

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

## TANZANIA: DROUGHT

3 March 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

This Bulletin (no. 1/2006) is being issued for information only, and reflects the situation and the information available at this time. While the Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time, technical support (watsan) is being deployed to Tanzania to assist in the preparation of an emergency appeal. Support from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is also under consideration, and will be communicated shortly.

Activities undertaken are 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.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Appeal 2006-2007 of the East Africa Sub-regional Programmes: Appeal no. MAA6400- [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?annual06/MAA64003.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual06/MAA64003.pdf). For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

## **The Situation**

A large part of Tanzania's rural population is facing food shortages following prolonged droughts. The emerging crisis is affecting nearly 85% of Tanzania's 129 districts, according to an inter-agency assessment<sup>1</sup> carried out on the Tanzanian mainland. The assessment states, that the food shortage is acute and widespread; affecting all assessed districts, accounting to nearly 85% of all districts in the country. So far, 3.7 million people have been identified as facing food shortage, or nearly 11% of the mainland population. More than 565,000 of those will be needing emergency food supplies at least until the end of April, as they lack the resources to purchase heavily subsidised staple food.

Tanzania is the latest of 10 countries in Eastern Africa to face food shortages due to crop failures. Whilst the crises in other countries of the region have been well known for a while and humanitarian responses well already underway, the situation in Tanzania is only just beginning to be recognized as a catastrophe on a similar scale. The report noted that poor rainfall had significantly reduced pasture and water availability, resulting in massive emaciation including deaths of livestock, notably cattle in the pastoral and agro-pastoral zones. The survey teams noted various evidence of crisis in the rural areas, such as significantly reduced food rations in homes, increasing school drop-out rates, movement of people looking for work and indiscriminate logging as people try to cope by engaging in charcoal production.

In common with the other countries affected by food insecurity in East Africa, the crisis in Tanzania has impacted the populations of the agro pastoral zone most significantly. In some places, maize prices are 85% higher than normal, whilst the cattle prices had already plunged to levels where a single cow would cost 20 kilos of grain. The lack of food is compounded by the food crises in surrounding countries where higher prices for maize has encouraged the informal export of maize across borders.

A further complicating factor in Tanzania is a devastating army worm, "*Spodoptera exemptata*" infestation in the southern grain-producing areas. The worms devour all green plants in their path and are so fast-breeding that they are difficult to control. Current estimates indicate that 75,000 hectares have been decimated by the army worms. Not only does the infestation destroy crops, and thus reduce the overall food supply, but it also affects the amount of grazing stubble available for pasture, since the plants exude a poisonous substance in defence against the worm, thus adding to the destruction of livestock.

With the current meteorological predictions for the East Africa being pessimistic, the general outlook for food security is probably set to get worse before it gets better. It is clear that the next rainy season is crucial. If the rains fail, the crisis can be expected to deepen and widen across the region.

Following the Rapid Vulnerability Assessment by the Food Security Information Team in August, in which the Tanzanian Red Cross Society (TRCS) took part, the Government targeted 613,405 food insecure people in 36 districts with emergency food distributions. Although 21,499 metric tonnes of maize were released from the government owned Strategic Grain Reserve (SGR), at a highly subsidized price of TZS 50 per kilo, current estimates indicate that only around 11,000 metric tonnes have actually been distributed. The FSIT survey in January set a target of 3.7 million people to be reached with subsidized food sales through local cooperatives until May. Of these, 565,000 people were to be given free food.

On 14 February 2005, the government officially requested international assistance and asked for 100,000 metric tonnes of food. The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) is expected to coordinate international food donations.

The Government has also embarked on a campaign to raise resources domestically. At a recent function hosted by the President, local businessmen pledged over TZS 3 billion (approximately USD 3 million) in cash and kind to meet the crisis. At the same time, the government has been forced to introduce power rationing in response to falling water levels in its hydro-electric dams.

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<sup>1</sup> The Rapid Vulnerability Assessment (RVA) of Food Insecure Districts in Tanzania Mainland For the 2005-6 Market Year (Food Security Information Team): February 2006

## **Tanzania: Drought; Information Bulletin no. 1/2006**

Furthermore the Government has also suspended import duties on grain imports by commercial companies in an effort to boost supplies. Whilst the recommended price for commercial sale of maize is TZS 300 per kilo, in some areas the price is already TZS 500, reflecting not only scarcity but also the high costs of transportation, adding concerns that many of the affected people will not be able to afford to buy expected commercial imports of some 100,000 metric tonnes. There are also concerns that, in view of the price differential between Tanzania and surrounding countries, that much of the commercial imports will be re-exported.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

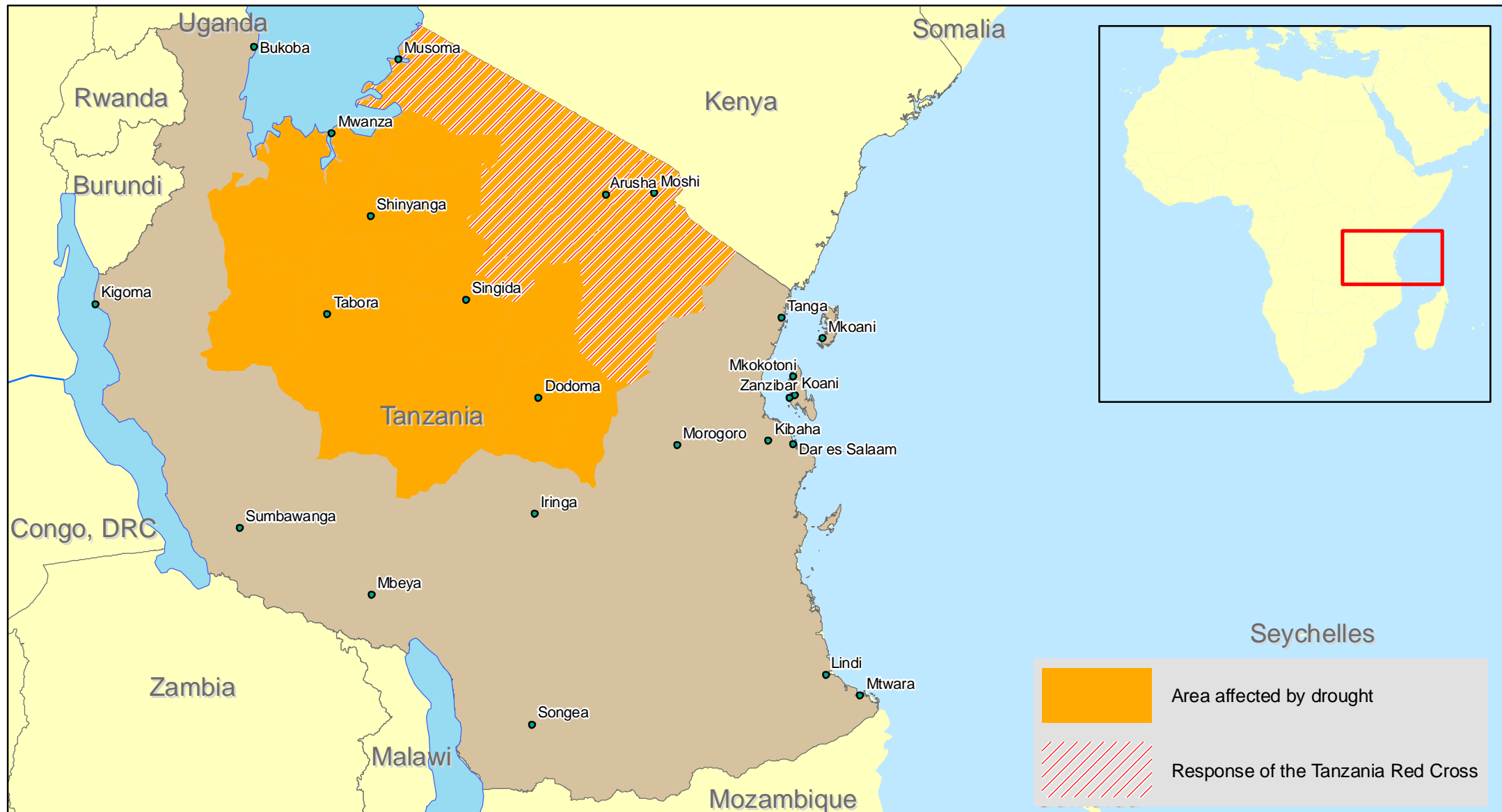
The regional delegation in Nairobi continues to monitor developments in Tanzania. At the request of the Tanzania Red Cross National Society, a Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT) was deployed to Tanzania on 23 February 2006. Following discussions with the national society, the government's Disaster Management Office, WFP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and others, and in view of the likely deterioration of food supply until May, the Federation has decided to issue a preliminary emergency appeal to support approximately 75,000 people in three northern districts (Arusha, Kilimanjaro and Manyara) for three months. The appeal, which should be issued within the next few days, will seek to mobilize resources for the local procurement and distribution of some 2,600 metric tonnes grain for the period March to May 2006. It is expected that other humanitarian agencies will contribute to alleviating the crisis in Tanzania.

The preliminary appeal will be used as a base for a more comprehensive emergency appeal, which should include water and sanitation (WatSan), health and livelihoods programming (possibly including livestock interventions), is foreseen to be issued in around three weeks time. For this purpose, the Tanzania Red Cross National Society will participate in a rapid assessment, led by UNICEF, focusing on health and water/sanitation issues beginning the second week of March. It is envisaged that the Federation will deploy a WatSan expert to Tanzania to assist in the preparation of the emergency appeal. An application for CHF 250,000 from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund is under consideration to initiate the activities.

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# Tanzania: Drought



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