



Ethiopia: Floods; Appeal MDRET003

Fact Sheet no. 1: 13 November 2006

A Preliminary Appeal was launched on 18 August 2006 for CHF 1,112,299 (USD 902,000 or EUR 70,000) for six months to assist 9,000 beneficiaries. Due to increased flooding, a Revised Appeal was issued on 6 September 2006 for CHF 5,212,634 (USD 4.2 million or EUR 3.2 million) for nine months to assist some 25,000 beneficiaries. The beneficiary number proposed in the Revised Appeal was later adjusted to 45,000 beneficiaries (9,000 families).

In mid September 2006, the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) was approached by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to assist in meeting emergency seed requirements in the areas devastated by floods. Severe flooding had destroyed crop plants and the seed production as well as many seed stockpiles which were stored in the flooded houses or in mud and bamboo silos. In some of the affected areas, the seeds had already been planted and were subsequently lost due to the flooding.



ERCS volunteers meet with farmers in Kolepa.

A special meeting was convened at OCHA on 20 September 2006 to address the urgent seed requirements in the flooded areas. The planting season is normally during the second half of September. If planting is not done during this period, farmers will be without crops until the following harvest or for approximately six months.

As the ERCS was already working in the Amhara Region, which was the most affected by the recent floods, it was allocated the Dembia, Achefer and Bahir Dar Zuria *woredas* (sub-regional areas) for targeted seed distribution. The request for this additional task was presented to the Federation's Horn of Africa sub-regional office, which agreed to support the task, as outlined in the table below:

Woredas	Households	Quintals	Cost per Quintal (in ETB)	Total Cost (in ETB)	Total Cost (in CHF)
Dembia	3,477	1,787	600	1,072,200	155,469
Achefer	120	83	600	49,800	7,221
Bahir Dar Zuria	485	901	600	540,600	78,387
Total	4,082	2,771	1,800	1,662,600	241,077
Transport and handling costs				138,550	20,090
Total requirement				1,801,150	261,167

The ERCS agreed to assist in the procurement. The duties of the Horn of Africa sub-regional office's programme delegate assigned to the Amhara Region were expanded to include monitoring the distribution of the seeds. The distribution was completed in the last week of October, and this fact sheet provides information specific to the seed distribution.

Subsequently, within the Amhara Emergency Coordination Forum, Bahir Dar Zuria *woreda* was reassigned to another non-governmental organization (NGO) - Food for the Hungry International - while the ERCS retained the responsibility for seed distribution in the affected *woredas* of Dembia and Achefer. To fulfill its responsibilities, the ERCS partnered with local merchants and the Ministry of Agriculture to procure local seed varieties and to ensure

the quality and viability of the seeds prior to their distribution. As a result, chickpeas, lentils and a local spice (fenugreek) were approved for purchase. These varieties are the most appropriate and locally preferred seeds for the current planting season and will yield their harvest in early February, prior to the next planting season which begins in early March. Although there will still be a need for seed distribution at that time, this action significantly assists in providing food security in the region.

In executing the programme, local government officials used public announcements and direct home visits to give advance notification that the ERCS would be providing seeds to the flood-affected beneficiaries. The beneficiaries then traveled to distribution sites to receive the donated seeds, and transported them back to their homes by the use of donkeys. In North Gonder, where beneficiaries could not be reached via normal land routes, seeds were first taken to Gorgora port on Lake Tana and then ferried by a system of boats to pre-arranged distribution sites.

Seeds were distributed in areas familiar to the farmers such as near central market places and at farmers’ cooperatives. The Red Cross emblem was prominently displayed in flags and local youth volunteers wore Red Cross uniforms. The ERCS worked in conjunction with local leaders to verify the needs of the beneficiaries, primarily through the size of their land. For each hectare the farmer owns, he/she received 100 kilograms of seed, a unit known locally as a *quintal*.



Farmers wait for the seeds at an ERCS distribution point.

Vulnerable populations such as female heads of households and the elderly received equal assistance without prejudice. For beneficiaries who were unable to go to the distribution sites, a representative, such as an older child, was sent with verification provided by local leadership. Where a representative could not be sent, the local leaders secured the absent beneficiary’s portion and delivered it themselves to the beneficiary.

The beneficiaries were very happy with the quality local varieties of seeds which had been provided. Because of the sensitivity of the ERCS to the farmers’ actual needs, the beneficiaries are able to plant and care for the crops according to their standard methods. In response to the seed distribution project, many farmers freely offered to volunteer for the ERCS to support its programmes in their area. Although the final tally is not yet in, the following are preliminary figures provided from the distribution points.

	Male-headed households	Female-headed households	No. of beneficiaries	Seeds (in Kg)	Total hectares
Dembia	4,951	441	26,960	1,418	3,889
Achefer	1,007	76	5,415	545	552.5
Total	5,958	517	32,375	1,963	4,441.5

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