

# ***MONGOLIA: SNOWFALLS***

**Appeal no:5/2000**  
*22 February 2000*

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 815,200  
IN CASH AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 30,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR THREE MONTHS***

## ***Summary***

Severe snowfalls in large areas of Mongolia have caused the death of over half a million head of livestock, the mainstay of the rural economy and the sole source of food for herders and their families. Some 238,000 people in 11 Aimags are affected by the food shortages in the immediate term, and by the loss of their livelihood in the longer term. The government and the Mongolian Red Cross Society have already distributed emergency supplies in the worst affected areas, drawing on funds and goods donated locally. On 11 February Mongolia appealed for international aid. The operation for which this appeal seeks funding will provide food supplies for three months and winter boots to the worst affected herders and their families.

## ***The Disaster***

Unusually heavy and sustained snowfalls, the worst in Mongolia in 16 years, have affected large areas of the country. The snowfall started abnormally early in October and gradually built up: in some places the snow is 80 - 100 cm deep, with an underlying ice crust. By 1 February, the disaster had spread to over 56 Soums (counties) in 7 Aimags. These figures have now risen to 82 Soums in 11 Aimags. The worst hit areas are Bayangkhongor, Dundgobi and Zavkhan, Uverkhangai and Uvs. So far, three deaths have been reported as a direct result of the freezing weather.

Some 36,900 households (238,000 people), most of them herders and their families, are now facing serious difficulties following the large scale losses of their animals. At least 505,000 head of cattle, sheep and goats have died. The loss of meat and dairy products, which are the basic foodstuffs of the rural population, means many herders are now facing severe hunger.

About 2,000 cattle are dying each day. After a summer drought that seriously weakened their resistance, the herds are now unable to reach any grazing because of the snow cover and the ice crust. Some 8,000 herders have lost their entire herd of cattle. The current freezing temperatures ( as low as - 40 C in some areas) are expected to last a further three months.

The 'Zud', as this type of disaster is called in Mongolia, is characterised by an extensive and prolonged drought during the summer, followed by early and heavy falls of snow, interspersed with rain. Freezing temperatures create an ice cap over the ground, further restricting the cattle's access to the underlying pasture. The severe drought weakens the animals' ability to withstand the extreme cold and fodder shortages.

**Current statistics on the situation in the 11 affected Aimags**

| No. | Aimag        | Number of affected Soums | Dead cattle in the Aimag | Affected households | Affected people |
|-----|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1   | Dundgobi     | 15                       | 158,000                  | 8,200               | 56,900          |
| 2   | Bayankhongor | 6                        | 60,000                   | 4,340               | 28,500          |
| 3   | Zavkhan      | 19                       | 98,000                   | 7,467               | 49,500          |
| 4   | Uverkhangai  | 10                       | 108,000                  | 6,900               | 42,700          |
| 5   | Uvs          | 11                       | 64,000                   | 5,860               | 36,500          |
| 6   | Khuvsgul     | 4                        | 10,000                   | 2,760               | 16,300          |
| 7   | Umnegobi     | 4                        | 3,000                    | 560                 | 3,600           |
| 8   | Dornogobi    | 4                        | 2,000                    | 450                 | 2,800           |
| 9   | Gobi-altai   | 2                        | 700                      | 126                 | 700             |
| 10  | Bulgan       | 2                        | 900                      | 140                 | 600             |
| 11  | Bayan-ulgii  | 3                        | 700                      | 180                 | 300             |
|     |              |                          |                          |                     |                 |
|     | Total        | <b>80</b>                | <b>505,300</b>           | <b>36,900</b>       | <b>238,000</b>  |

## *The Response so far*

### **Government Action**

In the early phases of the disaster, the government released strategic reserves of fodder and fuel to affected areas. In early February, it launched a nationwide appeal for donations to assist the herder population. Since its launch, flour, rice, candles, matches and warm clothes worth 2 billion MNT (1,860,000 USD) have been received and distributed to 8 affected Aimags. The government has committed to further assist the herders, especially in the field of health care.

While this appeal has been reasonably effective, further aid became essential. On 11 February, Mongolia appealed to the United Nations for international assistance to help the affected population in the disaster hit areas.

### **Red Cross/Red Crescent Action**

Red Cross volunteers in the Aimag branches have assisted with the distribution of relief to the most vulnerable. Together with the Aimags' own Emergency Commissions, they have collected statistics on the most vulnerable in each Soum, so that assistance can be immediately distributed to these targeted families. During the distributions, the local Red Cross members and volunteers collect all the documentary records required by the MRCS Headquarters.

The President of the MRCS (who is also a member of the State Emergency Committee) accompanied the Prime Minister of Mongolia, Mr. R. Amarjargal, on a recent assessment mission to Dundgobi.

The Federation has released CHF 100,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund for the procurement of relief supplies.

### **Other Agencies' Action**

The Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is in close contact with the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator in Ulaanbaatar. The United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) will co-ordinate all international assistance.

### **Initial Response**

The MRCS has launched its own national appeal among its volunteer activists, membership and supporters to assist the affected Aimags.

To date it has distributed assistance worth MNT 9.7 million (9,000 USD) in the form of warm clothes, foodstuffs, candles and matches to 746 households in eight Soums of two Aimags.

In the next few days, foodstuffs (rice and flour), warm clothes and other aid worth 18 million MNT (17,000 USD) collected from domestic and external organisations and currently stored at the Disaster Centre of the MRCS will be distributed.

A further 10.2 million MNT ( 9,500 USD), a donation from the American Embassy in Ulaanbaatar, will be used to target 240 families in 3 Soums in the Bayankhongor Aimag. Other donations, including 1.7 Million MNT (1,570 USD) from the Russian Embassy and 2.0 Million MNT (1,850 USD) from an electrical company, will be used to provide medicines, foodstuffs, warm clothing and other basic relief material to those Soums not already assisted.

### **Co-ordination**

At national level, the State Emergency Committee (SEC) co-ordinates all national relief efforts. The close linkage between the SEC and the MRCS will ensure that assistance received through this appeal will be carefully co-ordinated with government and NGO efforts.

At local level, the Chairmen of the Soum Red Cross committees are often the Presidents of the Soum citizens' "Khural" or assembly. They are therefore familiar with the living conditions of the local herders and can ensure that aid received is distributed fairly, based on needs.

## ***The Intended Operation***

### **Assessment of Needs**

A number of assessment teams from the MRCS headquarters in Ulaanbataar have travelled to the most badly affected Aimags over the past weeks to gather information on the situation. Using this information, plus disaster reports from the Red Cross Aimag branches, the Society has compiled a complete assessment of the situation. The Federation's Acting Representative in the Regional Office in Beijing went to Ulaanbaatar in the first week of February to meet with the MRCS's management. The MRCS provided detailed statistics on the worst affected Soums within the five Aimags of Dundgobi, Bayankhongor, Zavkhan, Uverkhangai and Uvs. Based on the findings of this mission, as well as a mission report from the Federation's Regional Information Delegate, who visited some of the worst hit Aimags from 10 to 12 February, a plan of assistance has been drawn up.

### **Red Cross Objectives**

{ To ensure the rapid mobilisation of national and international funds to provide immediate assistance;

{ To provide a total of 30,000 beneficiaries in 22 Soums in the five Aimags of Dundgobi, Bayankhongor, Zavkhan, Uverkhangai and Uvs with complementary emergency food assistance (wheat flour and millet) for a 90-day period. The food represents a daily calory allowance of 1.200 Kcal. The total affected population of these five Aimags is over 214,000.

{ To provide winter boots to 1,200 people in Dundgobi, Zavkhan and Uverkhangai aimags.

### **Immediate Needs**

*Food:* With the loss of their herds, many herders have lost their sole source of food. The Red Cross response will be to supply 675 MT of wheat flour and 270 MT of millet -- representing supplementary emergency food for 30,000 beneficiaries for 90 days. Each person will receive the equivalent of 250 gr. of wheat flour and 100 gr of millet per day.

*Winter boots:* Many herders have had their horses die in the disaster and are forced to search for lost animals on foot. The MRCS therefore see the provision of replacement boots as a main priority. The Red Cross will provide 1,200 pairs of boots to the worst affected families.

### **Anticipated Later Needs**

The effects of this disaster will probably be felt by the population for some months to come. The Federation will monitor the situation in the affected areas and may extend the scope of the appeal at a later date.

## ***National Society/Federation Plan of Action***

### **Emergency Phase**

#### ***Phase 1: February - Mid March 2000***

The MRCS will use stocks currently held or being collected in Ulaanbaatar to alleviate the worst effects of the disaster prior to the mobilisation of international funding. Funding generated within the country will also help to bridge the gap. In order to assist the MRCS during this early phase, the Federation has allocated CHF 100,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) for the immediate procurement of relief supplies for the worst affected Aimags.

#### ***Phase 2: Mid March - April 2000***

Further plans of action, matching funds mobilised by this appeal with the specific needs at the time such funds arrive in Mongolia, will be developed to allow more deliveries of basic relief supplies to the worst affected areas.

### **Logistics and Procurement**

Distances of Aimags from the capital:

|                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Ulaanbaatar - Dundgobi     | 260 kms   |
| Ulaanbaatar - Bayankhongor | 630 kms   |
| Ulaanbaatar - Zavkhan      | 1,000 kms |
| Ulaanbaatar - Uverkhangai  | 450 kms   |
| Ulaanbataar - Uvs          | 1,336 kms |

Due to the distances between the capital and some of affected Aimags, and in order to reduce the delivery time and cost of transportation, goods for those Aimags furthest away (such as Zavkhan and Uvs) will be procured in the Aimag capitals. All the required goods can be purchased within the country itself.

### **Capacity of the National Society**

The MRCS has 21 Aimag branches and an extensive nationwide network of grassroots volunteer groups in each of the Soums. The Society has 240,000 members throughout the country. It has disaster preparedness warehouses in all the Aimags.

The MRCS has a dedicated team of relief staff at its HQ in Ulaanbaatar with experience in relief operations. Operational procedures are in line with those required by international donors.

### **Present Capacity of the Federation**

The Federation's office in Mongolia, which is staffed by two Mongolian national staff, will be reinforced by the assignment of a field delegate. The Federation's Regional Office in Beijing, currently staffed by three delegates, will provide support to the relief operation. In addition the operation will receive further support from the Regional Information and Finance Delegates based in the Federation's Southeast Asia Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur.

### **Monitoring and Reporting**

The Relief Co-ordinator of the MRCS and the Federation field delegate will carry out monitoring missions to the Aimags to ensure the operation is running to plan.

## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

This appeal is in response to the worst snowfalls in Mongolia for sixteen years. The massive loss of livestock, which forms an essential means of survival for the herders, has been catastrophic. Funding is urgently needed to assist the Mongolian Red Cross in its efforts to reach the most vulnerable victims of the disaster. Donors are therefore urged to support this appeal accordingly.

Margareta Wahlström  
Under Secretary General,  
Disaster Response & Operations Co-ordination

Didier Cherpitel  
Secretary General

| <b><u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u></b>                        |   | Annex 1                      |                              |
|---|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mongolia - Snowfalls                                |   |                              |                              |
| AP05/2000   |   |                              |                              |
| CODE  |   | <b><u>Initial Budget</u></b> | <b><u>Revised budget</u></b> |
| <b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>                                 |   | IN CHF                       |                              |
| 51  | Clothing (Winter boots)                             | 23,150                       | 172,485                      |
| 52  | Flour   | 336,150                      | 2,160,900                    |
| 52  | Millet /Rice  | 129,600                      | 308,700                      |
| <b>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</b>                           |   | 488,900                      | 2,642,085                    |
| <b><u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u></b>                     |   |                              |                              |
| 581   | Vehicles  | 18,000                       | 58,570                       |
| 582   | Computers/fax/radio equipment                       | 3,500                        | 36,719                       |
| <b><u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u></b>                     |   |                              |                              |
| CASH  | Programme management                                | 53,408                       | 273,904                      |
| CASH  | Technical support                                   | 15,988                       | 81,992                       |
| CASH  | Professional services                               | 17,730                       | 90,929                       |
| 59  | <b><u>TRANSPORT STORAGE &amp; VEHICLE COSTS</u></b> |                              |                              |
| 59  | Transport of goods/Storage (inspections fees)       | 149,000                      | 604,000                      |
| 59  | Vehicle maintenance                                 | 1,200                        | 24,800                       |
| 60  | <b><u>PERSONNEL</u></b>                             |                              |                              |
| 60  | Expatriate staff                                    | 30,000                       | 90,600                       |
| 60  | National staff                                      | 7,500                        | 47,870                       |
| <b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</u></b> |   |                              |                              |
| CASH  | Travel & related expenses                           | 9,435                        | 18,520                       |
| CASH  | Communication & Information expenses                | 5,790                        | 24,400                       |
| CASH  | Administrative & general expenses                   | 3,750                        | 36,564                       |
| CASH  | Evaluation/Assessment                               | 5,500                        | 31,097                       |
| CASH  | Audit fees  | 5,500                        |                              |
| <b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</b>                      |   | 326,301                      | 1,419,965                    |
| <b>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, SERVICES</b>                  |   | 815,201                      | <b>4,062,050</b>             |
| CFCASH  | <b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>                 |                              | <b>(258,170)</b>             |
| <b>NET REQUEST</b>                                  |   |                              | <b>3,803,880</b>             |

This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>