



## ***MONGOLIA: SNOWFALLS***

Appeal no: 07/2001  
14 February 2001

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 2,864,472  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 35,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 12 MONTHS***

### ***Summary***

Following the heavy snowfalls in large areas of Mongolia during 1999/2000, in which 3 million livestock were killed and 452,000 herders were affected, another winter disaster has hit Mongolia. 90% of the country is covered in thick snow, further threatening the food security of large numbers of vulnerable nomadic herders who rely entirely on their animals for survival.

These two consecutive disasters are unprecedented in living memory even in a country which faces severe winter temperatures. The disasters, that are locally termed as 'dzuds', are a combination of severe widespread drought during both of the last years' summers, followed by unusually cold temperatures in the autumn and winter, with very heavy snowfall.

Some 75,889 herder families (representing 38% of the total herder population and 19.2 million livestock (or 40% of the total livestock) in 21 aimags (provinces) have been affected by the latest dzud. By the end of January, 605,300 head of livestock, the mainstay of the rural economy and the main source of food for herders and their families, had died. The current loss of livestock represents 2.5 times the numbers lost at the same time in last year's disaster. Many herders who were interviewed in a recent field visit made by the Federation/Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS), are close to physical and mental exhaustion. In the past three months, more animals have been than throughout the whole of last year.

According to government sources, if current weather conditions continue, the number of dead animals is likely to rise to as many as 6.6 million by the end of May. In January, Mongolia witnessed the coldest weather in 50 years with temperatures dropping as low as minus 52.9 centigrade in Uvs and Selenge

aimags. At least 9 people are known to have died as a direct result of the blizzards with large numbers of people suffering from frostbite.

In order to respond to the growing needs, the Federation is seeking CHF 2,864,472 to assist up to 35,000 beneficiaries. The operation is expected to last twelve months.

*Mongolian Red Cross Society response:*

The MRCS has been heavily involved in distributing emergency supplies in the worst affected areas, utilising funds received from last year's MRCS/Federation snowfalls appeal together with relief goods donated locally. The MRCS/Federation are currently distributing the final round of supplementary food rations within this operation to 1,150 households (6,300 beneficiaries) in six aimags.

In addition, the MRCS has launched a national appeal to raise funds for the affected population. A number of initiatives have not only raised much needed funds (9 million Tugrig), but have reminded the population of the major role the MRCS has played during emergencies and its ability to access the most isolated areas with relief assistance.

## ***The Disaster***

For the first time in living memory, Mongolia has been struck by two consecutive dzud (in 1999-2000 and 2000-2001). Dzud can be best described as a type of disaster specific to both Chinese Inner Mongolia, (which is also experiencing a similar disaster), and Mongolia. It is caused by an interaction of extreme climatic conditions and man made socio-economic factors. It impacts on the food security of the livestock through the loss of available grass (caused by drought, rodent infestation, overgrazing and heavy snow cover) which severely undermines their ability to build up sufficient reserves of body fat to survive the winter. With the onset of severe winter conditions in October, which brought lower than normal temperatures along with strong winds and heavy snowfall, large numbers of already weakened animals stood little chance of survival.

This latest snowfall disaster follows a second summer of drought, which reduced the availability of fodder in areas affected by the previous drought in 1999. The loss of cattle has created significant food security problems and has had a major impact on the ability of the herders to survive. The economy of the herders is based on their ability to barter their animals (or bi-products, such as wool) to allow them to purchase supplementary food and other essential non-food items. The loss of so many animals over the past two years has meant they no longer have the ability to provide their families with supplementary food items. The loss of cash gained from these sales has also meant that families do not have the means to access basic medical care or education for their children. The psychological impact on the herders has been immense. Given the close relationship that the victims have with their animals, the loss of even a few is seen as a failure by the herders.

21 of a total of 22 Provinces in Mongolia have so far been affected in some way by the latest disaster. Thirteen aimags (provinces) are considered by the government to be seriously affected by the dzud. The total population within these most seriously affected aimags is some 1.1 million people - about 45% of the total population of Mongolia. Of this population, it is estimated that about half a million are directly or indirectly affected by the dzud, and these affected herders manage 40% (12.8 million) of the livestock in Mongolia.

According to the latest government statistics, the most severely affected aimags are as follows:- Uvs, Hovd, Bulgan, Zavhan, Huvsgul, Arhangai, Tuv, Bayan-Ulgil, Govi-Altai, Dunggovo, Umnogobi, Henti, Suhbataar, and Gobisumber.

The following aimags are reported to be moderately affected:  
Bayanhongor, Ovorhangal, Selenge and Dornod.

The Mongolian State Emergency Commission (SEC) reported that as of 25 January animal losses exceeded 600,000. This is more than double the losses reported by the same date last year.

In terms of animal losses, the worst affected aimags are as follows:

No.	Aimags (Province)	Number of severely affected Soms (Counties)	Head of cattle lost
1	Zavhan	21	89,087
2	Tuv	7	88,285
3	Huvsgol	5	81,898
4	Hovd	3	62,735
5	Bulgan	N/A	45,503
6	Uvs	7	31,433
7	Arhangai	3	29,640
	Total		<b>428,581</b>

Weather conditions are likely to continue to worsen with more heavy snowfall predicted in most parts of the country during February and temperatures expected to drop by 1 -2 degrees below normal averages for the time of year. Greater than average snowfall is expected in March in many northern aimags.

While the herder population in Mongolia moves throughout the winter in search of fresh grassland, there has been an unusually high movement due to the harsh winter and lack of grazing. In all, 7,000 herder households from 8 provinces have moved with 2.4 million head of livestock to areas outside their normal grazing areas, placing an extra burden on neighbouring provinces not directly affected by the emergency.

The situation will deteriorate with the onset of spring when the herders' winter food reserves will be exhausted and the animals will face the harsh spring wind and cold with inadequate fodder. Consequently, the MRCS/Federation plan to seek to address both the medium term food needs of 6,500 herder families (35,000 beneficiaries) and to provide much needed support to the same families through a package of relief goods in the form of first aid kits and basic radios. The provision of radios to the families will allow them to access to not only up to date weather reports, but also Red Cross messages on how to cope with the disaster as well as information on the Mongolian Red Cross Society's relief distribution plans.

**The Mongolian Red Cross Society is the only organisation within Mongolia with a national branch network which allows it to access the nomadic herders in the more isolated areas. The aim of this appeal is to target the most isolated victims of this disaster in those areas which have, to date, not benefited from any relief assistance over the past year.**

## *The Response so far*

### **Government Action**

On 13 February 2001, the Mongolian government made an official request to the United Nations for international relief assistance.

Prior to the onset of the latest dzud, the government of Mongolia, using the lessons learned from last year's disaster, had made various initiatives to limit the impact of this year's dzud. These included:-

- alerting all provinces of another disaster in August 2000.
- increasing the allocation of the state hay/fodder reserve (up by 27%) and granting loans for three provinces to purchase emergency stocks, and investing state funds to renovate water points and wells in 8 provinces.
- dispatching field assessment teams to obtain data on the latest situation and improve disaster preparedness in drought and dzud-affected areas.
- distributing 5,050 tonnes of hay, 2,315 tonnes of fodder and 1,084 tonnes of wheat flour donated by the government of Japan, in 16 provinces.

Even with these efforts, many provinces, particularly in the south of the country, received only a third of the amount of animal fodder/hay needed for the winter.

#### **Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w Mid February 2000 - mid March 2001**

Following the appeal launched in the wake of the 1999/2000 dzud, the MRCS/Federation have been providing supplementary food to some 35,000 people since February 2000. Given the time scale of this operation, which is due to close in March 2001, the Mongolian Red Cross Society has been able to provide assistance to many herders affected during this last winter. On 10 February, a convoy of 29 trucks left Ulaan Baatar carrying 348 mts of wheat flour, which will be distributed to 6,300 victims in the six aimags targeted in final phase of the 2000 appeal.

Red Cross volunteers in the aimag branches have assisted throughout the distribution of relief to the most vulnerable. Together with the aimags' emergency commissions, the local MRCS branches have been gathering statistics on the most vulnerable in each soum affected by the latest disaster. This will enable the branches to deliver assistance to the target families until such time as international funds become available to procure relief stocks. During the distributions, the local Red Cross members and volunteers collect all the documentary records required by the MRCS headquarters.

#### **Federation Delegation •**

The Federation field delegate has been co-ordinating efforts with the Mongolian Red Cross Society to complete the final phases of last year's operation.

The field delegate has also carried out field visits, to assess and report on the developing situation. An information delegate on temporary assignment to Mongolia, has also carried out an information gathering mission to gather first hand accounts from the herders. The field delegate will continue working closely with the MRCS on the initial planning and implementation of Phase 1 and developing an extended programme of support for those affected.

Support is also being provided by the Federation regional office in Beijing and the Federation regional delegation in Kuala Lumpur.

#### **Other Agencies' Action •**

Prior to the launch of the joint United Nations appeal of USD 8,678,000 for Mongolia, the UN agencies carried out an intensive assessment in some of the most affected aimags to identify the immediate relief needs. OCHA's regional disaster response advisor for Asia has been charged with co-ordinating the UN response. Many members of the assessment team, along with Mongolian government officials and a Japanese film crew tragically lost their lives in a helicopter accident during the assessment. The UN joint appeal aims to address four main sectors of support: livestock survival, health/water and sanitation, nutrition and disaster preparedness.

Other agencies, including Save the Children, Adra and Mission East are currently assessing the impact of the disaster in their areas of operation. As with the previous dzud operation, the Mongolian Red Cross Society will work closely with these agencies to ensure that there is no duplication of activities.

#### **Co-ordination •**

At national level, the State Emergency Committee (SEC) co-ordinates all national relief efforts. The close linkage between the SEC and the MRCS (the Secretary General of the MRCS is a member of the Committee) will ensure that assistance received through this appeal is carefully co-ordinated with government and NGO efforts.

At local level, the Chairmen of the soum Red Cross committees are often the Presidents of the Soum citizens' *Khural* or assembly. They are therefore familiar with the living conditions of the local herders and can ensure that aid received is distributed fairly, based on needs.

## ***The Intended Operation***

#### **Assessment of Needs •**

Following the onset of the current dzud, the MRCS received information from its aimag branches on the impact of the disaster. Using the information gathered from the reports, together with information provided by the government of Mongolia, the Society has compiled a complete assessment of the situation, including detailed statistics on the worst affected soums within the eleven most affected aimags. Given the evidence of the impact of the disaster and the number of people affected by both the 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 dzuds, it became evident that an international response was needed to assist the MRCS in its plans to target the most vulnerable herders with relief assistance.

Based on this information, the MRCS/Federation have identified eleven aimags that are not only the worst hit by this latest disaster, but were also hit badly in the dzud of 1999/2000 and the heavy drought in the summers of 1999/2000.

Latest statistics showing losses in the worst affected aimags - based on survey figures (29 January) are shown below:

<b>Aimag</b>	<b>Number of Soums</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
Arhangai	8	805
Bayan- Olgii	3	280
Bulgan	8	700
Gobi-Altai	5	595
Gobisumber	3	245
Dorngobi	5	490
Khenti	6	700
Hovd	10	550
Huvsgul	7	1050
Sukhbaatar	7	630
Umnogobi	5	455

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**Immediate Needs •*****Food***

With the loss of their herds, many herders have lost not only their main source of food, but the potential for bartering animals for supplementary food and health and education services. The operation will aim to provide supplementary food in the form of wheat flour for 35,000 beneficiaries in two distinct six months phases. Each family will receive two six month rations of 150 kgs. This represents the equivalent of a daily ration of 155 grams of staple food. The provision of food will also avail the herders of the opportunity to save any limited cash reserves they may have.

***Radios and spare batteries***

One of the few means of contact that the herders have with the 'outside world' is via transistor radios. As many do not have access to these radios, they are not able to listen to locally broadcast information, detailing weather reports, MRCS health messages and distribution information. Through this appeal, the Mongolian Red Cross Society hopes to provide 15,000 of the most vulnerable families with both radios and spare batteries.

***First Aid Kits***

Many herders are either isolated from any form of health services or do not have the financial means to pay for basic health care. The MRCS/Federation intends to provide 15,000 herder families with basic first aid supplies, to enable them to treat minor injuries. The MRCS therefore sees the provision of first aid kits as a priority as they provide practical welfare support to the beneficiaries.

***Shipping Containers***

The operation will seek to supply each of the aimags with one shipping container which will allow the Red Cross branches to store relief supplies prior to onward distribution to the beneficiaries. These containers will also allow the branches to build up stocks during the summer.

**Anticipated Later Needs •**

The full extent of the disaster will be fully apparent when the snows melt and access to some of the more remote areas is easier. An operational review will be carried out by the National Society and the Federation in the summer in order to review the objectives and the implementation of the operation.

**Red Cross Objectives •**

- To ensure the rapid mobilisation of national and international resources to provide immediate assistance.

**Phase 1:*****March - September 2001***

- To provide a total of 35,000 beneficiaries in the 11 worst-affected aimags with complementary emergency food assistance for an 180 day period.
- To provide a total of 15,000 transistor radios to individual families.
- To provide 11 local vans to assist the MRCS with monitoring and micro-distributions.

- To reinforce the capacity of the local aimag branches involved in the operation by providing fax machines.
- To reinforce the storage and disaster preparedness capacity of the aimags by providing steel shipping containers.
- To reinforce the staffing levels at both headquarters and aimag level during the course of the operation.

**Phase 2:**

*October 2001 - March 2002:*

- To provide 35,000 beneficiaries with complementary winter food rations for a further 180-day period.
- To continue to assist the MRC with its staffing needs to manage, monitor and distribute the relief goods.

## ***National Society/Federation Plan of Action***

***February 2001***

The MRCS is currently using funds allocated within the 2000 appeal to provide assistance to target beneficiaries. Locally donated funds, including those contributed by the American Embassy in Ulaan Baatar, will be used to purchase emergency food and non food items for families in the most affected areas. Funding generated within the country will be used to help to bridge the gap prior to receipt of international assistance.

***March - September 2001***

The MRCS will supply supplementary emergency food to 35,000 beneficiaries in the eleven aimags of Arghangai, Bayan-Olgii, Bulgan, Gobi-Altai, Gobisumber, Dornogobi, Khenti, Hovd, Huvsgul, Sukhbaatar, Umnogobi for a 180 day period. Each person will receive the equivalent of 155 gr. of wheat flour per day, giving 550 Kcals per person per day. The total amount of food needed is 975 mt. of wheat flour.

In addition, 15,000 households in these same aimags will receive one transistor radio, spare batteries and one basic first aid kit.

During this phase of the operation, steel shipping containers will be delivered to the aimags to allow them to preposition food stocks prior to the onset of winter. These same containers will provide the MRCS with the means to build up and store disaster preparedness stocks to be used during future disasters.

***September 2001 to March 2002***

*Food.* If funding is available, a further six month ration will be provided to the same selected families. A further distribution will supply 975 mt of wheat to 35,000 beneficiaries.

**Capacity of the National Society •**

The MRCS has 21 aimag branches and an extensive nation-wide network of grassroots volunteer groups in each of the soums. The Society has 240,000 members throughout the country. It has small disaster preparedness warehouses in many of the aimags.

The MRCS has a dedicated team of relief staff at its headquarters in Ulaan Baatar who have gained experience in previous relief operations, especially during 1999/2000. Staff numbers at headquarters will be reinforced.

**Present Capacity of the Federation •**

The Federation's office in Mongolia, which is staffed by two Mongolian national staff, was reinforced by the assignment of a field delegate for the 2000 dzud operation. Given that the current delegate is due to leave at the end of March, two additional international delegates will be assigned to assist the MRCS

in the relief operation. The Federation's regional office in Beijing, will provide support to the relief operation. The regional information and finance delegates in the Federation's Southeast Asia regional delegations in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur will also provide support during the course of the operation.

#### **Evaluation •**

The relief co-ordinator of the MRCS and the Federation team of delegates will carry out monitoring missions to the aimags. Reporting will be co-ordinated through the regional relief delegate in Beijing.

### ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

### ***Conclusion***

The dzud which hit Mongolia during the winter of 1999/2000 was acknowledged as the worst in thirty years. The deteriorating situation following the unprecedented second dzud has further exacerbated poverty and both the physical and mental well being of a large number of those affected. Support is therefore essential to enable the Mongolian Red Cross Society to provide relief to target beneficiaries as rapidly as possible. Funding is urgently needed to assist the MRCS to reach the most vulnerable victims of the disaster and donors are therefore urged to support this appeal accordingly.

Jean Ayoub  
Director  
Disaster Management & Coordination Division

Didier J. Cherpitel  
Secretary General

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

		ANNEX 1
<b><u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u></b>		APPEAL No. AP07/2001
Mongolia: Snowfalls		
TYPE		VALUE
<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>		IN CHF
Food supplies (1950 MT Flour)		793,650
Medical & first aid (15.000 First Aid Kits)		244,200
Other relief supplies (15.000 Radio & 120.000 Batteries)		634,920
Shipping containers (11 units)		44,282
<b>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</b>		<b>1,717,052</b>
<b><u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u></b>		
Vehicles (11 vans)		116,400
Computers		9,768
Telecom. equipment		6,268
Office furniture & equipment (cameras - copiers)		14,156
<b><u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u></b>		
Programme management		193,151
Technical support		57,819
Professional services		64,121
<b><u>TRANSPORT STORAGE &amp; VEHICLE COSTS</u></b>		
		246,130
<b><u>PERSONNEL</u></b>		
Expatriate staff		240,000
National staff		45,000
Personnel (support costs)		
<b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</u></b>		
Travel & related expenses		73,000
Information expenses		50,890
Administrative & general expenses		19,716
Evaluation & Audit fees		11,000
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</b>		<b>1,147,420</b>
<b>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES</b>		<b>2,864,472</b>
<b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>		
<b>NET REQUEST</b>		<b>2,864,472</b>