

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

BURKINA FASO, MALI, MAURITANIA AND NIGER: FOOD INSECURITY

10 July 2006

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 183 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. 05EA015; Operations Update no. 6; Period covered: 1 April to 23 June 2006; Appeal coverage: 76%; [Click here to go directly to the attached Contributions List](#)

Appeal History:

- Emergency Appeal launched on 22 July 2005 for CHF 18,243,483 (USD 14,211,607 or EUR 11,642,754) in cash, kind or services to assist 44,400 households (220,000 beneficiaries) in four countries¹ for six months (until 22 January 2006) <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/05/05EA015.pdf>
- A Revised Plan of Action of 7 August 2005 specified assistance to 76,571 households (532,000 beneficiaries) over the next six month period.
- Operation Update no. 1 dated 27 August 2005 – <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/05/05EA01501.pdf>
- Operation Update no. 2 dated 25 October 2005 – <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/05/05EA01502.pdf>
- Operation Update no. 3 dated 8 December 2005 – <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/05/05EA01503.pdf>
- Operation Update no. 4 dated 9 February 2006 – <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/05/05EA01504.pdf> provided a six-month Supplementary Plan of Action and extended the Appeal timeframe until 23 July 2006.
- Operation Update no. 5 dated 13 April 2006 – <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/05/05EA01505.pdf> increased the Appeal budget to CHF 31,242,371 (USD 24,051,094 or EUR 19,798,714).
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated CHF 280,000. Funds have been reimbursed.

Outstanding Needs: CHF 12,310,476 (USD 9,476,887 or EUR 7,801,316)

Operational summary: Food distributions that began in autumn and winter of 2005 in Mali and Burkina Faso are now complete. Interventions in Mali were completed in February and those in Burkina Faso during April 2006. Federation supplementary feeding activities that began August 2005 have been integrated into governmental community-health centres. The current Federation health-nutrition strategy, centred at Tahoua, is focused on community education and training of health volunteers and staff rather than direct intervention through services.

The monitoring of food security conditions at Filingue-Abala and Tanout, and continued evaluation of the impact of the cash distribution in Tanout during October and November 2005, is ongoing. In order to improve longer-term food security prospects, the implementation food-for-work project at Filingue-Abala is continuing.

¹ For more about the national societies responding to this crisis, please click on links below:

Red Cross Society of Niger – <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=127>

Mauritanian Red Crescent – <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=114>

Mali Red Cross – <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=112>

Burkinabe Red Cross Society – <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/cn6.asp?countryid=181>

Regarding general food security conditions, the picture is a rather mixed one. Malnutrition persists in a number of locations along with the cumulative effects of hardship as a result of the lean seasons, locust invasions and drought of the previous years. Lack of agricultural and economic opportunities and the more structural health and nutritional problems also persist in Niger.

Training and mapping, as part of water and sanitation (WatSan) activities is continuing although most construction efforts for wells and latrines are on hold until September due to the onset of the rainy season in Niger. Training in procedures and systems management through the Sahel operation Logistics Department has been completed at a number of locations throughout Niger and another session is scheduled to be held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, as part of a more regionally-oriented effort. Logisticians from West African countries outside the Sahel region will also be taking part in the training. As regards the Appeal Extension objectives, the installation of IT/telecoms equipment is continuing in Mauritania. As with other programmes, the aim of current logistics and IT/telecoms efforts is to strengthen the capacities of national societies of the Sahel region so that they can autonomously respond to crises in the future.

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This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- **Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.**
- **Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.**
- **Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.**
- **Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.**

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>

Background

The crisis in the Sahel region became most evident in 2005, and can be largely attributed to a combination of structural and seasonal factors heightened by the worst locust invasion in twenty years and compounded by drought. Each year households endure the 'lean season' when food availability and household stocks become limited during the months leading up to the next harvest. Any additional environmental or economic factors that negatively disrupt access to food can therefore quickly overwhelm household coping strategies. The vulnerability of households already facing great challenges to ensure their survival is complicated by limited access to clean water and a lack of adequate health care – often not available in rural or isolated communities and too costly for people to access. At the same time, a general lack of awareness regarding health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation increases vulnerability to malnutrition and food insecurity, particularly among infants and children.

In Niger, despite estimations that the harvest of 2005 was 'normal', there were indications that not all areas would benefit equally and cases of increased food insecurity could re-emerge during the lean season, or during the transition to 2006. Serious concerns for the longer-term impact of the recent crisis remained, given that the livelihoods of many had been eroded. People had liquidated assets, notably livestock, and incurred significant debts in spite of assistance received in recent months and the previous year.

The Federation Emergency Appeal, launched on 22 July 2005, was oriented towards addressing immediate and longer-term needs in the Sahel region. Key programme sectors included relief (in form of general food and cash distribution) as well as health (through the provision of supplementary feeding for moderately malnourished children, with rations made available to their families). Complementary activities included the development of an administrative, telecommunications and logistics structure incorporating the Federation/Norwegian Red Cross Transport Support Unit (TSU). Managed in cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP), the TSU provided trucking services to the wider community in Niger. In order to achieve its programme goals, to promote human resource capacity building and to share expertise, the Federation also trained and supported a vast number of Red Cross volunteers and regional disaster response team (RDRT) members from various African national societies.

Operational developments

The overall response by national and international actors during the previous year was remarkable to a certain extent; it only tackled the most obvious aspects of an acute crisis resulting from multiple factors. As the emergency response progressed during the summer and autumn of 2005, the more structurally-oriented problems of the crisis, (most notably in Niger), became obvious to the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement.

With a need to continue certain interventions, to launch new activities and to pursue monitoring of the ongoing situation in the Sahel region, the Federation revised its Appeal and extended it on 9 February 2006. By continuing the work it began in July 2005, the Federation has been aiming to address the roots of humanitarian challenges in Niger and the Sahel region so as to mitigate and ideally prevent the emergence of acute crisis conditions in 2006.

As its main programme effort, in cooperation with the Red Cross Society of Niger, the Federation has been reinforcing the capacities of community-regional health structures so they can be more competent in addressing the needs of their people in the future. As a complementary action, the Federation/ Red Cross Society of Niger Mobile Health Teams (MHTs) are delivering basic services to remote communities. By making health consultations available, providing vaccinations and education regarding hygiene and nutrition, help can be given to those who do not typically benefit from the presence of such services in their community or cannot readily access them elsewhere. As a result, the likelihood that another health crisis will brew 'behind closed doors' in targeted communities, only to become evident when people migrate in overwhelming numbers to distant health facilities, as they did during 2005, can be lessened.

Current efforts in the health sector also serve as a good example of the transition from relief work to recovery and more developmental or structurally-oriented programmes. Food-for-work activities that have been underway since the beginning of the year are similar in nature. Based in the areas where general distributions were conducted during 2005, food-for-work projects are a means of providing additional but limited, direct food assistance, but with the implementation of water reservoirs, wells, soil recuperation and tree planting, they can provide wider and longer-term benefits to the targeted communities.

Financial support is still greatly needed for 'forgotten emergencies' in Africa or more precisely, the periods that end up lying between times of crisis. Undoubtedly, there is a lean season each year in the Sahel region but more recently, due to a variety of factors, the ability to cope by many households has been stretched to the limit or eroded. In spite of assistance received last year and even a good harvest at some locations, the state of many people remains fragile. Any stress in the weeks or months ahead can quickly have an overwhelming negative impact. By providing support now, as an evolution of its initial emergency response, the Federation is seeking to encourage a more positive set of circumstances in Niger and the Sahel region.

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

Goal: Provide support to the affected Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies in order to decrease and further prevent vulnerability to food insecurity and malnutrition by immediately responding in the form of livelihood interventions for 76,571 households (536,000 beneficiaries) over a six-month period [as per the Revised Plan of Action of 7 August 2005].

Specific objective 1 (Relief - general food distributions): Distribute a monthly general food ration to 76,571 households (536,000 people) in Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

Progress/Achievements

SO1a, Burkina Faso – Food distributions in the Northern provinces of Burkina Faso were completed by the end of April 2006.

As a result of a field visit to Yatenga, Loroum and Soum provinces undertaken by the Federation, the Burkinabe Red Cross Society and the Luxembourg Red Cross at the beginning of December 2005, it was found that northern regions continued to be affected by the recent drought as well as attacks by caterpillars and seed-eating birds. In some areas, it was predicted that food stocks would last only two months and some producers were already eating the new crop while harvesting.

The December 2005 assessment mission concluded that distributions needed to be continued – most notably in Oudalan, Soum, Yatenga, Loroum, Soum and Oudalan Provinces – to target cases of ongoing food insecurity. Beneficiaries were selected according to the following criteria:

- Vulnerable households that included seniors, the people with disabilities, those with more than five individuals, orphans or female-headed households;
- Households with low harvest stocks, production entailing less than two-months supply;
- Households suffering from irregular feeding, done every two days or mainly composed of wild leaves.

As a result, a supplementary round of distributions took place at Soum, Oudalan and Yatenga. The distributions targeted 19 sites and 8,984 households with approximately 998MT of foodstuffs. The table below shows the forecasting of the distributions.

Table 1: Forecasts of food distributions in Burkina Faso

Province	Number of Sites	Targeted Households	Distribution Time (days)	Foodstuff Total (MT)
Oudalan	6	3,214	28	357
Soum	8	1,712	15	190
Yatenga	5	4,058	22	451
Total	19	8,984	65	998

Rations were composed of 70kg millet, 20kg rice, 15kg niebe and 6ltr vegetable oil per household in Oudalan Province; 60kg millet or sorghum, 30kg rice, 15kg niebe and 6ltr oil in Soum and Yatenga provinces. Distribution teams consisted of 19 Burkinabe Red Cross Society volunteers and a supervisor.

Distributions were organized jointly with the Burkinabe Red Cross Society and the Luxembourg Red Cross. The Federation sent 333.5MT of foodstuffs (239MT sorghum, 21MT rice and 73.5 MT beans) from stocks in Niger to Burkina Faso. In addition, the Federation purchased 54.6ltr of vegetable oil while other food items were part of the contribution of the Burkinabe Red Cross Society and the Luxembourg Red Cross.

SO1b, Mali – Due to a lack of human resources, no Federation delegates are currently based in Mali.

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In the previous months, food distributions in the Timbuktu region of Mali ended up constituting three activity strands:

- SO1b consisted of a partnership between the Mali Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross and the Federation;
- SO1bb reflected efforts conducted through the Mali Red Cross and the Swiss Red Cross;
- SO1bbb was a partnership arranged between the Mali Red Cross and WFP with the involvement of the Federation.

SO1b, Mali: 25 Red Cross volunteers were trained through two modules; one about Movement Principles, the Code of Conduct and the role and responsibilities of the Red Cross/Red Crescent within an operational context. The second training module focused on the technical aspects of distributions such as monitoring, distribution, telecoms and reporting.

SO1bb, Mali: No details to report at the present time.

SO1bbb, Mali: The Mali Red Cross distributions, with commodities provided by WFP, assisted 41,413 children between ages of 5 and 59 months with the provision of 1,491MT of food. An additional 329MT of food was made available to 10,226 children between the ages of 5 and 59 months by the Mali Red Cross, supported directly by the Federation.

Four distribution rounds were planned over 120 days and took place at 104 sites among 14 communes in Timbuktu, Goundam and Gourma-Rharous targeting 10,226 children, of which 4,036 were female. Rations were composed of 250g enriched flour (CSB), 30g oil and 20g sugar per child per day. In order to achieve their objective, the Mali Red Cross and the Federation trained 20 volunteers, organized in 5 distribution groups. The table below shows results of the three distributions. The intended fourth distribution has not been undertaken but planned distribution amounts have been listed.

Table 2: Breakdown of the first to fourth rounds of distributions in Mali

Locations	No of beneficiaries	1 st round (MT)			2 nd round (MT)			3 rd round (MT)**	4 th round (MT)**
		CSB	Oil	Sugar	CSB	Oil	Sugar	CSB	CSB
Timbuktu	6,384	31.920	3.830	2.554	38.304	4.596	3.064	79.800	41.496
Goundam	2,329	11.645	1.397	0.932	13.974	1.677	1.118	29.113	15.139
Gourma	1,513	7.565	0.908	0.605	9.078	1.089	0.726	18.913	9.835
Total	10,226	51.130	6.135	4.091	61.356	7.362	4.908	127.826	66.470

** Due to a lack of goods in its pipeline, WFP stopped the distribution of oil and sugar.

In addition to the distributions, the ‘food for work’ and ‘food-for-training’ programmes were implemented in the end of November 2005. ‘Food-for-work’ and ‘food-for-training’ distributions were made at the beginning and the end of the work or training periods, and they aimed at protecting the child rations already distributed.

Among the food-for-work projects were dike construction, reforestation, water pipe construction, irrigation, warehouse construction and market gardening. Food-for-training projects were mainly oriented toward HIV/AIDS sensitization, illiteracy elimination and nutrition education. Beneficiaries received 2kg cereals and 75g oil per day when participating in a food-for-work project and 1.2kg cereals and 45g oil per day when participating in a training session. The table below shows distribution results of the food-for-work and food-for-training activities.

Table 3: Food-for-work activities in Mali

Locations	No. of beneficiaries	Food-for-work/formation	
		Cereals (MT)	Oil (MT)
Timbuktu	6,384	61.650	2.304
Goundam	2,966	30.000	1.129
Gourma	1,520	14.600	0.548
Total	10,870	106.250	3.941

SO1c, Mauritania: To date, no general food distribution activities have been undertaken in Mauritania. However, the Federation is discussing prospects for food or seed distributions with the regional delegation in Dakar, due to more recent needs and demands in the country. A possible intervention could form part of the Sahel operation or be an effort undertaken more separately by the regional delegation in Dakar.

As an ad hoc measure beginning in the previous year, the Federation provided financial support to assist the Mauritanian Red Crescent in its response to a cholera outbreak. Sensitization activities of on diarrhoea diseases were conducted in schools at Nouakchott and Rosso started from December 2005, as a continuation of efforts done by the national society together with the French Red Cross.

SO1d, Niger: Activity closed.

Impact: In Burkina Faso, 8,984 households, reflecting 44,920 beneficiaries and 21,096 beneficiaries in Mali have benefited from food distributions plus food-for-work and training.

In all regions, there was a valued participation of the national society volunteers, who had been trained in relief procedures at the start of the operations. The positive effect of training and field experience has become apparent in the improvement of functions between the different rounds of distributions.

Constraints:

- Goods that needed to pass through the Niger customs clearance delayed the implementation of food distributions in Burkina Faso. Six trucks were sent from Niger to Burkina Faso, taking four days for customs clearance per truck.
- The duration of distributions in Mali was prolonged due to difficulties in the identification of children, as many had similar names.
- Distributions for nomadic populations are generally a challenge due to their migration habits.
- Transport was challenging as some villages in Mali are not reachable by road, and hence, 'pinasses' or motorized pirogues were rented. Unfortunately, pinasses cannot ensure a fully secure transportation since some goods may become wet and unusable and others can be lost overboard.
- Telecommunications were improving during the time of the distributions, but still insufficient to cover all programme activities. Satellite phones, radio HF equipment and GPS equipment could not be made available in spite of requisitions received at the main office of the Sahel operation in Niamey, Niger. Moreover, as the majority of distribution vehicles were rented, no radio equipment could be installed in the vehicles.

Specific objective 2: (Health –supplementary feeding): Provide basic health services through emergency supplementary feeding for targeted vulnerable children aged under five years, to a total population of 24,500 in Niger.

Progress/Achievements

Supplementary feeding activities formed a significant part of the Federation Emergency Appeal for the Sahel region launched in 22 July 2005. By mid January 2006, 48,525 moderately malnourished children had been treated through the Red Cross/Red Crescent supplementary feeding centres at Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder, Agadez-Arlit and Tanout. With their families also receiving protection rations, the total number of beneficiaries stood at 291,150. Activities conducted through the supplementary feeding centres were implemented by the Federation and the national societies of France, Qatar and Spain.

By the close of September 2005, the government of Niger had a new protocol in place, establishing its responsibility for the nutritional situation in the country. By that time, the Federation was questioning the merits of a 'parallel system' of a supplementary feeding being conducted by the international humanitarian community as a long-term venture. It became clear that the Federation, in partnership with the Red Cross Society of Niger needed to assist regional authorities in making their health centre personnel more tangibly responsible for the management of malnutrition.

Despite the Federation supplementary feeding centres being closed or integrated into community-regional structures, due to the passing of acute crisis conditions at Tahoua, some supplementary feeding still persists, but it is under the stewardship of governmental authorities, and is only supported by the Federation through training,

education and a limited commodity provision. To date, the 15 targeted community-regional health (CSI²) structures have achieved all their transfers of activities. Stocks of supplementary food (UNIMIX and oil) have been provided and positioned at each CSI and 60 health agents have been trained in malnutrition screening and treatment, mother and child health as well as stock management. To date, 3,648 moderate malnourished children aged under five years have been detected. As part of a rotation staff system, 15 volunteers from the Red Cross Society of Niger have been trained to support the CSI.

In Maradi, the Spanish Red Cross has finished the transfer of its supplementary activities to Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)-France. In turn, MSF-France is conducting training and pursuing the reinforcement of capacities within community-regional health structures. Thus, the Spanish Red cross is no longer directly involved in supplementary feeding and instead, focuses its efforts on community health education among other activities.

The French Red Cross has taken over areas previously covered by MSF-Belgium to pursue supplementary feeding for moderate and severely malnourished children. The French Red Cross monitors 16 supplementary feeding centres for moderate malnutrition (CRENAM³) and 6 supplementary feeding centres for severe malnutrition (CRENAS⁴) in Zinder region. The French Red Cross has treated 2,778 children in their CRENAM and 265 in the CRENAS since the beginning of the activity. In Agadez, the French Red Cross has started a consolidated plan of action (PoA) to monitor and integrate the intensive supplementary feeding centre (CRENI⁵), CRENAS and CRENAM into governmental health structures - 18 community-regional health centres are involved in the project.

The Qatar Red Crescent closed its supplementary feeding activities by the end of 2005. However, it continues to work in health education through the training of midwives while also planning to concentrate on WatSan activities in the Zinder and Tanout Regions.

Impact: According to the Niger government protocol on malnutrition, health agents are supposed to undertake malnutrition screening and treatment. With support from the Federation and the Red Cross Society of Niger, training, materials and technical support is being provided. So far, 60 health agents, 30 general staff and 40 Red Cross Society of Niger are capable of dealing with supplementary feeding activities.

Constraints: In general, development and management of a supplementary feeding programme demands a high level of staff expertise, technical support and oversight. The Federation was fortunate to have such inputs in place in the early stages of its supplementary feeding programme. As described in the Federation Emergency Appeal of 22 July 2005, this supplementary feeding programme is now closed.

Specific objective 3 (relief – cash distribution): As per the Revised Plan of Action of 7 August 2005, a cash distribution was foreseen targeting 20,000 beneficiaries, or 4,000 households, to communities in Niger and Mali.

Progress/Achievements

SO3a, Mali: Activity closed.

SO3b, Niger: Cash distribution monitoring and evaluation regime

With the completion of the distribution of cash at Tanout in November 2005, a monitoring regime followed, consisting of three phases.

Phase 1 was implemented from 19 November to 6 December 2005, and consisted of baseline data collection. A total of 14 villages, including one pastoral settlement area, were targeted. Survey instruments were used for key informant discussions, male/female focus group discussions (FGDs) and household surveys. Global positioning

² Centre de Santé Intégré

³ CRENAM : Centre de Récupération Nutritionnel Ambulatoire pour la Malnutrition Modérée.

⁴ CRENAS: Centre de Récupération Nutritionnel Ambulatoire pour la Malnutrition Sévère.

⁵ CRENI: Centre de Récupération Nutritionnel Intensif.

system (GPS) devices were used to locate and record the coordinates of each household. Market surveys were conducted in the region to determine the price of common goods and monitor price fluctuations following the cash distributions. A report of baseline findings is available from the Federation Office at Niamey, Niger, on request.

Phase 2 was undertaken in January 2006. In this period, the monitoring team returned to the sample villages to repeat parts of the household survey and FGDs, so as to assess the short-term use and effects of the cash distribution. Additionally, a specialized team collected anthropometric measurements of children aged between 6 months and 5 years in each of the sample and control villages, so as to monitor the effects of cash distribution on malnutrition rates. A report of baseline findings is available from the Federation Office at Niamey, Niger, on request.

Phase 3 began in 15 April 2006, and consisted of data collection to measure the overall impact of the cash distribution project, six months after completion. Quantitative and qualitative data was again collected, using the same household survey and focus group instruments used during Phase 1. A third report from the monitoring team is expected in July 2006.

According to the second phase of data collection, the villages that received cash assistance reported positive changes in the general status of their population. The main uses of the cash received included:

- Purchase of household food stocks, primarily cereals, and supply of cereal banks (84.5 %);
- Purchase of livestock and sale of land to facilitate reproduction (66.4%);
- Purchase of carts to facilitate water transport within the village and transport to the health centre;
- Purchase of clothing, particularly for children (79.4%);
- Purchase of medicine including aspirin, chloroquine, cotrim, paracetamol, flagil, eye cream among others;
- Community projects such as classrooms, housing for local government workers (teachers and health workers), mosques and rehabilitation/maintenance of wells or other water sources (46.1%);
- Assistance to local populations or neighbouring communities that did not receive cash assistance;
- Repayment of debts/loans (49.8%).

In general, the dry conditions of last year resulted in negative consequences for all the surveyed villages. The most common outcomes included an insufficient harvest, lack of available grazing land for animals and few seeds for planting. As a result of the drought, price increase for staple goods led to an overall rise in food shortages at the household level. Additional consequences included the loss of livestock due to disease and migration of some pastoral communities to more secure locations for their animals. In many villages, seasonal migration by at least one household member was also noted as a means of subsisting due to hardship brought on by the dry climate.

With regards to the health situation, the most common illnesses around Tanout include conjunctivitis, trachoma, diarrhoea, dysentery, respiratory infections (colds and whooping cough), vision problems, urinary difficulties, skin infections, scabies, goiter and malnutrition among children. Maternal and child health issues including childbirth complications and childhood diseases (measles and meningitis) were raised as concerns, particularly by female survey participants.

The most frequent challenge brought up during the survey discussion groups is lack of schools. In many villages, most of the people are illiterate. In villages where schools are present, there is a need for supplies and teachers. In general, communities would like to see an overall improvement in the education infrastructure for their children.

Pastoralists in the Tanout region endure the greatest difficulties with respect to their livestock, as their livelihood depends on it. As a result of the drought, many animals were lost to various illnesses including pneumonia and fever. Because of the limited number of animals and a high prevalence of disease during the crisis, animals were sold at very low prices and the returns could not cover the high cost of grains (up to 1250 per tia of millet). Thus, people living off the sale of their animals did not receive enough money to purchase needed items. Another complicating issue is the lack of veterinary services or animal health banks to treat animals when needed.

The issue of water, both in quantity and quality, was presented as a high concern among the majority of discussion participants during the cash distribution monitoring. Problems with water include the poor and diminishing state of wells which are often traditional in construction and need improvement. For those villages that have alternative

systems such as pumps, they are often broken and difficult to maintain. In addition, each water source is often used by multiple populations, from surrounding villages and pastoral groups who settle in the region. In the village of Guiniya Alhazaye, for example, the population walks 7 km to Kélé Kélé for water due to the absence of a well in their own village. Similarly, the semi-nomadic population of Dareram travels 10 km to Adjiri for water. Use of supplies becomes even more difficult during the dry season when water is scarce, forcing populations to travel to neighbouring villages. As a consequence, many women raised concerns about poor hygiene status attributed to the lack of access to water.

In contrast to communities that received cash assistance, control villages continue to live in more difficult situations. For example, the 2005 harvest in the control village of Dareram was not very good and the community is suffering already from a generalized food shortage. The main issues presented by these control communities include: insufficient harvest, loss of livestock, increase in price of staple food items, hunger, seasonal migration and illnesses linked to the lack of a proper diet as well as malnutrition among children.

Though many of these problems are similar among beneficiary and non-beneficiary communities, control communities stated that their situation has not changed since last year as no assistance was received during the crisis of 2005. A copy of the report for Phase 2 monitoring of the cash distribution at Tanout is available from the Federation at Niamey, Niger, on request.

SO3b, Niger: cereal bank pilot project

As per results of the cash distribution monitoring regime, it became evident that cereal banks might be a means of further assisting people in the region. Preliminary investigations suggested that more than 50 villages could benefit from cereal banks as a means of enhancing their longer-term food security.

Since there was a general reluctance by the Federation to pursue the implementation of cereal banks, it was felt that further studies regarding the potential effort was needed to complement the cash distribution monitoring regime. In response, the British Red Cross and the University of Arizona (who are key players in the development and stewarding of the monitoring regime) agreed to provide staff for additional research and a possible implementation of cereal banks should their appropriateness be confirmed.

A project manager from the British Red Cross arrived in Niger to develop the cereal bank pilot project along with academic staff from the University of Arizona. In addition to the funding provided by the British Red Cross, the Federation agreed to provide logistics support for the research and implementation phases of the pilot project. The following criteria were used to select beneficiary villages:

- Cash distribution villages;
- Agricultural villages: cereal bank experiences in pastoral areas had been deemed as unsuccessful;
- Official demand at the préfecture;
- 'Deficit villages' according to governmental lists of 2004;
- Villages must accept to give a place for the bank and participate in construction by providing sand, gravel, water and a workforce.

A total of 21 cereal banks in 30 potential sites have been constructed in villages around Tanout. The rationale in building cereal banks using cement bricks, concrete and steel, instead of local traditional materials, was based on research done (reflecting the use of both types of products) with an important factor being the reduction of overhead costs which contributes to longer-term sustainability.

Village land was identified sites were confirmed by the GPS and official documents signed by village chiefs who authorized the allocation of land. 21 village committees for cereal bank management were created and a three-day management training was conducted. Several items including tables, chairs, notebooks, pens and cleaning products for the cereal banks were provided.

Impact

The cereal bank pilot project was realized in 21 villages in the department of Tanout: at Wala Kanta, Akourki, Anekar, Tiguirri, Fay Fado, Guidan Badata, Farak, Guiniya Alnazaye, Afalawas, Sourouto, Kassale, Tegime, Akoulma, Dan Gao, Gangazar, Manamaoua, Mai Magaria, Dan Kade, Maroki, Garagoumsa, Kouna Daga).. This represents a total of 21,663 inhabitants.

For every cereal bank, 12 pallets and 10MT of rice were transported and provided through the Sahel operation logistics department. At present, cereal banks are managed by the Red Cross Society of Niger. However, during an opening ceremony, management will be handed over to the villages committees. In addition, six cereal banks were built as an extension for a local office of the Red Cross Society of Niger.

Constraints

- Delays were encountered in cement delivery due to product shortage and transport difficulties.
- As cereal banks were only implemented in cash distribution villages and agricultural areas, it was anticipated that surrounding villages and those from nomadic areas might be jealous of the intervention.

Specific objective 4 (Logistics, administration and telecoms): Immediately augment the existing Red Cross and Red Crescent NSs with logistical, administrative and telecommunications infrastructure in the four different countries of the Sahel operation.

Logistics

SO4a, Burkina Faso: For the distributions that were undertaken in Burkina Faso, 333.5MT of rice, sorghum and oil were transported from the Red Cross Society of Niger /Federation/TSU warehouse in Niamey to the various distribution sites. Two Federation logisticians were dispatched from Niger to support the Federation's relief delegate and the Burkinabe Red Cross Society to complete the distributions and assess NS capacities.

SO4b, Mali: An informal assessment of logistics capacities of the Mali Red Cross was done by a Sahel operation logistician from the Federation, in parallel with a recent nutrition evaluation. Results were shared with the regional delegation logistics department in Dakar.

SO4c, Mauritania: No activities to report during this period.

SO4d, Niger: In Filingue-Abala, as part of food-for-work activities, a sub-office and warehouse were temporarily established at Abala. Ten TSU trucks were dispatched as part of the food-for-work effort, and a stock of 200MT of cereals was put in place. Due to poor road conditions, TSU trucks require frequent maintenance and repairs which can sometimes delay project implementation.

As part of the ongoing health-nutrition activities at Tahoua, 140MT of UNIMX have been ordered. To complement the health-nutrition programme efforts, the Sahel operation logistics team has provided training on warehousing to health agents who will receive UNIMIX from the Federation. To facilitate overall logistics management, a logistics counterpart from Red Cross Society of Society of has been identified in Tahoua to ensure that Federation stocks can be pre-positioned into sub-halls.

Logistics training in Niamey has been completed. Similar training (for about 10 people per session for 3 days) is also being undertaken in Zinder, Agadez, Tillabery, Tahoua and Maradi. The warehouse and compound of the Red Cross Society of Niger has also been renovated to include a new entry zone, an improved grading to protect the area against ground water and rains as well as new roofing.

During the last three months, TSU trucks transported an average of 1,500MT each month. Apart from supporting the Federation and other Red Cross/Red Crescent activities, the TSU supports the WFP cooperating partners such as Action against Hunger (ACF⁶), CONCERN and Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) through 'cluster deployments' of 2 to 10 trucks. TSU operational hubs are based in Tahoua and Maradi with approximately 20 trucks in each location - 30 trucks remain in Niamey. The main constraint for TSU operationalization is lack of fuel and supply of spare-parts.

The Federation Sahel operation fleet is in the midst of scaling down: four Land Cruisers have been sold, six more will be sold in the weeks ahead. The handover of vehicles to the PNSs will be achieved by the end of the current Appeal Extension. Technical support to PNSs has also been a main occupation of the logistics department. The Sahel operation logistics team is planning to handover responsibilities to the NSs to encourage autonomous

⁶ In French: Action Contre la Faim.

responses to humanitarian demands. With the NSs of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger being provided with emergency stocks and training through the Federation, it is intended that increased responsibilities by the PNSs will enable them to provide stronger support to host NSs.

Administration

SO4e, Burkina Faso: No activities to report during this period.

SO4f, Mali: No activities to report during this period.

SO4g, Mauritania: No activities to report during this period.

SO4h, Niger: No activities to report during this period.

IT/Telecoms

SO4i, Burkina Faso: Due to lack of human resources, no formal evaluation has been done yet in Burkina Faso. According to plans, the Burkinabe Red Cross Society will be provided with 1 laptop, 3 desktops, 1 network printer, 2 HF bases, 2 high frequency (HF) mobiles, 2 very high frequency (VHF) bases, 1 VHF mobile and 15 handsets. As for the three other countries of the Sahel operation, an internet connection, the recruitment and training of an IT/telecom officer for the NS is also planned, with the Federation IT/Telecom team implementing training for radio operators and computer users.

SO4j, Mali: The Mali Red Cross benefited from the presence of an IT/Telecoms delegate during the first six months of the Sahel operation when the main installations were realized. The Sahel operation IT/Telecoms team installed a wide area network/local area network (WAN/LAN) with an access point and internet connection for approximately 15 users. An IT/telecom counterpart was identified, recruited and trained as well as 5 other persons. Before leaving Mali, the Sahel operation IT/Telecom team handed over to the IT/telecom counterpart who could ensure material maintenance with support of the team in Niamey. A total of 5 laptops and 3 radios have been provided by the British Red Cross and 2 new desktops, 1 network printer and radios will also be provided by the Federation. A radio network will be installed between Timbuktu, Goundam, Sikasso, Bamako and two frontier cities to reinforce the NS capacities in the event of migration or displacement as a result of tensions in Ivory Coast.

SO4k, Mauritania: According to an informal evaluation done by the Sahel operation IT/telecom coordinator in April, the Mauritanian Red Crescent has a weak IT/telecom infrastructural capacity. As a result, it became a priority for the Sahel operation to install a radio and computer network in Mauritania. At present, the Federation is in the process of installing 3 HF and VHF bases at Zoucrete, Nouakchott and Nema or Nouadibhou, as well as 2 mobile HF and VHF and 15 handsets, in response to recent population movements. The Federation also plans to provide the Nouakchott base with 4 desktops, 1 laptop and 1 network printer as well as to recruit one IT/telecom counterpart and train 3 radio operators and 7 computers users.

SO4l, Niger: In addition to IT/telecom bases already existing, the Federation plans to provide the Red Cross Society of Niger with 1 laptop, 2 desktops, 1 network printer, 2 HF and VHF bases for Niamey and Tahoua as well as 2 HF and VHF mobiles and 15 handsets. An IT/telecom counterpart has already been recruited and trained and internet connection has been provided. In Agadez, the Irish Red Cross plans to install 3 radio bases by the end of July, in cooperation with Sahel operation staff.

Constraints

- Many NS vehicles are inactive or out of order making it pointless to install mobile radio units since the cars are unlikely to leave their garage.
- The Federation IT/telecoms team also faces a challenge in the recruitment of counterparts since they may be hard to find and due to the final agreement needed from the host NSs with respect to the necessity of an IT/telecom officer in their structure.
- There are difficulties at times to find appropriate places to install radio rooms.

- In some buildings, necessary infrastructure does not exist which delays the implementation of the overall IT/telecoms projects.

Specific objective 5 (Relief - livestock interventions for Mali and Niger): As per the Revised Plan of Action of 7 August 2005, it was anticipated that 5,000 pastoralists would be assisted in Mali and Niger.

SO5a, Mali: Activity closed.

SO5b, Niger: Activity closed.

Specific objective 6 (Relief - cereal bank support for Mali and Niger): As per the Revised Plan of Action of 7 August 2005, it was anticipated that food stocks could be placed at cereal banks in 250 of the worst affected communities in Mali and Niger.

SO6a, Mali: Activity closed.

SO6b, Niger: Activity closed.

Specific objective 7 (Health – post-emergency health for Niger): Sustainable health interventions to promote resilience and improve the longer-term health of the most vulnerable were advocated as part of the Revised Plan of Action of 7 August 2005.

SO7a (Malnutrition strategy - Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder, Agadez and Tanout): Assist the government of Niger in establishing a permanent programme to manage acute and moderate malnutrition in children aged under five years in health centres where the Red Cross/Red Crescent is already operational.

Progress/Achievements: As part of the technical support-transition process, and on behalf of the Federation and the Red Cross of Niger for CSI, 60 health officers and 30 general staff have been trained on malnutrition screening and treatment according to the national protocol and supplementary feeding stock management. The training and integration of services has been undertaken in 15 health centres including Hadachimo, Mogheur, Dangona, Maboya, Illéla, Bagaroua, Séhia, Tébaram, Toulou, Edir, Dandoutchi, Tajaé, Dandaji and Moulléla. As part of the integration strategy, the Federation has trained 40 Red Cross Society of Niger volunteers who are providing technical support to the health agents of community health centres.

Because chronic malnutrition is a result of specific behaviours toward food and hygiene, the main focus of the Sahel operation health team at Tahoua has been to educate for key people (matrons within communities and Red Cross Society of Niger volunteers) as vectors for sensitization and action to the local population. To date, 60 matrons and 40 Red Cross Society of Niger volunteers working with the CSI in Tahoua and Illéla districts have been trained on information, education and communication (IEC) regarding nutrition.

Matrons are the key people as they are usually the traditional advisers of mother and child health within communities. Training sessions typically last for two days for matrons and one day for volunteers. A training of trainers (ToT) session for the Red Cross Society of Niger counterparts in nutrition and education has also been undertaken through the health programme in Tahoua. In addition, 150 training sessions on nutrition are planned until the end of July: each session is for 10 mothers and lasts approximately 20 minutes.

As part of the Sahel operation malnutrition strategy, finalizing a global nutritional alert PoA, together with the regional health department, is underway. Current evaluation efforts are identifying available staff and equipment at each CSI as well as the level of alerts and the possible responses. Following data analysis, a workshop to achieve the emergency strategy with the different governmental and humanitarian partners is intended for July.

Impact: The Federation has adopted a longer-term approach regarding malnutrition by integrating education-sensitization, training and an emergency plan. So far, 60 health agents from CSI at the village level are trained and more than 1,500 mothers are sensitized on nutritional education. 40 Red Cross Society of Niger volunteers continue with their support to health centres.

Constraints: The distances between health centres, remoteness of villagers and potential levels of malnourished children are the major challenges that the national societies face.

SO7b (Mobile health teams – Tahoua): Assist regional health authorities in providing basic health care to remote communities within their sphere of operation in areas of Federation activity as a priority.

Progress/Achievements: Since November 2005, three mobile health teams composed of 5 Red Cross Society of Niger volunteers have been established to circulate around Tahoua. This project aims to improve the vaccination coverage and facilitate access to health care for remote populations. The mobile health teams have also focused on community sensitization and education on hygiene as well as health promotion. These teams regularly visit 48 sites (24 in Illela district, 20 in Tahoua district and 4 in Tchintabaraden district) translating to approximately 144 movements between March and May 2006.

On special request from village heads and CSI, the Federation implemented training to reinforce the operational capacities of matrons in their childbirth activities in order to promote health management in villages. As a result, 150 matrons (75 in Illela district, 65 in Tahoua and 10 in Tchintabaraden) were trained in the following:

- Risk reduction in pregnancy and childbirth;
- Health data collection in villages for health structures;
- Child vaccination and pregnancy referrals to health centres;
- Reporting to health structures;
- Cost recovery management after childbirth.

A special childbirth kit including gloves, towels, compresses, cotton, iodised alcohol, torches and batteries have been distributed to matrons by the Federation.

Impact: To date, 11,636 children aged under 11 months have been vaccinated, 2,788 pre-natal consultations and vaccinations of pregnant women were done, 3,117 new cases of moderate malnutrition for children aged under 5 years were identified and treated and 13,194 de-worming treatments for children aged under 12 months were provided. In addition, 2,383 people were sensitized on mother and child health.

The different activities organized by the Mobile Health Teams increased basic health care accessibility to remote populations. Vaccination coverage has greatly improved. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), general vaccination coverage at Tahoua does not exceed 34% but it can reach 90 to 94% in areas where there are Mobile Health Team interventions.

Constraints: Changes in behaviour to improve child health can only be measured in the longer-term; results cannot be immediately seen.

Specific objective 8: Water and sanitation (WatSan), Niger

Progress/Achievements: Following a Federation assessment mission undertaken in September 2005, a number of potential WatSan activities, that could be implemented immediately or over the mid and longer-term, were outlined. The priority for the Federation has been to pursue actions complementing the health sector interventions as well as the Red Cross Society of Niger priorities. In general, it was felt that the scope of a WatSan programme was flexible depending on the funding received and the presence and expertise of staff available to implement and manage WatSan activities.

As part of a potential effort with the Qatar Red Crescent, the Federation will facilitate and increase access to water supplies so as to meet basic needs such as access to safe drinking water and promotion of good personal and environmental hygiene. With funding already received for WatSan activities, the Federation has trained 55 Red Cross Society of Niger volunteers in participatory hygiene and sanitation transformation (PHAST) in Tahoua and Zinder. 24 more volunteers will be trained in Filingue once an agreement with the Qatar Red Crescent is signed. The volunteers will work in 265 villages (150 in Zinder, 70 in Tahoua and 45 in Filingue) that have already been selected. In addition, 120 wells are planned to be rehabilitated in Tahoua and Filingue and 120 pumps will be rehabilitated in Zinder. Training of 220 water management and 40 hygiene committees will also be carried out.

Impact: These projects are aimed at reducing the cases of cholera and decreasing the number of diarrhoea cases. They will also encourage villagers to use toilets and maintain them as well as concentrate on making clean drinking water available throughout the year. Currently, the impact of the planned projects cannot be measured since they have not started.

Constraints:

- While funding to launch activities such as volunteer training was available, certain efforts have been put on hold pending collaboration with the Qatar Red Crescent.
- Logistics supplies such as motorbikes have taken more time than initially anticipated: suppliers were not reliable and stocks were not available, hence, new purchases had to be made for 25 motorbikes that are in line with Federation standards. Nine motorbikes were rented through the Red Cross Society of Niger and sent to Tahoua to support initial WatSan mapping efforts.
- WatSan construction activities cannot be implemented if they coincide with the onset of the rainy season (between June and September).

Specific objective 9: Logistics – capacity building

Niger

SO9a (Focused technical management): Develop the logistics capacities of the Red Cross Society of Niger at the Niamey-level and with counterparts in preparation for future emergencies and disasters, with particular emphasis on stock, warehouse and transport management. [New Activity – Open]

Progress/Achievements: Different training sessions have been provided to the Red Cross Society of Niger volunteers and staff members. Training was recently held in Niamey for 15 members of the governance and executive branches of the NS. The members attended a five-day workshop on project planning, logistics preparedness and response, procurement, warehousing and transport management as well as IT/telecommunications. During the last day of training, a visit to the NS warehouse and a brainstorming session was undertaken about the future of logistics within the Red Cross Society of Niger. As part of the training (done according to Federation standards) logistics compact disks (CDs) were also distributed.

Three days of training are being held for volunteers and staff members in Zinder, Agadez, Tillabery, Tahoua and Maradi where approximately 10 people will attend each training session. To date, training has already been conducted in Zinder, while training in the four other locations will be completed by the end of July. In all the sessions, the same materials will be given to participants along with a general introduction including a video projection on the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement.

SO9b (Emergency stock): Assist the Red Cross Society of Niger in the pre-positioning of an emergency stock and reliable stock management system. [New Activity – Open].

An emergency stock of 1,000MT of cereals has been pre-positioned for the Red Cross Society of Niger at its Niamey warehouse. As part of its overall service, the Federation is ready to dispatch the stock to other locations in the country to facilitate the NS's interventions in case of emergency conditions that may arise again in 2006. The emergency stock has been treated as per the Federation standards with the NS staff members trained in warehousing techniques.

SO9c (Extended warehousing training): Develop the Red Cross Society of Niger warehousing capacities at the branch level. [New Activity – Open]

In the frame of the general logistics training, a specific module on warehousing has been provided. At the Red Cross Society of Niger bases such as Tahoua, a logistics counterpart has been fully integrated into current Federation activities.

Burkina Faso

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SO9d (Focused technical management): Develop the logistics capacities of the Burkinabe Red Cross Society with counterparts in preparation for future emergencies and disasters with particular emphasis on stock, warehouse and transport management. [New Activity – Open]

Efforts are underway to implement a regional training session for Sahel operation countries in Ouagadougou as well as others in West Africa in cooperation with the regional delegation in Dakar. This training session is being finalized and will take place early in July.

SO9e (Emergency stock): Assist the Burkinabe Red Cross Society in the pre-positioning of an emergency stock and reliable stock management system. [New Activity – Open]

Through a recent agreement, 500MT of cereals will be dispatched to Burkina Faso as emergency stock.

SO9f (Extended warehousing training): Develop the Burkinabe Red Cross Society warehousing capacities at the branch level. [New Activity – Open]

This forms part of the upcoming regional training at Ouagadougou.

Mali

SO9g (Focused technical management): Develop the logistics capacities of the Mali Red Cross at the Bamako-level and with counterparts in preparation for futures emergencies and disasters with particular emphasis on stock, warehouse and transport management. [New Activity – Open]

The Mali Red Cross logisticians will be attending the upcoming regional logistics workshop at Ouagadougou.

SO9h (Emergency stock): Assist the Mali Red Cross in the pre-positioning of an emergency stock and reliable stock management system. [New Activity – Open]

It is currently planned that 500MT of foodstuff will be dispatched to Mali (in Gao and Bamako) as emergency stock.

SO9i (Extended warehousing training): Develop the Mali Red Cross warehousing capacities at the branch level. [New Activity – Open]

No activities were reported during this period.

Mauritania

SO9j (Focused technical management): Develop the logistics capacities of the Mauritanian Red Crescent and with counterparts in preparation for future emergencies and disasters, with particular emphasis on stock, warehouse and transport management. [New Activity – Open]

No activities were reported during this period.

SO9k (Emergency stock): Assist the Mauritanian Red Crescent in the pre-positioning of an emergency stock and reliable stock management system. [New Activity – Open]

Depending on current discussions and input from the NS, some commodities may be provided to the Mauritanian Red Crescent through the Sahel operation or the Federation via the regional delegation in Dakar. Goods might be used immediately for distribution or maintained as emergency stock.

SO9l (Extended warehousing training): Develop the Mauritanian Red Crescent warehousing capacities at the branch level. [New Activity – Open]

No activities were reported during this period.

Specific objective 10: Relief-livelihoods capacity building in Niger

SO10a (Monitoring capacity - Filingue-Abala and Agadez): Enhance the Red Cross Society of Niger capacities in the monitoring of the local food security situation fostering an independent and reliable source of early warning with particular emphasis on conditions facing pastoralist communities. [New Activity – Open]

As part of the monitoring of food security conditions at Filingue-Abala, (undertaken by the University of Arizona consultants in cooperation with the Federation) 19 villages have been chosen for survey activities; five at Filingue, eight at Abala and six at Sanam. In each village, meetings with female and male focus groups as well as key informant interviews have been completed. In each village, 40 children aged between 6 and 59 months were screened for malnutrition.

As per preliminary findings, the situation in Filingue-Abala is delicate. There is a lack of seeds for the planting and some seeds had been already eaten as part of household coping mechanisms. A general lack of food diversity persists and increased migration to larger urban centres and abroad has started. It also appears that migration is increasing each year, indicating a possible trend toward under population in the region.

Malnutrition indicators

District surveys revealed a strong incidence of chronic malnutrition as being 32%, with the allowed gravity threshold being 30%. The presence of chronic malnutrition is notable in the areas targeted by the Federation: in Abala, 30% and Sanam, 39%. In the urban location of Filingue, the incidence of chronic malnutrition is 24%.

Acute malnutrition rates are high (registered at 16%) while the generally allowed gravity rate varies between 11 and 13%. Acute malnutrition is more obvious in areas not specifically targeted for intervention by the Federation (18% at Filingue) than in the ones which benefited from general food distributions held in September and October 2005 (14% in Abala and 17% in Sanam). These high levels suggest a strong probability of deterioration of the situation during the lean season.

Table 4: Malnutrition indicators

District	Chronic (%)			Acute (%)			Weight insufficiency (%)		
	Moderate	Acute	Total	Moderate	Severe	Total	Acute	Moderate	Total
Abala	18	12	30	12	2	14	9	25	34
Filingué	12	12	24	17	1	18	10	29	40
Sanam	19	20	39	15	2	17	17	30	47
Total	17	15	32	14	2	16	12	28	40

Food security indicators: Food availability is insufficient in almost all villages within Sanam and Abala districts. In general, these areas are affected by deficits of agricultural production, although they are more pastoralist than agricultural in nature. Nevertheless, insufficient and irregular rainfall as well as sandy soils cannot facilitate any needed agricultural activity.

Most households in the district rely on market activities which are impaired due to the drought of the previous years, loss of livestock and a general lack of agricultural production. Already crop seeds have been eaten by households as part of coping strategies and special shortage foods such as *jiga* and *anza*, fruits as well as flowers of *Balanites aegyptica* are being eaten in most of the villages. These circumstances, which were widely experienced in other parts of Niger during the summer of 2005, are now evident in the Filingue-Abala area. However, the population in Filingue-Abala suffered as much as other regions last year, but the absence of humanitarian organizations, media coverage and governmental humanitarian interventions has kept it on the sidelines (much like northern Niger) in comparison with places such as Tahoua or Maradi.

Household food accessibility is mainly based on income coming from those who migrate as well as the sale of cattle and other small income generating activities (IGAs). Cattle herds have been adversely affected by the crisis of the previous year and many households have already sold their assets in order to survive.

According to research findings from Tanout, income generated as a result of migration still tends to be meagre and may not filter back to the home village and principal households. Increasing migration from villages, within the country or abroad, also affects their longer-term sustainability. With the lack of labourers or income-earners, the vitality of villages can be weakened in spite of the gains hoped or foreseen through migration.

The IGAs that persist can cause a negative impact to the local environment. For example, the production of charcoal, collection of straw and wood can eventually deplete local resources to an extent that they cannot be recovered. In general, weak household incomes and high prices tend to make the lean season more difficult as coping strategies become neither sustainable nor perennial. At the same time, there are signs of a poor diet among the villages surveyed. The over-consumption of cereals contrasts with the under-consumption of protein-based foods and those rich in micro-nutrients. Many households only eat millet-based meals for their three daily portions (when available) and sometimes without salt or milk. Moreover, milk has become scarce for a number of households because of the decline in the number of cattle in the recent years.

Markets and supply: It is important to note that markets still tend to be adequately supplied with commodities. However, the current millet price is higher than the average of the last five years. As mentioned previously, cattle losses plus lack of agricultural opportunities and household income keeps living conditions severely constrained. Currently, the terms of trade in agro-pastoralists areas are favourable to breeders since the prices are better than those of the previous year, when the food security-health crisis resulted in selling at low prices.

Conclusions:

- The global situation around Filingue-Abala is difficult but does not necessarily suggest that a major crisis is forthcoming.
- The malnutrition situation around Filingue-Abala is serious.
- The coming agricultural campaign is worrying, adaptive and qualitative seeds are lacking in most the villages, especially in Abala and Sanam.
- In spite of the suggestion that a major crisis is not evident, the severity of the situation in the region is strongly conditioned by the 'effects of persistence'. The combined effects of the previously described circumstances and cumulative outcome of several years of household deficit around Abala and Sanam, with few prospects for improvement, indicate a 'slow-burning' and a serious humanitarian situation.

SO10b (Livelihoods small grants programme, Agadez): Implement a small grants programme focusing on the promotion of improved livelihood opportunities for food insecure communities in the region of Agadez. [New Activity – Open]

This objective is fully funded and implemented as part of Irish Red Cross involvement in Niger.

Progress/Achievements: The small grants project is implemented by the Irish Red Cross in Agadez and divided into two parts: family grants and collective grants for micro-projects. Family grants will assist vulnerable families until the next rainy season and reinforce their coping mechanisms in future by contributing to replenishment of their household economy. In conducting the project, a few prerequisites have to be fulfilled:

- Identification and census of the vulnerable population in the area of intervention;
- Selection of the poorest and most vulnerable families;
- Analysis of the situation of each family in order to orient the grant allocation.

Collective grants for micro-projects are oriented towards reinforcement of food security for local communities. In its conduct one must:

- Identify needs expressed by communities;
- Evaluate their relevancy and feasibility;
- Organize implementation.

Grants distributions are scheduled to take place in June and July 2006. To date, 26 volunteers in Agadez and 7 in Tabelot have been recruited and trained to do survey work. In Agadez, 310 out of 480 surveys have been completed and 826 out of 846 surveys of families in Tabelot have been carried out.

Impact: As a result of the surveys, the number of beneficiaries and needs for each family is being defined. At the moment, data is being treated to determine beneficiary figures and the nature and scope of grants (cattle, money or other possibilities).

Constraints: As the area of intervention is large and diverse, the identification phase was difficult to complete. It was decided to ask the traditional chief and representatives of the population to designate about 12% to 13% of the

families in their area corresponding to the most vulnerable of their villages or districts of influence. Detailed surveys on the families will lead to the selection of those more vulnerable and facilitate the decision about the way to best support them.

Regarding family grants, the traditional chief and representatives of the population were asked to propose several micro-projects in March 2006. However, in most of the areas, people only suggested ideas about what they would like to be done but were not able to provide a complete evaluation of the costs or needs. Complementary surveys will, therefore, be done on the micro-project proposals themselves.

Most of the intervention areas are remote: the commune of Tabelot (6,956 families) is 150km northeast of Agadez involving 4 hours of driving off road including areas where cars do not normally go. Similarly, 1,040 families in the north of the valley of Abardokh (population of 220) and on mountains of Bagzan (population of 820) can only be reached by motorbike or foot. Donkeys were used to carry luggage during the two first field missions of March, April and May 2006. The Eastern Ténéré (around 17,080 inhabitants) is more than 500km east of Agadez, meaning two days by car to cross the desert. As a result of distances, the distribution of grants involving food, cattle or other materials will be challenging. Distribution points might need to be redefined due to distances.

Combined with geographical and logistics constraints, the overall timeframe for the project is a challenge. A field campaign for the survey in the eastern Ténéré area (involving about 270 surveys) will take two to three weeks. Distributions could also take about two or three weeks for each area: Agadez, Tabelot, and eastern Ténéré. With only 2.5 months left, according to the project schedule, it will be difficult to complete all the work involved.

SO10c (Food-for-work projects, Filingue-Abala): Develop a small portfolio of up to 7 mid-term rural and agricultural extension activities that focus on rebuilding livelihood capacity, sustainability and promotion of gender sensitive activities from a food security perspective. [New Activity – Open]

Progress/Achievements: A pilot project was undertaken in Fadama and Tillimoune, two villages north of Abala and close to the Mali border. Activities in both villages are focusing on water provision and agriculture including:

- Soil recuperation and improvement of a water catchment in Fadama and Tillimoune;
- Rehabilitation of a community well in Fadama and Tillimoune;

Well reconstruction in Fadama: Reconstruction of the well has been completed. The well portico will be installed and the well area is going through the sanitation phase. The project started on 15 March 2006 and, currently, 20 workers benefit from the food-for-work project. These workers are replaced every 20 days with other local labourers.

Soil Recuperation in Fadama: This food-for-work project, which started on 15 March 2006, aims at making 4 dams, 4,553 micro-catchments, 3.18km of stone lines, bank protection and a deep pond.

So far, 4.545km of stone lines, 3,920 micro-catchments, almost 95% of 3 dams and 55% of the fourth dam have been completed. The last stage for the dams will be to reinforce the banks before the heavy rains damage the construction. In coordination with the 'Génie rural' and the village committee, it has been decided that half the micro-catchments will be for trees. Verbal agreement with the environmental department has been made to supply 4,000 'Prosopis Juliflora' for river lining and 3,333 'Acacia Sénégal' for the micro-catchments.

As a result of the visit of the Federation WatSan coordinator in March 2006, design changes to the deepening of the pond were proposed to 'Génie rural' and the community due to potential adverse environmental effects. The design has been adjusted by 'Génie rural' where 3,000M³ of sand instead of 7,000M³ will be removed from a much smaller area.

Well reconstruction in Tillimoune: Reconstruction and site sanitation are fully completed. The project started on 17 March 2006 with 20 workers benefiting from the project, where they are replaced every 20 days with other local labourers. According to the head of the village, 200 families are now using the well.

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Soil recuperation in Tillimoune: This project consists of the construction of 7,700 micro-catchments and 5.58km of stone lines, beginning on 17 March 2006. Currently, the work is close to being finished: 2,630 forest half-moons, 5,008 agricultural half-moons and 4.16km of stones lines have been installed.

In coordination with the ‘Génie rural’ and the village committee, it has been decided that half of the micro-catchments will be for trees. Verbal agreement with the environmental department has been made to supply 6,666 ‘Acacia Sénégal’ trees.

Impact: The Filingue-Abala region suffers generally from a lack of humanitarian support. The Federation and Mercy Corps are the only international organisations intervening in this area. Worksites are remote in the sandy desert area while transport access is also difficult. To date, the Federation is the only organization embarking upon such a massive project in the area, thanks to its logistics-TSU capacities.

The Federation team working in Fadama and Tillimoune has received strong testimonies of gratitude from the villagers and authorities for their involvement in such a remote and challenging area. On behalf of Federation staff members, an encouraging restoration of the villagers’ confidence in their potential and capacities has been observed. Moreover, female participation in the workforces was promoted and their interest and commitment in the food-for-work projects is still increasing.

As Fadama’s well was not functioning for years, the impact of rehabilitation is impressive. Some families are starting to migrate back to the village as access to water has been facilitated.

Despite security concerns and climate pressure, 84.8% of the global construction has been achieved in Fadama and 82.6% in Tillimoune. To date, 1,113 workers have benefited from the food-for-work projects and 25MT of rice, 45.95MT of sorghum, 19.2MT of niebe and 5.669MT of oil have been distributed in Fadama and Tillimoune.

Constraints: The main constraint is the security situation in the form of banditry as conveyed by the government of Niger. Discussions are continuing on behalf of the Federation with various authorities at local, regional and national levels to review conditions. Discussions have also been held between the Red Cross Society of Niger, French Red Cross, the Federation and the ICRC to review security concerns. In Conclusion, it has been deemed that food-for-work efforts can continue with prudent security measures in place such as movement restrictions on delegates and vehicles to worksites. Food-for-work activities around Filingue-Abala are still scheduled to be completed by the beginning of August. However, general movement restrictions imposed by the government of Niger might impact the foreseen end date. In response and as a cautionary move, food security monitoring on behalf of the University of Arizona and the Federation around Filingue-Abala has been suspended.

The productivity of the two trucks displacing rocks, gravel and sand was lower than the estimation by the ‘Génie rural’. Thus, adjustments have been made to the loading teams. TSU trucks have since been engaged to lower overall project costs. The trucks are used mainly to carry stones from quarries that are roughly 12 and 16km from worksites.

Replacement of workers who reached their maximum number of days of engagement is somewhat problematic at Fadama. The village committee has difficulties in finding new workers. In response, the Federation has maintained a strict stance by decreasing activity levels to make sure the committee tries to involve surrounding villages for labour. The replacement of sorghum with rice might attract new or more workers.

Specific objective 11 (Reporting-media-communications – advocacy and public information)⁷: Promote and disseminate within the target audience the activities highlighted in the Supplementary Plan of Action – Appeal Extension and overall Sahel operation.

⁷ The reporting-media-communications plan focuses on Niger since it comprises of most activities contained in the Supplementary Plan of Action – Appeal Extension. If significant activities are being developed or underway in other countries of the Sahel region, reporting-media-communications actions will be replicated for those locations taking into account resources available as part of the Sahel operation.

SO11a, Promote and disseminate activities implemented by the Federation, PNSs and the Red Cross Society of Niger through national and international media, other organizations and donors. [New Activity – Open]

This objective has not been achieved due to the absence of a communication/media delegate.

SO11b, Strengthening the Red Cross of Niger's communication capacities, Niger. [New Activity – Open]

This objective was not achieved due to a lack of a communication/media delegate. As an alternate but complementary effort, a project planning/reporting training session was included as part of the wider training for Red Cross Society of Niger governance and executive staff members, representing 15 people. Thus, the Red Cross Society of Niger capacities in project management have been strengthened.

SO11c, Documentation of achievements, lessons learned and activities implemented during the Sahel operation. [New Activity – Open]

This objective was not achieved due to the absence of a communication/media delegate.

SO11d, Communications support to health and WatSan activities as highlighted in the Supplementary Plan of Action – Appeal Extension. [New Activity – Open]

This objective was not achieved due to the absence of a communication/media delegate.

Federation coordination

Significant positive interaction continues between the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, UN System, non governmental organizations (NGOs) and the government at all levels. For the Federation in Niger, the NS remains a channel for its links with various Ministries. In addition, the NS provides links to some unique channels of contact with the Ministry of Community Development and the President of Niger who was pivotal in facilitating the implementation of the Federation cash distribution monitoring in Tanout during the late summer and autumn of 2005.

With the UN System, especially WFP, staff members of the Sahel operation are in contact almost daily due to the need to coordinate transport services for the humanitarian community through the TSU. Irrespective of whether they are cooperating partners of the WFP, the NGO community is increasingly interested in the Federation's provision of transport services. At the regional and local level, apart from formal mechanisms in place, there is a rather favourable atmosphere in the cooperation between the Federation, the UN and the NGO community. In the health sector, where coordination is crucial, there is a genuine willingness to share information and experiences and even trade commodities in an informal. This was experienced during the height of emergency conditions in August, September and October 2005.

In conclusion, cooperation in Niger within the Movement and among all humanitarian actors has been impressive. It is safe to say that, organizations were facing tight timelines for activity implementation during the late summer of 2005. The process of getting an operation running, all corresponding systems in place and general food distributions completed by early October (in spite of logistical challenges) was a formidable task.

On a regular basis, the Federation is producing a number of internal ad hoc documents and evaluations to further its operational orientation, assess the impact of activities as well as broaden and deepen its understanding of the context in Niger and elsewhere. Examples include post-general food distribution assessments that formed the basis for subsequent food-for-work activities, evaluations as a result of cash distribution monitoring at Tanout and a recent nutrition-programme evaluation in Mali. The monitoring regime is most notably, the source of a growing number of significant reports illustrating its impact at the household, village, market and regional level as well as its link to the health and nutritional status of targeted and non-targeted populations. Baseline and preliminary findings were made available in January, a second report was produced during March and a third is expected in July 2006.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- principles and initiatives

New volunteers have been trained on Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Movement. As part of more recent diffusion efforts, volunteers at Filingue had a special training session on Movement history, emblem issues Fundamental Principles, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Red Cross/Red Crescent components. On 8 May 2006, as part of International Red Cross/Red Crescent Day, aspects of the Movement were broadcasted through national media outlets in Niger.

National society capacity building

Strengthening the capacities of the NSs remains an essential part of the focus of all programmes implemented through the Federation Sahel operation. Technical support and systems management, education provision, assessment, evaluation and survey techniques form a unique part of several programme areas. As a consequence of the current Appeal Extension, governance and executive staff of the Red Cross Society of Niger received training, from the Federation, in logistics in order to become more autonomous in humanitarian responses. A regional logistics training session will be implemented in July, thus broadening benefits for the Sahel region. At various bases of operation, the Federation is striving to ensure that the NS counterparts and technical staff are in place for future interventions and humanitarian responses.

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

Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger: food security

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 05EA015

PLEDGES RECEIVED

10/07/2006

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				31,242,371	TOTAL COVERAGE 76.0%	
AMERICAN - RC				46,524	29.12.05	NIGER: OPERATIONS MANAGER, RELIEF DELEGATE
ANDORRAN - RC		12,000	EUR	18,948	20.04.06	
AUSTRALIAN - RC		200,000	AUD	195,700	10.08.05	CSB
AUSTRALIAN - RC		130,000	AUD	128,115	06.10.05	CEREALS, OIL, SURROUNDING COSTS
AUSTRALIAN - RC		79,599	AUD	77,609	27.02.06	WELL & WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM REHABILITATION
AUSTRIA - MUNICIPALITY VIENNA		15,000	EUR	23,250	20.09.05	TRANSPORT COSTS, NIGER
AUSTRIA - MUNICIPALITY VIENNA		2,000	EUR	3,156	11.04.06	TRANSPORT COSTS NIGER & BURKINA FASO
BRITISH - RC		100,000	GBP	226,000	25.07.05	FOODS & SEEDS, NATIONAL/ REGIONAL STAFF
BRITISH - RC		150,000	GBP	338,925	11.08.05	
BRITISH - DEC/RC		404,651	GBP	916,940	21.09.05	LIVELIHOODS CASH DISTRIBUTION PROJECT
BRITISH - RC		316,198	GBP	720,299	05.10.05	
BRITISH - RC		6,635,070	XOF	15,924	27.10.05	
BRITISH - RC		55,870	GBP	126,211	02.12.05	LIVELIHOODS CASH DISTRIBUTION PROJECT
BRITISH - RC		320,886	GBP	736,432	06.03.06	CEREAL BANK PILOT PROJECT
BRITISH - RC		100,000	GBP	226,600	25.04.06	NIGER MOBILE HEALTH CLINICS
BRITISH - RC				246,500	30.05.06	LOGISTICS, FLEET, IT&TELECOM DELEGATES
BRITISH - PRIVATE DONOR		500	GBP	1,130	02.08.05	NIGER
CANADIAN - RC		25,000	CAD	26,138	22.07.05	
CANADIAN - PRIVATE DONOR		1,100	USD	1,332	12.06.06	
CHINA - HONG KONG - RC BRANCH		38,380	HKD	6,226	17.10.05	
CROATIAN - RC				12,000	07.03.06	
DANISH - RC				47,338	02.08.05	
DANISH - RC				133,905	12.09.05	
DANISH - RC				153,715	20.09.05	
DANISH - RC				230,822	23.09.05	BURKINA FASO, MALI
DANISH - RC				92,896	08.11.05	BURKINA FASO, MALI
DANISH RC				38,405	23.01.06	
DANISH - RC				209,332	10.03.06	
FIJI - PRIVATE DONOR		5,000	FJD	3,750	10.08.05	
FINNISH - GOVT		248,000	EUR	386,136	28.09.05	

Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger: food security

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PLEDGES RECEIVED

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DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
FINNISH - RC		100,000	EUR	155,700	28.09.05	
FINNISH - RC		50,000	EUR	78,900	30.04.06	
GERMAN - RC		39,664	EUR	61,756	14.10.05	
GREEK - GOVT		200,000	EUR	315,600	22.02.06	
ICELANDIC - RC		3,000,000	ISK	59,700	08.08.05	
ICELANDIC - RC		250,000	ISK	4,900	26.08.05	
IRISH - RC		100,000	EUR	154,800	25.07.05	NIGER
IRISH - RC		290,000	EUR	452,545	22.08.05	RDRT DELEGATE, RELIEF DELEGATE, HEALTH DELEGATE, VOLUNTEERS HEALTH SECTOR
ITALIAN - GOVT		500,000	EUR	775,000	13.09.05	MALI, NIGER
JAPANESE - RC		30,000,000	JPY	348,000	03.08.05	
LIECHTENSTEIN - RC				21,020	29.08.05	
MONACO - RC		30,000	EUR	46,815	02.08.05	BURKINA FASO, NIGER
NETHERLANDS - RC		50,000	EUR	78,025	04.08.05	
NETHERLANDS - RC		7,487	EUR	11,683	04.08.05	LIAISON DELEGATE
NETHERLANDS - RC		100,000	EUR	156,050	12.08.05	
NETHERLANDS - RC		78,748	EUR	121,705	18.11.05	
NETHERLANDS - RC		119,958	EUR	187,015	27.06.06	
NEW ZELAND - RC		19,914	NZD	17,442	02.02.06	
NORWEGIAN - RC		2,452,000	NOK	476,669	28.11.05	NIGER
PHILIP MORRIS		49,975	USD	64,918	22.03.06	
PRIVATE DONORS ON LINE				62,142	11.08.05	
PRIVATE DONORS ON LINE				4,137	19.01.06	NIGER
SPANISH - PRIVATE DONOR				1,548	05.12.05	
SWEDISH - GOVT		3,600,000	SEK	605,880	28.07.05	
SWEDISH - GOVT		240,000	SEK	39,840	05.09.05	LOGISTIC DELEGATE
SWEDISH - RC/GOVT		1,560,000	SEK	253,500	24.11.05	DELEGATE, MALI, WATSAN NIGER
SWEDISH - GOVT		4,000,000	SEK	671,360	19.04.06	NIGER WATSAN, HEALTH, GENERAL
SWEDISH - RC		300,000	SEK	50,940	29.06.06	
COMMUNE DE VERNIER				10,000	24.10.05	
SWISS - PRIVATE DONORS				12,719	09.08.05	NIGER
SWISS - PRIVATE DONORS				4,810	01.01.06	NIGER
USA - PRIVATE DONORS		1,794	USD	2,298	05.09.05	NIGER
USA - PRIVATE DONORS				444	23.09.05	MALI
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				10,698,119	CHF	34.2%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
					27.04.06	

Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger: food security

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PLEDGES RECEIVED

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DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
AUSTRALIAN - RC		61,857	EUR	96,311		7900 BAGS CSB
BELGIUM - RC FLANDERS		4,070	EUR	6,335	16.08.05	402 BAGS CSB, TRANSPORT
BRITISH - RC				144,240	22.08.05	LOGISTICS ERU MODULE MK2, TRANSP/INSURANCE
BRITISH - RC		3,087,997	GBP	6,978,849	27.07.05	3000 BAGS CSB, 235'340 L. VEGETABLE OIL, 16 PCES MODULE NUTRIT. SUPPL. DRY FEEDING EQUIP., MEDICINES & MEDICAL MATERIALS, 2580 MT RICE, 2580 MT SORGHUM, 774 MT BEANS, 6400 BRACELET IDENTIF. , 20 BABY SCALES, 4TOYOTA LANDCRUISER, 4 RUBBHALLS, 50 FIRST AID CAR KITS, 30 MOTORBIKES, SHIPPING/TRANSP
BRITISH - RC		3,400	GBP	7,701	20.07.05	1 TELECOM MATERIAL
DANISH - RC				81,215	22.08.05	1 ERU TELECOMMUNICATION COMPLETE
FRENCH - RC		138,024	EUR	213,316	26.07.05	1480 BAGS CSB, 3840 L. VEGETABLE OIL, SHIPPING/TRANSP.
GERMAN - RC		217,231	EUR	338,120	24.07.05	3000 BAGS CSB, 63500 L. VEGETABLE OIL, 1 FEEDING CENTER, 2 CHOLERA KITS, 45000 KG RICE, 45000 KG BEANS, 45000 KG LENTILS, 500 KITCHEN SETS, SHIPPING/TRANSP.
IRELAND - RC				33,624	23.08.05	RENTAL & TRANSPORTATION 6 LANDCRUISERS, 6 LANDCRUISERS PICK-UP
NETHERLANDS - RC				27,000	28.09.05	RENTAL & TRANSPORTATION LANDCRUISER
NORWEGIAN - RC		8,650,854	NOK	1,678,266	28.07.05	3 TRANSPORT SUPPORT UNITS, SHIPPING/TRANSPORT
SAUDI ARABIA - RC		170,034	SR	56,740	15.08.05	DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO MALI: TENTS, BLANKETS, CARPETS, MEDICINE, FOODSTUFF
AMCROSS	DELEGATE(S)			25,600		
AUSTRALIA	DELEGATE(S)			13,000		
BELGIUM	DELEGATE(S)			44,800		
CANADA	DELEGATE(S)			124,400		
DENMARK	DELEGATE(S)			53,000		
FINLAND - RC	DELEGATE(S)			37,600		
GERMANY - RC	DELEGATE(S)			93,600		
GREAT BRITAIN	DELEGATE(S)			101,200		
ICELAND - RC	DELEGATE(S)			42,200		
IRELAND - RC	DELEGATE(S)			33,400		
NETHERLANDS - RC	DELEGATE(S)			46,600		
NEW ZEALAND	DELEGATE(S)			19,800		
NORWAY - RC	DELEGATE(S)			259,000		
SPAIN	DELEGATE(S)			68,600		
SWEDEN	DELEGATE(S)			72,600		
VARIOUS				2,359,826		ESTIMATED COST TRANSPORT/INSURANCE
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				13,056,943	CHF	41.8%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger: food security

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DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - RC		148,560	USD	188,671	19.09.05	DIRECT ASSISTANCE: FOOD SUPPLIES, CLOTHES
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				188,671	CHF	