

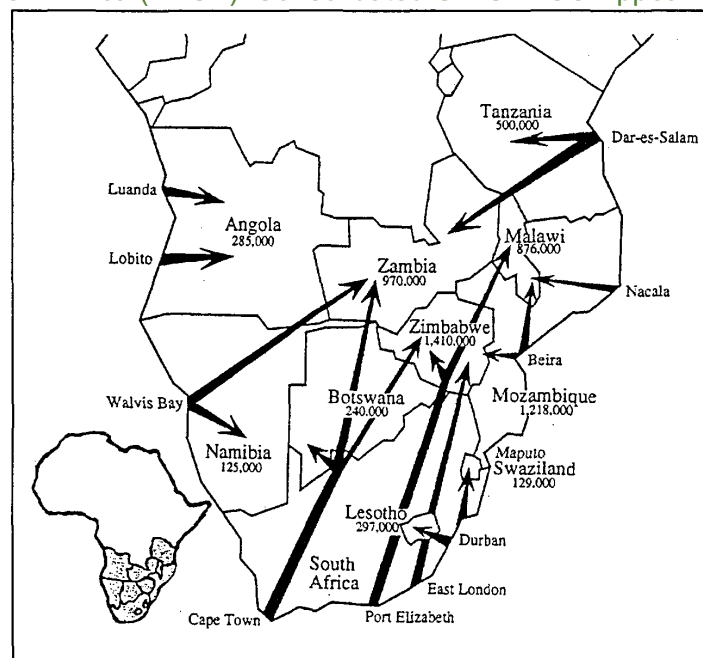
# Disasters Avoided

## Southern Africa Drought, But Not Famine: 1991-1993

- The 1991-1992 El Niño triggered a region-wide drought that led to a 52% cereal production shortfall, placing 20 million people at risk of acute food insecurity.
- A coordinated multi-scalar response led to the import and transshipment of 11.6 million tonnes of food across the region, the largest food relief response since the 1966-1967 drought in India.

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Figure 1. Southern African Countries (1992) with Transport / Shipment Routes for Relief Food (values in metric tonnes). Image source: United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) and Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). (1992) Drought Emergency in Southern Africa (DESA): Consolidated UN-SADCC Appeal. DHA + SADCC, p. 8.



The Southern Africa drought response of 1992-1993 demonstrated how coordinated and timely action was effectively able to avert disastrous famine consequences – even at regional scale. It highlighted the value of engaged regional institutions, at both political and operational levels, and particularly the importance of regional food insecurity warning systems. The advance drought warning enabled the transport of food commodities across eleven southern African countries from April 1992 to April 1993, using six transport corridors, nine ports, and a creative mix of road/rail and private sector transport. The response's effectiveness was underpinned by coherent political will across the affected countries, supported by vigorous international action, to ensure a disaster avoided.

Sources:

- Holloway, A. (2000) 'Drought emergency, yes...drought disaster, no: Southern Africa 1991-93'. Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 14, 1, 254-276.
- Benson, C. and Clay, E. (1994) The Impact of Drought on Sub-Saharan African Economics: A Preliminary Examination. Working Paper 77, Overseas Development Institute, London.