

## GEORGIA: DROUGHT

7 February 2001

*appeal no. 31/00*

*situation report no. 1*

*period covered: November 2000 - January 2001*

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*The drought in Georgia compounds an already dire economic situation in the country. While the full extent of the Federation's intervention depends on programme adjustments currently underway and an adequate donor response, with the limited level of support received in response to the Federation's drought appeal, assistance in the form of food parcels has been delivered to some 31,000 urban-based beneficiaries. In addition, the Federation is coordinating with WFP in the distribution of food (WFP-procured) to some 143,600 beneficiaries. The Federation is undertaking a budget review exercise and will issue a revised budget shortly, but further funding is urgently required to implement the scaled-down activities.*

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### *The context*

Georgia is now one of the poorest nations in the world. 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. A prolonged and severe drought since the winter of 2000 has compounded the situation in the country, damaging 60 to 95 percent of the cereal crops in southern and eastern Georgia (including potatoes, vegetables, fruits, vineyards, oilseed, fodder and livestock production). According to the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), some 696,000 people require external food aid through this year's harvest and some 26,000 tonnes of seeds are needed for planting in the 2001 harvest. 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 places them in a critical situation in terms of food security.

Vulnerability studies conducted by the Federation 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 (approximately USD 68) defined by the World Bank.

Responding to the situation and the Government request for international assistance, the Federation launched an appeal to implement the 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.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

CHF 100,000 was allocated from the Federation’s Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to provide immediate support to the Federation’s activities in Georgia. Following its own assessment, including discussions with government representatives, humanitarian organisations, local administrative authorities in various regions, and private households, the International Federation’s delegation in Georgia established a plan of action that is an integral part of and complementary to the operations planned by WFP, FAO, and various NGO’s. The DREF allocation, in addition to other contributions from donors, have enabled the Federation to mount a quick and effective response to this crisis. The main objective of the Federation’s operation now is to prevent or reduce malnutrition by procuring and distributing food parcels to the 31,000 urban-based most vulnerable persons who are prioritised by the Federation as particularly vulnerable due to the affects of both the current drought as well as Georgia’s deteriorating social welfare system.

The planned implementation stages include:

- *Preparation of the lists of beneficiaries:* The lists of beneficiaries submitted by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs (MoLHSA) of Georgia were checked and cross-checked by Federation monitors and reduced to 31,000 of the most vulnerable. The beneficiaries were selected based on the following criteria: destitute urban households headed by elderly people, female headed households with young children, lone elderly and disabled people without family support, facing additional hardship due to drought.
- *Procurement and delivery of the required food commodities to Georgia:* Procurement of the required food commodities (see table below) has been arranged internationally by the Federation in compliance with the Federation policies and procedures for procurement. Part of the commodities were an in-kind donation from the German Government/German Red Cross.

**Food Composition Table**

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,700</b>	<b>244.96</b>	<b>1,003.28</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>39.7</b>

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

The commodities have started to arrive in Georgia. The food is being transported to the Federation’s central warehouse in Tbilisi to be packed into parcels which will be transported to the regional distribution points in Tbilisi (21,285), Rustavi (3,065), Kutaisi (4,787) and Batoumi (1,863) to be handed out by MoLHSA and Red Cross staff and volunteers. The required operational infrastructure is already in place, including experienced staff.

The initial plan foresaw four distributions (a total of 200,000 food parcels, each one intended to provide a two-month ration for 50,000 worst affected vulnerable from the urban population). Due to the limited response to the appeal and also to an intensive analysis of the beneficiary lists, one distribution round will now be carried out to 31,000 urban-based and vulnerable persons.

In addition, the Federation will also collaborate with WFP as an operational partner by distributing WFP-procured bulk food to 143,600 beneficiaries living in the rural southern regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti (Adigeni, Akhaltsikhe, Borjomi, Aspindza, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda) and Kvemo Kartli (Tsalka, Tetri Tskaro, Dmanisi, Bolnisi, Marneuli and Gardabani), and monitoring the distribution operation.

A letter of agreement was signed between the WFP and the Federation related to the distribution of WFP-supplied food commodities (within the WFP project ‘Food Assistance to Drought-Affected People in Georgia’). In co-operation with the MoLHSA and WFP, the Federation finalised the list of beneficiaries. Initially the operation envisaged assistance to 220,000 drought victims, however, the recent Household Food Economy Survey conducted by the WFP has resulted in a reduction of the number of beneficiaries, with a particular focus on the vulnerable due to the effects of both the drought as well as Georgia’s deteriorating social welfare system. The beneficiaries were selected based on the following criteria:

- Households whose primary income source is crop production having less than one hectare of arable land, not more than two cows and harvest losses exceeding 40 %. Priority was given to female headed households with young children;
- Destitute rural households headed by elderly people, female headed households with young children and pregnant and nursing women without family support, facing additional hardship due to drought.

The bulk food required for the first round of distribution (1,939 mt of food) will provisionally arrive in early February and the distribution will start shortly thereafter. Distribution will be made in accordance with the food basket and ration scale agreed with WFP as follows: a daily ration per person consisting of 400 grams of wheat flour fortified with iron, 30 grams of beans and 20 grams of vegetable oil fortified with vitamin A.

## ***Outstanding needs***

Georgia continues to experience serious economic problems, and is facing widespread food shortages as a result of the drought. The Federation is increasingly concerned over the well-being of the most vulnerable specifically related to the needs of the elderly living alone. In order for the programme to continue reaching the intended beneficiaries, further funding is urgently required.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

The Federation continued to maintain an effective working relationship with its partners. It has been an active participant in the planning efforts in response to the damage caused by the severe drought.

Special attention has been given to exchanging strategic information with the donor and counterpart agency community. The Federation has been attending interagency coordination meetings regarding the distribution of bulk food in the most affected regions. Regular consultations were carried out with local government representatives, and private households. The nature of the Federation's operation and the target of the beneficiary groups and districts have been co-ordinated with the MoLHSA, WFP, FAO, Counterpart International and other NGOs. A plan of action established by the Federation is an integral part and complementary to the operations planned by these organisations.

## *Contributions*

See Annex 1 for details.

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**This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>**

GEORGIA DROUGHT						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 31/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED				02/06/01
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>4,716,085</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 23.8%</b>
CANADIAN - GOVT		39,600	CAD	43,623	19.12.00	
FINNISH - RC		50,456	EUR	76,799	04.12.00	
GERMAN - GOVT		87,300	DEM	68,670	29.01.01	ASSISTANCE TO URBAN BENEFICIAIRES
GERMAN - RC		31,639	DEM	24,887	29.01.01	
ICELANDIC - RC		200,000	ISK	4,235	11.10.00	
MONACO - RC		30,000	FRF	6,987	10.10.00	
SWEDISH - GOVT		500,000	SEK	88,050	15.12.00	
SWISS - PRIVATE		1,097	USD	2,000	22.11.00	
WFP		225,200	USD	377,210	15.12.00	DISTRIBUTION COSTS FOR WFP FOOD
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				692,461	CHF	14.7%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
GERMAN - GOVT		545,480	DEM	429,075	29.01.01	WHEAT FLOUR, PASTA, BEANS, SUGAR OIL, TINNED FISH, SALT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				429,075	CHF	9.1%
<b>ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
<b>THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:</b>						
PGE561						