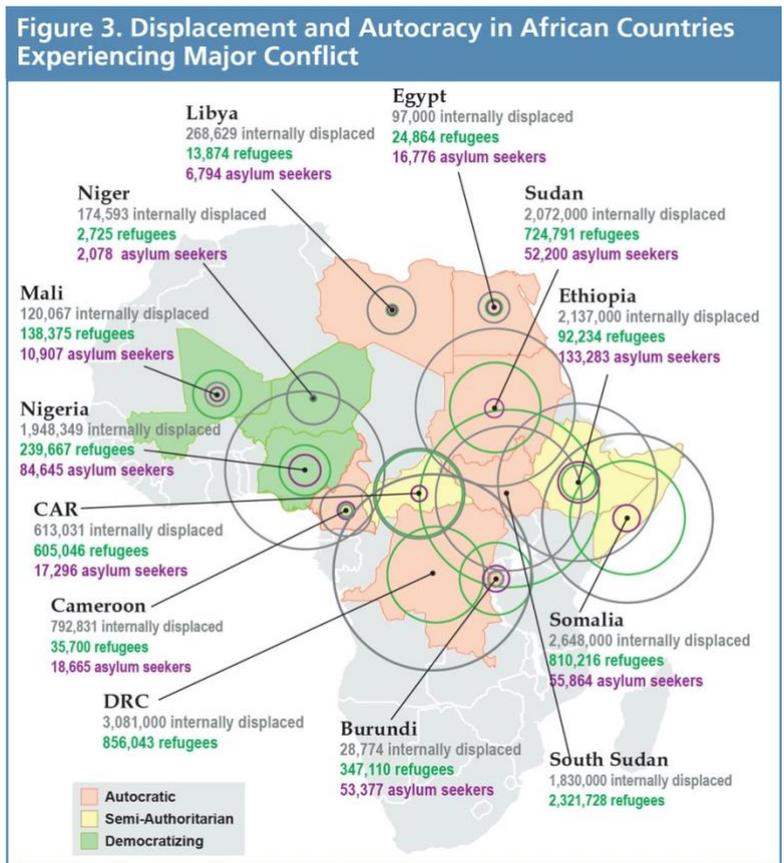
The conflict in Cabo Delgado, prolonged droughts, and the COVID-19 lockdown have led to a worsening food insecurity issue in Mozambique. Specifically, an IPC analysis suggests that the number of people experiencing food insecurity is going to reach 2.9 million in 2021.

### *Zimbabwe*

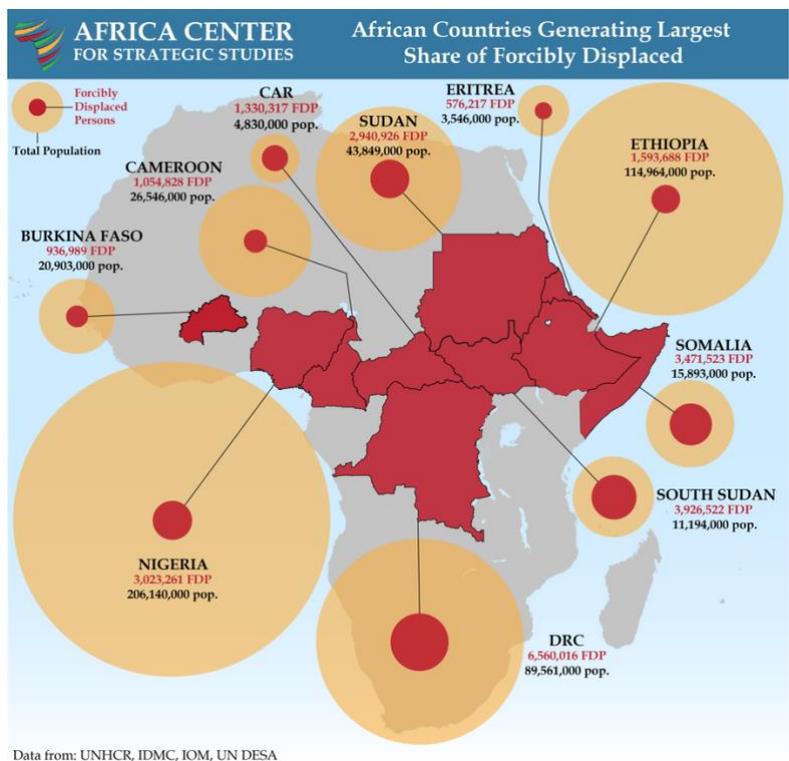
The pandemic and droughts, accompanied by poor economic conditions and increasing food prices, have led to approximately 3.4 million individuals in rural areas suffering from the effects of food insecurity. Furthermore, because of the pandemic restrictions, it is also expected that there will be hyperinflation, further exacerbating the food insecurity issue in Zimbabwe.

## **Increase in displaced people**

As of June of 2022, the number of stateless people in Southern Africa has exceeded 8.4 million due to the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mozambique, the violence in the Central African Republic (CAR), and the eruptions of Mount Nyiragongo in DRC.



**Caption #2: The internally displaced persons, refugees, and asylum seekers in African countries in the 2010s Africa (Africa Center for Strategic Studies)**



**Caption #3: Displaced population in African countries Africa (Africa Center for Strategic Studies)**

### *Conflicts in DRC*

The DRC has been enduring one of the longest conflicts in the world, and the situation has been recognized as the world's most neglected refugee crisis. For more than 25 years, the eastern DRC has been fighting with more than 122 rebel groups – some of them being M23, the Allied Democratic Forces, Cooperative for the Development of Congo, and the Mai-Mai. Despite the declaration of being sieged in May of 2021, the fight has continued, even intentionally targeting the camps of displaced people. The United Nations Human Rights for Refugees documents there to be over 918,000 refugees and asylum seekers from DRC being hosted, and more than 5 million people displaced internally in DRC. This has put stress on the neighboring countries as there is an increased inflow of asylum seekers and refugees.

### *Conflicts in Mozambique*

There have been prolonged conflicts in Mozambique, and the most recent insurgency started in 2017. The local al-Shabaab militia recognized the importance of Cabo Delgado for its natural gas reserves and since then, there has been a sharp increase in militant attacks targeted toward Cabo Delgado. In 2020 alone, 570 violent incidents were reported, with 700,000 displaced persons and extensive destruction in northern Mozambique. These violent incidents include killing, beheading, and kidnapping.

### *Political violence in the C.A.R.*

Since 1960, there has been instability in the C.A.R. The recent tension and political violence began after the re-election of Faustin-Archange Touadéra, where former president François Bozizé was rejected candidacy because he had international warrants and UN sanctions against him. This led to Bozizé joining the Coalition of Patriots for Change and leading multiple attacks to postpone the election and initiate peace talks. In December of 2021, 30,000 civilians fled, 185,000 were internally displaced, and hundreds died.

Despite the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission's peacekeeping interception and the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in 2019, the fighting persisted.

### *Eruption of Mount Nyiragongo*

Mount Nyiragongo is one of the deadliest volcanos in the world, last documented to have killed more than 170 people in 2002. The eruption in 2021 was reported to have killed 21 people, destroyed at least 4000 houses, and displaced more than 2 million people.

### **Main donors**

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) releases periodic reports detailing the amount of official development aid (ODA) a country has received or donated. The ODA is a measurement created by the OECD to measure the amount of government aid for welfare and economic development.

The report, Development aid at a Glance, totals the aid provided for African countries by others. Notably, the donor providing the most aid in 2019 was the United States, with the European Union and the International Development Association in second and third place, as shown in the table below. More specifically, this report also shows the number of donations the top ten donor countries gave, which the United States remains to be the top, and followed by the United Kingdom and Germany. Please refer to the appendix for further information, as the Development aid at a Glance focuses also on the specific sectors and the countries that aided the most for each sector.

<b>2.1.2. Top 10 ODA donors</b>			
<i>USD million, net disbursements in 2017</i>			
1	United States	11 190	21%
2	EU Institutions	6 851	13%
3	IDA	6 326	12%
4	United Kingdom	3 858	7%
5	Germany	3 691	7%
6	Global Fund	3 059	6%
7	African Dev.Bank	2 547	5%
8	France	2 362	4%
9	Japan	1 674	3%
10	Canada	1 140	2%
	Other donors	10 103	19%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>52 800</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Caption #4: The top ODA donors to African countries (OECD)**

	2015	2016	2017	3-year average	% of DAC countries
1 United States	9 320	9 840	11 190	<b>10 117</b>	36%
2 United Kingdom	4 203	3 857	3 858	<b>3 973</b>	14%
3 Germany	3 036	3 499	3 691	<b>3 408</b>	12%
4 France	2 131	2 217	2 362	<b>2 236</b>	8%
5 Japan	1 784	1 495	1 674	<b>1 651</b>	6%
6 Canada	1 086	974	1 140	<b>1 066</b>	4%
7 Sweden	873	842	1 033	<b>916</b>	3%
8 Norway	672	629	748	<b>683</b>	2%
9 Netherlands	635	663	716	<b>671</b>	2%
10 Switzerland	655	584	551	<b>596</b>	2%
Other DAC countries	2 483	2 615	2 813	<b>2 637</b>	9%
<b>Total DAC countries</b>	<b>26 877</b>	<b>27 213</b>	<b>29 776</b>	<b>27 956</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Caption #5: Top ODA donor countries to Africa countries ranked by the amount (OECD)**

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

## Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The FAO seeks to provide long-term aid and alleviate the effects of the food shortages in Southern Africa. The agency has supported the government of Malawi, for example, by devising a national food insecurity response plan.

## United Nations World Food Programme

The WFP is an organization that focuses on providing food in emergencies, and it is one of the main forces aiding the food shortage in Southern Africa in a short-term manner. Specifically, it implements social protection plans that provide food assistance with cash transfers and intends to assist the 2.4 million people suffering from food insecurity.

## United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The UNHCR focuses on helping people in need seek refuge in other countries, as well as helping them restart their lives. The UNHCR has aided internally displaced persons, refugees (due to the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo), and more, protecting such individuals. It fights against gender-based violence, offers training for refugees, and provides shelter. The UNHCR has developed two frameworks aiming to improve the situation for refugees: the Global Compact on Refugees and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

Dealing with the refugee situation in Southern Africa, the UNHCR works with 70 organizations. It is capable of assessing and prioritizing incidents of more urgent refugee situations. For example, with the violence in the D.R.C., the increased number of internally displaced persons reached 5.2 million in 2021, and the UNHCR declared it a level 3 emergency. This allowed more operations to take place and support the locals. With the violence in the C.A.R, the UNHCR has declared a level 2 emergency and coordinated with the camps and shelter clusters. With the increasing number of refugees, the UNHCR has provided protection monitoring, community-based protection, capacity-building facilities, specific care, and expanded the sizes of the shelter clusters to take in more refugees. Furthermore, the UNHCR is also currently working to ratify more international and regional instruments to protect displaced persons and refugees. Mauritius, a country in East Africa, for example, is working towards ratifying the 1951 Convention, which outlines the rights of refugees.

## Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The SADC is a union of countries of the Southern African region that work to achieve development, peace, economic growth, and ensure standards of life. This is achieved through regional integration, the establishment of democratic principles, and sustainable development.

The SADC, along with the UNHCR, has established a five-year plan, taking place from 2020 to 2024, to support the member states. The SADC promised that it would implement and further operationalize the Global Compact on Refugees by holding a regional conference. Additionally, the action plan aims to encourage regional cooperation in response to the increasing number of displaced persons and refugees. To aid the process of migration management further, UNHCR has also

implemented a four-year project with the International Labor Organization, International Organization for Migration, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1960s	The SADC is established for regional coordination of Southern Africa
1960	Continued instability in C.A.R.
2016	The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants is adopted and brings forth the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework.
2017	Insurgency arises in Mozambique
2018	The United Nations General Assembly affirms the Global Compact on Refugees, a framework for a sustainable solution for the refugee situation.
2019	Signing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation for the political violence in C.A.R.
2019	Zambia adopts the Global Compact on Refugees
2020	SADC and UNHCR develops a five-year action plan in response to the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons
2021	Eruption of Mount Nyiragongo
2021	The displaced persons from D.R.C. reaches 5.2 million. The UNHCR declares a level-3 emergency, prioritizing actions to support these individuals.
March 2021	Second wave of COVID-19 leads to another round of lockdown
2022	Madagascar suffers from the worst droughts, putting 1.64 million people at risk

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- State of global food insecurity (A/RES/76/L.55)
- Resolution 2648 (S/RES/2648(2022))

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

### The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) approach to counterterrorism

This counter-terrorism strategy was developed in 2015 and implemented globally. The strategy focused on a situational analysis of the violence. It involved sharing knowledge, advocating for the prevention of such violence through teacher development, and strengthening regional cooperation and political commitment toward political violence. The expected outcome was to educate the youth and prevent increasing recruits of violent political groups.

This measure is indeed important for long-term development. However, what is more important is to first protect the people from such attacks. Furthermore, it does not consider the feasibility of this plan, nor the fact that the political instability has led to many displaced people who would not have access to such education.

### **Zambia's adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)**

The Global Compact on Refugees is a framework set by the United Nations General Assembly to provide a responsibility-sharing solution for refugee situations through international cooperation. Four of their objectives include easing pressure on host countries, strengthening refugees' self-reliance, and supporting the country of origin to allow a place for the refugees to return to.

One example is Zambia's adoption of the GCR. Before the adoption of the GRC, the country wished to further protect the refugees but was limited by its funding and the lack of international support. It was only when Zambia adopted the 2017 Refugees Act that it was able to improve the situation for asylum seekers, refugees, and displaced persons. The adoption allowed the legal movement and integration of refugees from Angola and Rwanda. With the implementation of frameworks like the GRC and CRRF, Zambia integrated the refugees with the host communities. This successful integration has led to the successful settlement of these refugees and led to further cooperation with the WFO and UNHCR.

The steps to success demonstrated by Zambia were the implementation of laws and policies in favor of refugees, international support, and a long-term framework that was feasible for the country.

### **WFP and FAO addressing food insecurity**

The WFP and FAO have been addressing this issue by providing food for those facing food insecurity and devising plans to prepare them for cases of extreme weather and lack of access to food. The WFP has provided over 400,000 people in Zimbabwe with cash and food transfers. The FAO has worked with the government to restore 34 irrigation schemes and provided access to finance for 127,000 small farmers to gain access to technologies. This is certainly a good method to not only help them in the short-term, but also ensure that they can improve in the long-term. However, it is important to mention that many are still facing malnutrition and may need treatment due to long-term malnutrition, which is not covered by this solution.

## **Possible Solutions**

### **Measures to overcome extreme weather events**

The vulnerability of Southern Africa when facing extreme weather events is due to the lack of capacity and resilience against them. To become more resilient, countries should consider implementing systems that can predict and warn people who are exposed to threats. This could be done by setting up better telecommunication methods and ensuring the public's access to them.

Furthermore, the buildings should be built according to the extreme events that the region typically experiences. In 2022, for example, the heavy rainfall in April that exceeded 350mm within two days in South Africa led to a devastating flood, killing 435 people and damaging property the equivalent of \$1.57 billion. Due to the damage, the port of Durban was forced to shut down, pausing the supply chain for minerals and agricultural products. This damage could have been prevented through pre-planning the arrangement of the buildings and the adaptation of these buildings to such weather events. The buildings in Bangladesh, for example, are designed specifically to withstand extreme storms and floods, keeping the residents and their property safe.

Minimizing the damage brought about by extreme weather events can be achieved through the aid of other countries that have more expertise. Conferences or teams could be provided for countries in Southern Africa to develop a plan that is feasible, affordable, and beneficial. To ensure a continued and self-sustainable resilience against extreme events, community-based organizations could take on the role to educate the residents of these countries, and bonuses could be given to residents who are able to build their own plans with the given resources.

### Ensuring food security

It may be beneficial for neighboring Southern African countries to cooperate and adapt to the climate changes together, as that would allow them to devise a plan that is cost-effective and based on their specific regions. This has proven successful in cases such as improving the security issue regarding water quality in the Rhine River through cross-border collaboration, and planting Mangroves in the Xai-Xai district of Mozambique that restored the ecosystem.

References could also be made to the United Nations Environment Programme's ecosystem-based adaptation, especially how it puts emphasis on regional needs and finds the most effective method through monitoring and assessing the local environment. The research could then be shared with neighboring countries to reduce food shortages together.

To achieve this goal, international funds could be given to countries in Southern Africa to initiate a region-based project (that monitors the ecosystem), devise a suitable plan, and run periodic conferences.

### Providing shelters to displaced persons

To deal with the increasing number of refugees and displaced persons, it is important to hold institutions responsible, consider the possibility of corruption, share information, and have civilians and the government cooperate. Actions taken by the UNHCR, such as encouraging the adoption of instruments that facilitate the process of accepting displaced persons and refugees, are recommended. To take this further, the regional ratification of such instruments should be achieved, to take in more refugees in the future. As previously discussed, the example of Zambia is worth considering when developing a resolution. This resolution could also include means for regional cooperation, such as holding SADC meetings to encourage neighboring countries to help each other.

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## Appendices

- I. An in-depth analysis of current extreme weather events along with proposals for solutions. <https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-africa-stateless/2020/11/b6e9a1fa-weathering-the-storm-extreme-weather-events-and-climate-change-in-africa-grl-trr-04-2020-high-res.pdf>
- II. The actions were taken by the UNHCR in 2021 <https://www.unhcr.org/605c399a4.pdf>
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- IV. A report published by the United States Agency for International Development explaining the humanitarian crises in Southern Africa and their attempts to ameliorate the situation [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/03.02.2021\\_-\\_USG\\_Southern\\_Africa\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_1.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/03.02.2021_-_USG_Southern_Africa_Fact_Sheet_1.pdf)
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