

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

ERITREA: DROUGHT

21 April 2005

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 05EA002; Operations Update no. 2; Period covered: 01 March – 20 April 2005; Appeal coverage: 16.2%; ([Click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List, also available on the website.](#))

Appeal history:

- Launched on 28 January 2005 for CHF 5,210,000 (USD 4.38 million or EUR 3.36 million) for 12 months for 55,000 beneficiaries – refer to http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA002.pdf (See also Operations Update no. 1 dated 4 March 2005 - http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?05/05EA0021.pdf)
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: 300,000 CHF.

Outstanding needs: CHF 4,365,781 (USD 3,641,200 or EUR 2,818,500)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Eritrea 2005 Annual Appeal no. 05AA001 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA001.pdf

Operational Summary: The food and water situation in the operational area is increasingly worsening and communities are spending a lot more time collecting water. Meanwhile, the government has reduced food rations to 1400 kcal per person per day.

Funding to this appeal has been slow; very few hard pledges have been received, and there is uncertainty about the soft pledges. Low funding levels forced the Red Cross Society of Eritrea¹ and the Federation to borrow food from the WFP for distribution in Hagaz (19-28 April). Proposals for the water and food security component of the programme have been developed; implementation commenced in villages with critical water needs.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

¹ Red Cross Society of Eritrea – <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=188>

Eritrea Drought; Appeal no. 05EA002; Operations Update no. 2

Background:

The humanitarian situation in Eritrea is grave following five consecutive years of drought. The Red Cross of Eritrea and the Federation have been providing assistance to the drought affected communities since 2002.

This appeal launched on 28 January 2005 focuses on the most affected population of 55,000 inhabitants of Hagaz and other adjacent villages with short term food distribution, rehabilitation and construction of water resources coupled with long term activities in water, food security, dry land farming and improved health practices.

Operational developments

A recent survey by UN-OCHA reports that pastures in Eritrea's three most fertile regions of Anseba, Gash Barka, and Debub were at their driest since 1998. The agricultural-meteorological (agro-met) report of National Food Information System (NFIS) report indicated that the cumulative rainfall received in the Bahari season (October-February) was predominantly below normal. The Red Sea coast (parts of Zoba Southern Red Sea; lowlands of Zoba Northern Red Sea and the eastern escarpments of Northern Red Sea and its borders with zobas Anseba and Maekel received insufficient rain. This adversely affected the development of vegetation and pasture thereby negatively impacting on the livelihoods of many households.

Acute malnutrition affecting up to 15% of children under five has been recorded in four out of the six Zobas of Eritrea (Southern Red Sea, Northern Red Sea, Gash Barka and Anseba) while malnutrition among women reached 30-60%; OCHA attributes the increase in malnutrition in adult females to household food insecurity.

Water shortages have become a major feature following rain failure for five consecutive years which has resulted in the lowering of the water table in many parts of the country; recent surveys reveal a reduction from four to seven meters affecting the access to both protected as well as non protected sources. A large scale water project in Hagaz supported by UNICEF has commenced operations for only few days but later stopped due to technical difficulties mainly due to decreasing ground water level.

In addition to the drought, the protracted stalemate in the boarder dispute with Ethiopia continued to be a significant factor impacting negatively the humanitarian situation in the region.

The UN consolidated appeal process (CAP) has received low pledges forcing for the reduction of food rations to 1,400 Kcals per person per day, two-thirds of the SPHERE standard of 2,100 Kcals. It is reported that the available food stocks will last until mid-2005; immediate response from donors is sought.

Coordination

ERREC assumes overall responsibility for coordinating both government and non-governmental agencies and organizations engaged in the drought relief work. A Red Cross of Eritrea / Federation task force comprised of Red Cross of Eritrea senior staff and the Federation Representative for Eritrea is coordinating the Red Cross intervention. The operation is carried out with technical support from the Federation's regional delegation in Nairobi and while in-country, the national society collaborates with national and international agencies involved in food security, water, sanitation, health and agriculture. This cooperation allows for better information sharing, coordination and operational decisions related to the drought response programme.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

Emergency food and water assistance

Objective 1: To immediately improve livelihood and food security by provision of monthly food distributions to 55,000 people for 8 months.

The Red Cross of Eritrea and the Federation undertook the procurement of six months food ration in mid-February; however, only two months ration could be purchased due to funding constraints. The food is expected to reach port by the end of April.

Given the shortcomings facing the national society, an agreement was reached with ERREC who distributed 60 % food rations to 40,000 beneficiaries in Hagaz sub Zoba comprising wheat, oil and lentil for the months of February and March. The national society then borrowed 578 MT of wheat, 42 MT of lentils from WFP and 33 MT of oil from ERREC for the April distribution; this will be repaid using the consignment expected at the end of April. The actual distribution ran from 19-28 April. Iodized salt has been procured locally in Eritrea and will be included in the distribution.

The Finnish Red Cross has made a soft pledge of a two months in-kind donation of food; procurement will be undertaken in collaboration with the Finnish Red Cross Logistics and the Federation regional logistics department. Once this donation is processed, there should be sufficient food till the end of July.

Objective 2: To improve sustainable livelihood and food security by provision of monthly food distributions to 27,500 people for 4 months depending on crop yields in September 2005.

Implementation of activities under this objective will start in August based on the results of a crop assessment and the availability of funding.

Objective 3: To reduce morbidity and vulnerability to water related diseases by improving access to safe drinking water.

See section below for an assessment by a team from the Swedish Red Cross, the regional delegation and Red Cross of Eritrea staff. Five of nine project areas identified during this assessment were found to have very pressing needs for water: Gizgiza, Felhito, Muruni, Adi Omer and Dembe Aditesgai. A hand pump test has been carried out in Muruni and installation is in process, while two existing non-functioning boreholes in Adi Omer have been rehabilitated.

Three boreholes in Hashishay were also rehabilitated; two had their hand pumps repaired and the other installed with a new hand pump. In Gizgiza two boreholes were rehabilitated while work is in progress in the third. Work is ongoing in the other villages of Felhito, Muruni and Dembe Adi Tsegai.

Although the communities in Enchinac have dug very deep wells, the underground water is very low with very low yield and it is taking very long to even obtain a litre of water. The assessment team suggested immediate water trucking to alleviate the situation. However, this has not commenced due to low funding. Water trucking was also planned for Shebek, Adi Omer, and Adi Arey; however, the rehabilitation of the existing non functioning wells by the Red Cross of Eritrea is expected to partly solve the water problem in the short term.

Impact

The rehabilitated water points in Adi Omer are now operational with an increased water yield benefiting 600 people and 400 animals. Previously the communities had to draw water from some river pits far from their village. Work undertaken in Hashishay will see 15 villages or 10,000 people benefit from access to safe water and minimize congestion in the few water points that were functioning.

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Medium-term food security, sustainable livelihoods and integrated health

Objective 1: To increase medium term food security through distribution of seeds and farming tools to 10,000 households.

The procurement of seeds and farming tools has not commenced due to lack of funding.

Objective 2: Promote food security through the improvement of farming practices.

See section below for an assessment by a team from the Swedish Red Cross, the regional delegation, the ministries of agriculture and water, and Red Cross of Eritrea staff. One outcome of the assessment is a proposal to enhance agricultural production through the promotion of the pitting technique, designing in-situ water harvesting systems and supplemental irrigation systems. This drought/dry-spell mitigating strategy will have a risk reducing effect on the production systems and promote food security and a more resilient society. The activities in the proposal include training farmers in pitting techniques for improved seed-bed creation, in-situ water harvesting techniques such as ridging, and farmer to farmer exchange sessions between villages through participatory activities.

Construction of dams and an irrigation system for supplemental water harvesting in Hashishay are also additional long term activities linked with the longer term development activities of the Red Cross of Eritrea. The promotion and mobilisation will be done in collaboration with extension services of the ministry of agriculture.

Constraints

These activities could not commence as planned due to the unavailability of a consultant from the Swedish Red Cross.

Objective 3: To reduce morbidity and vulnerability to water related diseases by improving access to safe drinking water.

An assessment team undertook a 10-day general and detailed geological survey to assess areas of priority and to design water projects. Following the result of the assessment, nine villages were identified for short, medium and long term intervention. This included rehabilitation of existing non-functioning water points, construction of new ones, and the construction of dams, check dams and catchments areas. Eleven water project proposals were subsequently developed as outlined in the table below.

The assessment team comprised two water and agriculture experts from Swedish Red Cross, the regional water and sanitation (WatSan) officer for hardware, a local water consultant, representatives from the ministries of agriculture and water respectively and the Red Cross of Eritrea WatSan officer.

Villages/project name	Beneficiaries	Planned Activities	Remarks
Felhito and Karwat	500 people	§ Maintenance of existing borehole.	
Adi Omer	600 people and 400 heads of livestock	§ Maintenance of existing borehole (pumping system)	
Enchinak	4200 people	<u>Immediate</u> § Water trucking § Rehabilitation of hand pump <u>Long term</u> § Sub-surface dams and check dams	Three villages (Enchinak, Gedena and Lanshia) Ground water level is extremely low.
Dembe Adi Tsegai	500 people	§ Construction of water chamber § Assess whether rehabilitation of solar system or installation of hand pump is feasible based on water yield.	

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Villages/project name	Beneficiaries	Planned Activities	Remarks
Muruni river*	1500 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Install Solar pump and solar panel, § Public tap for human consumption § River bank construction § Modify reservoir 	* includes Dembe Adi Tsegai, Dembe Adi Tesfu, Guldmit, Dembe Zeratzion.
Gizgiza	3550 people	<p>Immediate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Completion of existing Hand dug well § Rehabilitation of 2 existing bore holes. <p>Long term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Construction of check and sub-surface dams § Rehabilitating existing pond 	Eight villages to benefit.
Firdigi	1115 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Series of check dams 	
Hagaz Check dam	10 sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Construction of check dams. 	
Hashisay	10,000 people	<p>Short term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Enhancing ground water recharge and repair and replace hand pumps (rehabilitation of three boreholes) <p>Middle term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Upgrading and improving piped water supply system <p>Long term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Construction of dam with 40,000 m³ storage capacity § Construction of an irrigation system supporting a minimum of 20 ha of agricultural land § Training of farmers through participatory method to promote agricultural production 	Three administrative areas, (15 villages)

Given the current low level of funding, priority was given to the most urgent projects in the villages deemed to be most at need.

Objective 4: To improve the health status of targeted communities through Community Based First Aid (CBFA), Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation (PHAST) and provision of basic sanitation installations

It is still too early to report on this objective since field activities started only on 19 April.

Objective 5: To improve household economy and reduce environmental degradation through the provision of fuel efficient stoves.

Activities related to this objective will be started together with health promotion activities once funds are secured.

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Advocacy and Public information

Objective 1: To ensure that the needs and rights of the most vulnerable in relation to the drought situation are secured.

The Red Cross of Eritrea and the Federation Representative have held talks with local film makers in view of preparing a video showing the impact of the drought on the people of Hagaz sub-zoba. A documentary movie script and a draft film have been prepared and sent to the regional information unit for comment.

A visiting team of students from Swedish Folk High school in Sweden took still photos in Hagaz; these will be exhibited to highlight the impact of the drought. The team also undertook interviews with some of the affected communities to be used for a radio broadcast.

In view of the lengthy procurement process, the Red Cross of Eritrea and Federation approached the ERREC to ensure that the February and March distributions were undertaken by the ERREC as the Red Cross was unable to meet its commitment to the most vulnerable due to the limited response to the international appeal.

Objective 2: To promote the Movement's Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values in the intervention area.

This activity will be started together with food distribution, water and sanitation projects and agricultural tools and seeds distribution.

Capacity Building

Objective 1: To build the response and operational capacity of the National Society at headquarters and branch level.

No progress has been made under this objective due to lack of funding. The Federation representative continually provides technical support on the general implementation of the operation as well as advocacy and communication with partners.

[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)

Eritrea - drought

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA002

PLEDGES RECEIVED

03/05/2005

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->					TOTAL COVERAGE	
					5,210,000	16.2%
JAPANESE - RC		144,500	USD	163,574	14.02.05	
MONACO - RC		20,000	EUR	30,970	27.01.05	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		2,750,000	NOK	512,875	28.02.05	
SWEDISH - GOVT		800,000	SEK	136,800	31.01.05	TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT, PLANNING MISSION
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				844,219	CHF	16.2%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES						
				0	CHF	0.0%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED						
				0	CHF	