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Before the next shock, who can act?

Three-minute briefing

African climate preparation now faces a practical test: whether money, contracts and operating authority match the warning time available. Zambia's reported K31.7 million release for relief food is the clearest spending decision in this week's evidence. District allocations, quantities, recipients and delivery dates remain open. Conflicting nine- and ten-province accounts do not establish complete coverage or an expanded operation.

The Southern African Development Community's (SADC) 23 October closing statement adds a consequential regional decision. Participants validated an anticipatory-action framework, prepositioning strategy and seasonal contingency plan. Ministers are to consider the resolutions in November. Most planned early actions remain unfunded, according to SADC. Technical validation therefore leaves both approval and the financing of execution unresolved.

Kenya faces a shorter clock. Its current heavy-rain warning identifies 26-28 October as the peak window, with easing towards 30 October. This is forecast guidance, not proof of widespread observed flooding. National response institutions, county executives and sector authorities need attributable evidence of local activation and continued access to essential services.

Sudan's decision is immediate. A 27 October United Nations briefing warns that shortages will leave 900,000 people without food assistance from November. WFP separately describes an 800,000-person cut through year-end. The totals require reconciliation. New funding and safe access are separate requirements; either can constrain delivery.

Three further developments broaden the picture. Morocco's US\$487 million reform financing has reached approval, not verified disbursement. Madagascar reports installation of a locally manufactured weather station, opening questions about calibration, repair and rights to use its data. Cameroon's announced energy-accounting work could make biomass and self-generated electricity more visible in investment decisions, but completed accounts have not been verified.

The finding is limited to the documented stages of action. It does not establish completed protection or compare national preparedness scores. The next evidence that would change the assessment is specific: district delivery records in Zambia; ministerial decisions and finance in SADC; local operating and impact records in Kenya; sustained access and funded delivery in Sudan; and published implementation records for the longer-term reforms.

The proposal is a legally reviewed trial of readiness clauses within an existing essential-service contract. It would test whether paying transparently for availability, fuel, staffing and activation can protect referral transport before an emergency purchase becomes necessary.

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