



GEORGIA: DROUGHT

Appeal no: 31/00
10 October, 2000

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 4,720,000
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES TO
ASSIST 50,000 URBAN BENEFICIARIES FOR 10 MONTHS***

Summary

Georgia faces a severe food crisis due to a current severe drought that has damaged 60 to 95 percent of the cereal crops in southern and eastern Georgia. According to the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), some 696,000 people will require external food aid through next year's harvest and some 26,000 tonnes of seeds are needed for planting in the next season (based on a FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission to Georgia, September 2000.) Following its own assessment, including discussions with government representatives, humanitarian organizations, local administrative authorities in various regions, and private households, the Federation delegation in Georgia has established a plan of action that is an integral part of and complementary to the operations planned by WFP, FAO, and various NGO's.

To respond to the situation, WFP is in the process of planning an appeal to provide food assistance to a total of 696,000 beneficiaries located in the five eastern regions of the country worst affected by the drought. While the full extent of the WFP intervention depends on further discussions and an adequate donor response, coordination between WFP, the Federation and other humanitarian agencies is currently being finalised.

The main objective of the Federation's operation will therefore focus on preventing or reducing malnutrition by implementing the two following activities:

- procuring and distributing food parcels (see table on page 3) to 50,000 urban-based vulnerable persons in the entire country who are considered by the Federation as particularly vulnerable due to the affects of both the current drought as well as Georgia's deteriorating social welfare system;
- assisting the World Food Programme as an operational partner by distributing WFP-procured bulk food to 220,000 beneficiaries living in the rural southern regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, and monitoring the distribution operation (WFP will also cover the distribution costs). This

activity is complementary to the first Federation objective of providing assistance to the 50,000 urban-based beneficiaries.

Because the combination of inflated market prices and the effects of the drought threaten the survival of the most vulnerable groups, the Red Cross Society of Georgia and the Federation consider it critical that assistance is provided before currently available supplies run out and winter begins.

The Situation

Georgia is now one of the poorest nations in the world. In 1999 the Georgian Government was able to finance only 37 percent of its budget. The country has been in transition to a market economy for ten years but has not been able to develop new sectors, which translates into high levels of unemployment. Agriculture is still the main source of income and employment for most Georgians, accounting for over half of the jobs in Georgia. Output in the sector, however, is only about 70 percent of its level in 1990.

The lack of rain and snow last winter and spring has seriously reduced the amount of water available for irrigation. Moreover, throughout the country, the number of effectively irrigated areas is slowly shrinking as main, secondary and tertiary canals have not been maintained since independence. According to FAO, the provisional forecast of the cereal and maize harvest in 2000 is sharply reduced; only half of the average of the last five years was produced. Barley production is also forecast to be down to about one-third of last year's harvest. All of this would not be so devastating if Georgia were still reliably able to import enough cereals from abroad.

Output of all other food and fodder crops is also markedly reduced. The drought has affected all other sectors of agriculture including potatoes, vegetables, fruits, vineyards, oilseed, fodder and livestock production. In most regions, private vegetable gardens have been damaged extensively. The drought has also damaged pasture lands; the price of meat in the market has been going down regularly for six months (measured by the IMF's Monthly Consumer Price Index) - a sure indicator of cattle slaughter and a lack of animal feed due to the drought.

Now, according to FAO, the quantity of domestic vegetables and fruits in the markets have declined significantly compared to last year. In some markets, tomato and onion prices have increased by 100 percent and the price of cheese has increased by 40-55 percent compared to the same time last year. Farmers have started to slaughter their livestock due to fourfold increases in fodder prices. Milk production is declining and is likely to decline further during winter when fodder becomes even scarcer.

As FAO and WFP note in their assessment, in addition to the small land holders and subsistence farmers, other population groups are directly affected and already vulnerable - such as pensioners, widows, single-parent households, disabled persons and families without a breadwinner. Although they are entitled to benefits under the government social assistance scheme, the beneficiaries receive erratic payments of their pensions (approximately USD 6 per month) and other benefits. These arrears in payment (15 months for certain persons interviewed) places them in a critical situation in terms of food security.

Vulnerability studies conducted over the course of the Federation's activities in Georgia have underlined the need for food assistance among the elderly. The Federation nutritional survey of 1999 found that the basic intake of its lone elderly beneficiaries is insufficient to meet their nutritional requirements. The reason for the limited food intake was simply because they have not enough money to buy food. The erratic pension received is lower than the cost of a 'minimum survival' food basket in Georgia defined by the World Bank. In July, 2000, the new Minister of Agriculture and Food took representatives from embassies and international organizations, including the Federation, to the regions to meet with local authorities and farmers to obtain a complete picture of the drought-affected areas. At the same time, the president of Georgia appealed for assistance from the United Nations.

The Programme

Red Cross Objectives •

Objective One: Prevent severe malnutrition by distributing food parcels to 50,000 targeted urban-based persons. Advocate for a well-functioning social service in Georgia, via public awareness campaigns and the use of a newly developed comprehensive database of vulnerable people initiated by Counterpart International. Activities to achieve this objective will consist of:

- Procurement and delivery of the required food commodities to Georgia (see table below).
- Transporting the food by rail to the Federation’s central warehouse in Tbilisi to be packed into parcels which will be transported to regional distribution points to be handed out by Red Cross staff and volunteers (either at the distribution points or by home delivery for homebound beneficiaries).
- Organising four distributions over the course of eight months (a total of 200,000 food parcels, each one intended to provide a two-month ration).
- Intensive and continuous monitoring and an end-of-operation evaluation.

Food Composition Table, Drought Appeal 2000/2001

Commodity	Ration/2mths. (g)	Ration/day* (g)	Kcals/day	Protein/day (g)	Fat/day (g)
Wheat flour	6,000	100	350	11.5	1.5
Beans	2,000	33.3	111.5	7.32	0.5
Sugar	1,000	16.7	66.8	0	0
Oil	2,000	33.3	294.7	0	33.3
Pasta	2,000	33.3	121.54	4.16	0.4
Tinned beef	1,600	26.7	58.74	5.6	4
Iodized salt	100	1.66	0	0	0
Total	14,700	244.96	1,003.28	28.6	39.7

NB: Table based on 50% RDA of Kcals, protein and fat for the temporary maintenance of an adult who is sedentary or doing only light work. * based on 30 days per month

Objective Two: As an operational partner with WFP, to distribute WFP-procured bulk food during a 8 month period to 220,000 drought victims in the two worst affected southern regions of Georgia - Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli (WFP will also cover the distribution costs). Activities to achieve this objective will consist of:

- Adjusting the existing operational infrastructure and expertise to the needs of the large-scale food distribution programmes.
- Establishing the targeting mechanisms to reach the most vulnerable in the worst affected drought areas.
- Upgrading the logistics infrastructure and establishing distribution points in co-operation with the Georgian Red Cross local branches and government authorities.
- Ensuring the required monitoring and adequate reporting on the use of resources made available.

Objective 3: Provide the Georgian Red Cross with the opportunity to further develop its preparedness and response capacity for the most vulnerable in the areas directly affected by drought. Activities to achieve objective 3 will consist of involving Georgian Red Cross branches in the drought affected areas in the implementation of the relief programme, thus upgrading their capacity to cope with disasters.

Capacity of the National Society •

The Georgian Red Cross has been gradually assuming responsibility in implementing relief operations. Although the primary objective of this operation is to assist the most vulnerable, this operation also presents an excellent opportunity to continue to develop the capacity of the National Society to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable. The programmes from the Federation’s Georgia Appeal 2001-2002 will integrate the drought operation into their activities.

Capacity of the Federation Delegation in Georgia •

The Federation delegation in Georgia is one of the few operational organisations in the country. The Federation has built up the experience, infrastructure and capacity needed for such a relief operation. The required operational infrastructure is already in place, including experienced staff both in the Federation's delegation and in the Georgian Red Cross. The current staff of expatriate delegates are well-trained emergency relief operators. The team will be led by staff with 5 years experience in the southern Caucasus. To best address the need for the planned operation, the Federation will rent additional warehouses in key regions and will also reinforce its monitoring team in order to make sure objectives of operation are satisfactorily met.

Co-ordination •

Co-ordination meetings are currently taking place between WFP, the Federation and various NGOs represented in the country regarding the distribution of bulk food in the most affected regions. All involved humanitarian actors are in close contact with the different ministries, as well as with regional and local administrations.

The Federation is also consulting with an American NGO in Georgia, Counterpart International, which has created a complete and verified database on 520,000 households, containing approximately 1,100,000 vulnerable persons, for the Georgian Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW). The database will greatly assist the Federation and the Georgian Red Cross to target its planned assistance to 50,000 worst affected vulnerable from the urban population. This appeal is complementary to activities being planned by other operational actors, and is designed and implemented in collaboration with and support to WFP.

Monitoring and Evaluation •

The Federation delegation in Georgia, supported by the Georgian Red Cross, will be responsible for the preparation of beneficiary distribution lists and reports. The Federation's team of monitors will ensure proper planning, implementation and monitoring during and after distributions to make sure that the inputs reach the targeted beneficiaries (69% to 100% of beneficiaries will be monitored).

An external evaluation of the operation will be carried out at the end of the operation to assess if the primary programme objectives have been met, if the programme design was relevant and appropriate, and if the operation has created learning opportunities for the Federation and the National Society to be used in similar drought and other emergency response situations.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The drought compounds a pre-existing, escalating economic crisis. Thus, just addressing the drought will do little to solve the long-term problems facing Georgia. It is expected that people will face challenges of the same type and magnitude in the following years. The Federation's emergency operation will therefore not only address the immediate effects of this year's drought on a total of 270,000 of the worst affected beneficiaries (220,000 with WFP-procured food distribution as well as 50,000 urban-based with direct Federation and Georgian Red Cross food parcels), as well as advocating on their behalf. This drought appeal may be followed up in 2001 by further rehabilitation and community development activities, possibly linked to food-for-work and food-for-training projects.

Jean Ayoub
Acting Under Secretary General,
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

Didier J. Cherpitel
Secretary General

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BUDGET SUMMARY		APPEAL No. 31/2000
GEORGIA DROUGHT		
TYPE	VALUE	
RELIEF NEEDS		
	IN CHF	
<u>Food & seeds</u>		
Cereals	1,072,000	
Salt	4,500	
Sugar	79,000	
Food oil	532,000	
Meat	1,049,600	
Other relief supplies	228,000	
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS		2,965,100
<u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u>		
Computers	4,000	
Telecom. equipment	12,370	
Office furniture & equipment	4,000	
Generators & lightning	2,200	
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>		
Programme management (automatic calculation)	318,006	
Technical support (automatic calculation)	95,194	
Professional services (automatic calculation)	105,570	
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS</u>	607,934	
<u>PERSONNEL</u>		
Expatriate staff	180,850	
National staff	285,082	
Personnel (support costs)		
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES</u>		
Travel & related expenses	4,000	
Information expenses	14,400	
Administrative & general expenses	93,900	
Professional fees	23,480	
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS		1,750,985
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES		4,716,085
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)		
NET REQUEST		4,716,085