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Information bulletin

Mongolia: Severe winter

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Glide n°:	Date of issue: 18 February 2019
Date of disaster: Ongoing since 11 January 2019	Point of contact: Munguntuya Sharavnyambuu, Disaster Management Programme Manager
Host National Society: Mongolian Red Cross Society	
Number of people affected: 2,000 (approx.)	Categorization of disaster: Yellow
N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation: Provincial authorities (Khovd and Uvs provinces), Save the Children, and World Vision Mongolia	

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS), with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), continues to monitor the evolving situation.

The situation

Each year, the National Agency for Meteorology and Environmental Monitoring (NAMEM) publishes a Dzud¹ risk map, which uses summer condition, pasture carrying capacity, livestock number, anomalous precipitation and temperature, snow depth, biomass, drought index, temperature forecast, etc. to predict which regions may experience severe winter condition. On 20 November 2018, a Dzud risk map was published (see **Figure 1**) and over 20 per cent of the country had high to very high risk of dzud, including Bayan-Ulgii, Uvs, Khovd, Govi-Altai, Zavkhan, Bayankhongor, Uvurkhangaï, and Arkhangai provinces. MRCS has been carefully monitoring the winter situation in the provinces that have high and very high risk of dzud.

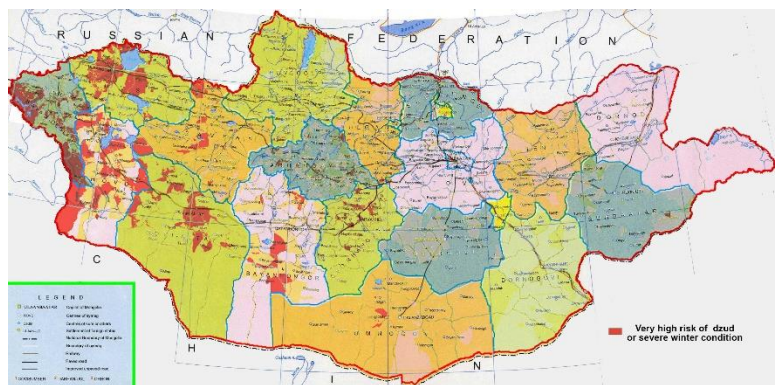


Figure 1. Dzud risk map (NAMEM, 20 November 2018).

According to the Red Cross branch of Khovd province, which has a very high risk of dzud, an emergency commission was formed to assess the winter situation as the local temperature dropped to minus 34 degrees Celsius in the mountainous area, and snow thickness became between 15 to 20 centimeters, which is above average (see **Figure 2**). In Khovd province, 4.8 million animals are at risk this winter and already over 20,000 livestock deaths and 3,242 pregnancy losses have occurred.

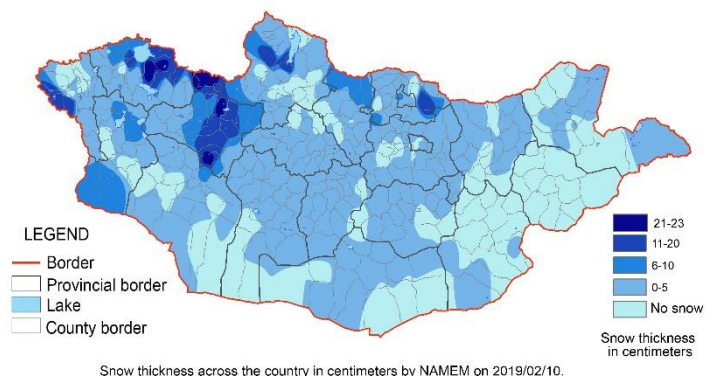


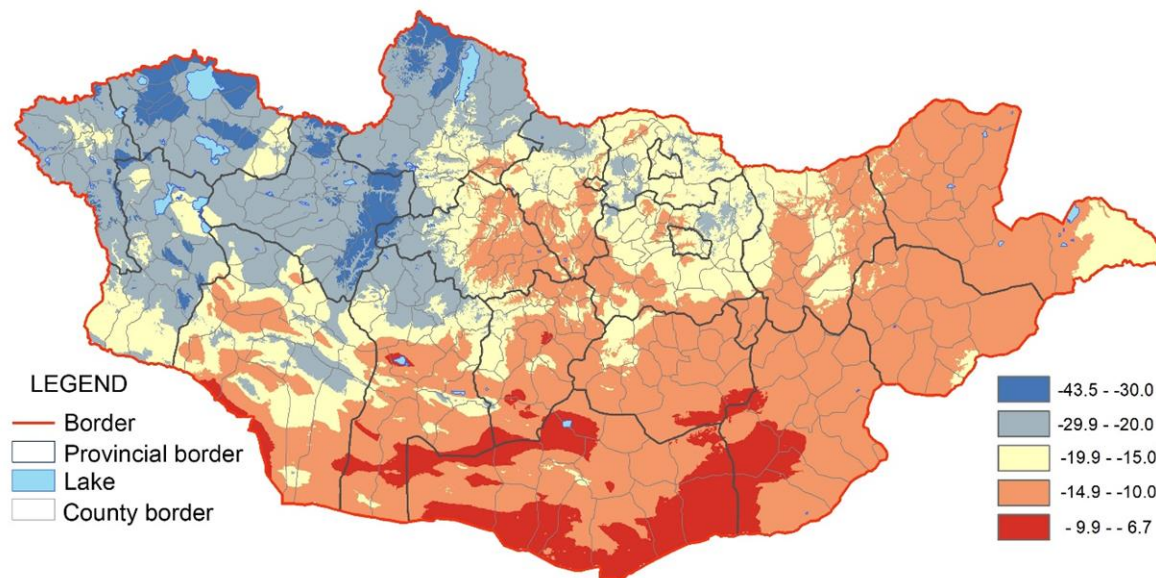
Figure 2. Snow thickness (NAMEM, 10 February 2019).

The Red Cross branch in Uvs province, another province which also has a very high risk of dzud, reported that 80 per cent of the province is covered by snow and snow thickness is between 15 to 24 centimeters in the steppe area, 40 to 80 centimeters

¹ A dzud is a Mongolian term for a severe winter in which a large number of livestock die, primarily due to starvation due to being unable to graze, or in other cases directly from the cold.

in the mountainous area, and the local temperature dropped to between minus 29 and minus 48 degrees Celsius (**see Figure 3**). Over 15,000 livestock have perished, and frozen fields are preventing livestock from grazing. The death rate is anticipated to hit its peak in spring (March to May) with no vegetation until June.

Emergency commission members met with herder households to assess their situation. Most herder households have started feeding their livestock with fodder to keep them alive; however, herders have stated that they will run out of their small amounts of reserved hay and fodder soon. In addition, due to the late onset of rain last summer (from end of July) hay is less nutritional to the livestock.



AVERAGE TEMPERTATURE OF JANUARY, 2019 BY NAMEM

Figure 3. Average air temperature of January 2019 (NAMEM, January 2019).

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

MRSC has been actively monitoring the winter situation, especially in the provinces that have high to very high risk of dzud. In both Khovd and Uvs provinces, emergency commissions to assess the winter situation have been formed and Red Cross branch secretaries and instructors have joined the commissions. National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) and Branch Disaster Response Team (BDRT) members are on alert in the event an operation is to be launched. A Humanitarian Country Team meeting is scheduled to occur on 21 February 2019 where the Mongolian National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) will provide a situation update.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

In Khovd province, 225 tonnes of hay was sold at 50 per cent discounted prices and 132 tonnes of fodder was sold at 30 per cent discounted prices from the state reserve. In Uvs province, 116 tonnes of hay and 85 tonnes of fodder were allocated to vulnerable herder households from the state reserve and the emergency commission wishes to get more resources from both governmental and non-governmental organizations to allocate more hay and fodder. Uvs province's authority also wishes to get more resources to allocate hay and fodder before the peak of livestock deaths begins.

Beginning in December 2018, based on Dzud risk map", Save the Children and World Vision Mongolia applied to the Start Fund from the START Network for early action. This early action was the result of technical support and coordination with MRCS and FAO in relation to the forecast-based financing pilot project conducted by MRCS and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) last year. Through the Start Fund, Save the Children and World Vision Mongolia started a "Dzud anticipation" project on 29 December 2018 and have since assisted 805 households in 7 soums (districts) of Bayan-Ulgii and Khovd provinces with cash grants and fodder supply. Currently, both organizations are planning to organize a lesson learned workshop.

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For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace**.