

## ***ETHIOPIA: IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY***

**Appeal no: 08/2001**  
**19 February 2001**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,932,510  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 40,250 BENEFICIARIES FOR 5 MONTHS***

### ***Summary***

In 2000, Ethiopia experienced one of its most severe droughts since 1984. Over ten million people were in need of emergency assistance and it was only as a result of a massive international response to the deteriorating food security situation that a major crisis was averted. Nevertheless, despite generally favourable main season rains last year, many people remain highly vulnerable to food insecurity due to several years of crop and livestock production failures. Up to 6.2 million people are likely to require emergency assistance this year and this could rise if drought conditions return.



The Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) and the Federation, coordinating closely with the UN and other humanitarian actors and agencies, will continue its operation in South Wollo until June targeting 40,258 farmers and their households who depend on the mid-year belg harvest. Four consecutive years of harvest failures have left them in an extremely vulnerable situation and in need of emergency assistance. The operation will include a package of interventions including cash for work, bulk and supplementary food.

### ***The Disaster***

Over half of the Ethiopian population is chronically food insecure. In a normal year, households find it difficult to subsist. There are many structural reasons for this including declining land holding size, land infertility, low usage of fertilizer and technology and lack of infrastructure. Whatever the causes, it has a major impact on health indicators. More than two thirds of children are stunted and as many as one in ten show signs of wasting. And it condemns the majority of the population to an existence characterized by extreme poverty and destitution. Any external shock such as a drought can, therefore, have a disproportional impact on the population pushing millions over the edge into a situation of starvation.

This is what happened last year. The vast majority of the population, having sold many of their assets including livestock as a result of the failure of previous harvests, was already in a highly vulnerable state before the drought occurred. While the impact of the drought was particularly insidious in the pastoral regions of the south and the east where cattle died in their thousands, it also had a devastating effect in the northern highlands especially among over two million farmers and their households who depended on the early season rain for their food. 2000 marked the fourth successive year in which these belg rains failed.

Responding to the situation, the ERCS and the Federation launched preliminary appeal no. 08/00 for CHF 5,200,000 to provide emergency relief assistance over 8 months to 77,594 of these belg dependent households in the two South Wollo woredas of Kutaber and Ambassel. The Federation launched a full (revised) appeal on 4 May 2000, expanding the operation to North Borena and increasing the budget to CHF 10,370,382 for a total of 130,000 beneficiaries.

These people rely on the annual mid-season harvest for their subsistence, which failed from 1997 to 2000. In an unusual departure from normal planting cycles, this year farmers planted during the main season rains in an attempt to make up for the belg failure, but much of the crop was affected by frost and hail storms and was only suitable for animal fodder. Some income was derived from off farm work and migratory employment. However, many remain dependent on emergency assistance until the next harvest in June. The Red Cross will, therefore, continue its operation in Ambassel until June, but focus on providing assistance to 40,258 people dependent on the belg harvest.

## *The Response so far*

### **Government Action w**

Emergency relief programmes in Ethiopia are co-ordinated through the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Committee (DPPC) which was established in the late eighties. Bulk food contributions to the country's 'Emergency Relief Needs' from international organizations, bi-lateral donors and NGOs are, for the most part, channeled through the DPPC with the funding organization playing a monitoring role. The DPPC is constituted at the national, regional and zonal levels. At the woreda level, the administrative units of the zones, the DPPC normally consists of the local administrator and representatives of various line departments.

The DPPC issued two local appeals in 2000, one in January for 8.4 million people and then a revised one in June following the failure of the belg rains for 10.3 million. The international response was slow at the beginning of the year, but geared up rapidly during the second quarter. By the close of the year, over a million metric tons of emergency food assistance had been imported into the country. This response and a generally favourable main season harvest has had a positive impact on food security in the country.

However, the results of the DPPC co-ordinated multi agency harvest assessment teams carried out at the end of last year demonstrate that many people remain highly vulnerable. The DPPC issued an appeal at the end of January 2001 which announced that 6.2 million people are likely to require emergency relief assistance during 2001. This is broken down along the following lines: 565,600 people as a result of last year's belg harvest failure, 1,566,800 people due to last year's drought in the pastoral areas and 4,109,900 people as of a lack of rain during the maher. According to the DPPC, a further 3.1 million will need close monitoring. The food assistance required for 2001 is estimated to be 639,246 metric tons, out of which 545,349 MT is grain, 54,539 MT is oil and 39,313 MT is supplementary food.

Figures for South Wollo show a reduction in those in need of emergency assistance from 1,185,926 in June last year to 745,400 now. Some of the woredas have fared better than others: still 86,000 in Ambassel require assistance (down from 116,107 in June), while only 20,600 require assistance in Kutaber (a reduction from 71,278). The ERCS and the Federation will concentrate efforts on Ambassel.

### **Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w**

The Ethiopian Red Cross, supported by the Federation, has been operating in both South Wollo and northern Borena since it issued the revised appeal in May, 2000. The Appeal had a 74% coverage and enabled the Red Cross to support a population of 77,594 in South Wollo initially with a general food distribution and then through cash transfers based on participation in employment generation schemes (EGS). It also provided supplementary food to 23,278 of the most vulnerable for the May, 2000 to January, 2001 period. Over 26,000 tools were distributed for use on the EGS. 300 metric tons of wheat and barley seeds were distributed to farmers in early February. In addition, the ERCS and Federation undertook an intervention in northern Borena in the two woredas of Odo Shakisso and Adolana Wadera to feed 20,290 people from August to December as well as distributing supplementary food to 5,468 of the most vulnerable within this group. With assistance from the Spanish Red Cross, the ERCS also undertook a three month relief programme from November in northern Borena for 8,000 beneficiaries, and a further intervention in the urban areas in northern Borena in January for 24,960 people with support from private donations. The ERCS has also been running a programme with the American Red Cross in Wollaita in North Omo for six months targeting 20,461 of the most vulnerable with supplementary food.

The total amount of grain and supplementary food distributed by the ERCS through the Federation appeal programme from May to January in South Wollo's woreda's of Kutaber and Ambassel was 5,625 MT and 720 MT respectively, and from August to December in northern Borena was 1,308 MT and 138 MT. Each beneficiary received 12.5 kg of grain per month and the most vulnerable an additional 4.5 kg per month of supplementary food. After September, grain distributions in South Wollo were limited to 20% of the total beneficiary population. Household representatives undertook work on employment generation schemes (EGS) for which they were paid in cash to support 80% of the population.

The cash for work intervention was designed as an innovative approach to satisfying emergency needs of an extremely vulnerable population as well as developing household and community assets for the long term benefit of the area. An assessment of this aspect of the operation will be carried out by the ERCS and the Federation in the next few weeks but early indications are that it has had a positive and valuable impact on the relief and development needs of an impoverished population.

The rationale for such an approach rests upon the premise that in certain situations and specific environments, national or regional food availability is adequate to satisfy the food requirements of the population. However, demand is suppressed because people do not have the purchasing power to access this food supply. Pouring emergency relief food into the area answers immediate needs but can distort rather than support the market, reducing incentives to produce and satisfy demand and, in extreme situations, bloating the market to such an extent that food loses its economic value. Cash transfers can be an extremely useful way of providing to energize the market and revive the engine of recovery, therefore attracting food surpluses and building economic revival.

However, judgment about the timing of such an intervention needs to be exact based on clear information on food availability and the functional nature of the market. Large cash injections might be ruinous to the market producing inflationary implosions. The ERCS and the Federation delayed the cash for work intervention until it was certain that these conditions were satisfied. Weekly market analyses of commodity prices in the two woredas has shown little evidence of inflation despite the transfers of USD 190,000 per month.

Participants in the cash-for-work schemes have considerably more flexibility about spending and saving. Cash is more liquid than food and allows for a regeneration of assets as well as the satisfaction of basic needs. It is well known that relief grain is often sold for low prices at the point of distribution to provide for different household food and other needs. Cash transfers within a stable market can better empower beneficiaries both economically and socially in comparison with food relief.

The further advantage to this approach is that it links relief to development, often with a long-term benefit to the community. Activities have included terracing, construction of check dams, road and

footpath maintenance and other schemes aimed at environmental improvement, soil and water conservation.

The operations conducted by the ERCS in South Wollo and northern Borena have been successful. The nutritional status among the affected population in both areas has improved. The ERCS and Federation plan to cease the operation in northern Borena since the emergency is now over. In South Wollo, however, the Red Cross will focus on Ambassel and cover the emergency needs of the belg population. The DPPC Appeal states that only 4,000 of the belg population are still in need of assistance in Kutaber and, for logistical and administrative reasons, the ERCS and Federation have agreed that this population be covered by DPPC. The main lessons learnt from these operations in 2000 will be applied in South Wollo in the next five months, and the impact will be seen in the improved and better targeted/designed EGS's.

**Other Agencies' Action w**

The UN launched its consolidated appeal for Ethiopia on February 8. This prioritized two main areas for UN humanitarian assistance in 2001: to maintain an adequate level of both food and non-food assistance to populations still in crisis and to support and reinforce the transition from relief to recovery. There is a shift away from general, blanket assistance to more targeted interventions. The total appeal is for USD 203 million for projects in the following sectors: food and logistics, agriculture, health, nutrition, water, education, protection, co-ordination, mine action, shelter, refugees and migration. The food and logistics component alone amounts to USD 125 million.

Other agencies operating in Ethiopia are continuing their emergency relief interventions on a scaled down level. Agencies such as Save the Children, Concern and SOS Sahel also operate in South Wollo but cover different woredas from the Red Cross.

**Co-ordination w**

Though the DPPC is the main implementer of relief interventions in the country, the ERCS, in its constitutional charter, has an explicit mandate to conduct relief interventions. The ERCS is the only other institution in the country with this level of autonomy. Good co-operation exists between the two organizations as demonstrated through the programme undertaken by the ERCS in 2000. The ERCS and Federation attend the regular WFP and other inter- agency meetings.

***The Intended Operation and Plan of Action***

**Assessment of Needs •**

The Red Cross has been operating in Ambassel both through emergency and development programmes for many years. Its knowledge of the communities and their needs is comprehensive. The recent emergency programme in 2000 and a series of assessments including two nutritional surveys in June and December have provided the ERCS/Federation with good information on the vulnerability and capacity of the communities.

**Immediate and Anticipated Later Needs •**

**Needs in the woredas (DPPC figures)**

Woreda	Total Population	Affected Population	Most vulnerable Belg individuals	At risk individuals
Ambassel	126,811	86,000	40,258	12,077

Some 86,000 people are still in need of emergency assistance in Ambassel. The Red Cross will target 40,258 of the 73,000 belg dependent farmers who are in need of emergency assistance -- the group who have suffered from the failure of successive rains and are the most vulnerable.

The nutritional survey conducted in December by a consultant hired by the ERCS and the Federation shows that there is still a global acute malnutrition rate of 20.2% and a severe malnutrition rate of 2% amongst children under five. This compares with baseline study figures from June of 31.3% and 3.7% respectively. The ERCS and the Federation intervention has, therefore, had a positive impact on the nutritional status of the belg dependent people in these two woredas. It also appears to have reduced the level of out migration, morbidity and mortality of the people in the programme operation areas. Rates of diarrhea among the sample of 913 children have declined from 28.5% in June to 10.9% in December.

However, the global malnutrition rate of 20.2% is still very high and justifies continued emergency assistance to this area. The consequences of stopping the programme several months before the mid year harvest would be dramatic and malnutrition rates would rise again. The people here have no other means of support until the belg harvest.

The ERCS and Federation programme will transfer resources in cash and food to the equivalent of 12.5 kg of grain for 40,258 people between February and June. Within this group, there are those who are, particularly, at risk. Dry supplementary feeding will, therefore, be targeted at a sub group of 30% of the belg vulnerable population (12,077) at 4.5 kg. per month. The targeted population consists of:

- Under five children (17%).
- Pregnant women (5%).
- Lactating mothers (5%).
- Elderly and disabled (3%).

From February - June 2001, the operation is a continuation of last year's programme at a slightly reduced scale. The three main objectives of provision of supplementary food to 12,077, bulk food to 8,052 and cash in return for work to support a population of 32,206 will run simultaneously from February to June.

#### **Red Cross Objectives and Related Activities •**

**Objective 1:** To provide 12,077 at risk individuals (pregnant and lactating mothers, children under five and elderly and handicapped persons) with blended, fortified cereal as a nutritional supplement to the staple food from February to June.

This objective will be achieved with the following activities related to supplementary food:

- **Procurement and delivery of commodities:** The supplementary food, FAMIX, will be purchased within Ethiopia from the factory in Addis. The total quantity required is 272 Metric Tons. Transportation will be done at the same time as the bulk food and transporters will be selected through a tendering process.
- **Targeting and distribution:** The ERCS will work closely with the DPPC authorities at the zonal, woreda and kebele levels to monitor the distribution of the supplementary food. Beneficiaries have already been identified through the kebele selection process. The members of the household to receive supplementary food will be registered by the Red Cross volunteers employed in the project who would carry out the distributions. These will be in Wuchali town, 60 km from Dessie. Distribution will be carried out by the Dessie branch with support from ERCS Headquarters.
- **Monitoring:** A second nutritional survey was carried out by the ERCS/Federation in December. This will act as the baseline. A further survey will be conducted in June at the end of the operation. ERCS Headquarters based Disaster Relief Officers will monitor the operation with support from the Federation.
- **Training:** The ERCS will use this opportunity to train volunteers in the Dessie Branch and in the zone in Community Based First Aid. This will strengthen its capacity to carry out community health activities since the programme outreach will allow it better access to the communities.

**Objective 2:** To provide 8,052 vulnerable belg farmers with a general ration of 12.5 kg per person per month from February to June.

This objective will be achieved with the following activities related to bulk food distribution:

- Local procurement of food will be carried out by the ERCS head office. Tenders will be invited from the Ethiopian Grain Trading Enterprise (EGTE), local state and commercial farms and companies which have sufficient stocks at this stage. Consignments will be received in the ERCS central warehouse from where they will be delivered to the warehouses and rubb halls located in Wuchalie. Tendering for transportation of the grain will be carried out by the ERCS/Federation. The ERCS and the Federation have a great deal of experience in this area gained from last year's operation. The total required is 503 MT.

**Objective 3:** To continue employment generation schemes that would provide employment for approximately 10,000 household representatives to support a population of 32,206 who would be paid in cash for their work.

This objective will be achieved with the following activities related to cash for work .

- The main form of intervention will be through employment generation schemes such as terracing, road maintenance, water resource development and environmental sanitation. This will be a continuation of the programme which was run last year.
- Under EGS guidelines issued by the DPPC, only 80% of the households can be represented in employment generation schemes and 20% would need support through gratuitous relief. Each of the 80% of households is represented by one member in the EGS and work a maximum of 15 days in the month for which s/he will be paid enough money to purchase 62.5 kg per month (the general ration of 12.5 kg times 5 household members).
- The EGS co-ordinator recruited last year by the ERCS will be retained until June. He has a liaison and co-ordinating role aimed at ensuring that the EGS are well managed with the full participation of the community, agricultural line ministry and the woreda authorities. He will continue to play an important role in monitoring the implementation of the EGS. Systems have been established for the operation of the cash for work programme. These include forms to be filled in on a weekly and/or monthly basis which will enable the ERCS to follow market commodity prices, to ensure proper design and planning, to keep track of the implementation of each EGS and the names and numbers of people working on them and the money to be paid to each participant. These systems have enabled the ERCS to undertake close monitoring of the operation. This is essential in a situation where the risk of inflation remains constant. The programme has enough flexibility built into it so that it can swap from cash to food if the market is shown to be unable to cope with the monthly injection of cash.
- A study of the impact of the cash for work programme will be carried out in the next few weeks. It will have a wide remit and look at the nuts and bolts of implementation so far as well as probing wider issues such as the impact on the market and household food security as well as the effectiveness and utility of the EGS already carried out. Lessons from this study will be applied during the operation.

#### **Capacity of the National Society •**

The ERCS has a strong Programme Department which reports to senior management. The Director of the Department has overall management of the operation. Within the Department, the ERCS has two very experienced officers within the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Section. They will both be fully involved at all levels of the operation including programme implementation and monitoring.

The ERCS has a well established Branch in Dessie town, the zonal capital of South Wollo. Both the Branch Secretary and the Programme Co-ordinator have been actively involved in the recent relief operations.

The branch has rubbhalls and access to warehouses in Dessie and Wuchalie. It also has two field vehicles which will be used to transport teams of youth volunteers from Dessie who will carry out distributions and conduct end use monitoring. There are over one hundred volunteers involved in the operation.

#### **Present Capacity of the Federation in Ethiopia •**

The Federation has two delegates at present. The Head of Delegation will play a co-ordinating and management role during the operation. Recent experience has demonstrated that there is no need for a relief delegate since the ERCS has sufficient capacity to run the operation. The Federation will continue its role as technical adviser and monitor. The Federation will seek support from the Regional Delegation where appropriate. The Regional Delegation has expertise and delegates in the following areas - Watsan, Health, DP and Information. The ERCS and the Federation will continue to monitor the situation in the country as a whole.

## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

Following a successful drought programme in 2000, the ERCS and the Federation will ensure through this appeal that some 40,000 people continue to receive support to recover from one of the most severe droughts to have hit Ethiopia since the mid-eighties. Donor support last year was timely, and proved crucial to averting a looming disaster of enormous proportions. The basic support requested in this appeal should be met by an equally positive response. A full report on the drought activities implemented during 2000 will be issued shortly.

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**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. 08/2001	
Ethiopia Drought		
TYPE	VALUE	
<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>	<b>IN CHF</b>	
Food - Cereals	418,692	
Teaching materials	12,350	
Utensils & tools	100,000	
EGS cash outlay/Cash for work	805,152	
<b>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</b>		<b>1,336,194</b>
<b><u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u></b>		
Telecom. equipment 7 radios	125,000	
<b><u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u></b>		
Programme management	134,412	
Technical support	38,919	
Professional services	43,161	
<b><u>TRANSPORT STORAGE &amp; VEHICLE COSTS</u></b>	<b>85,299</b>	
<b><u>PERSONNEL</u></b>		
Expatriate staff	14,525	
National staff	69,900	
Training (local staff)	10,400	
<b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</u></b>		
Travel & related expenses	12,000	
Information expenses		
Administrative & general expenses	36,700	
Consultant fees	26,000	
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</b>		<b>596,316</b>
<b>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES</b>		<b>1,932,510</b>
<b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>		
<b>NET REQUEST</b>		<b>1,932,510</b>