

MONGOLIA: SNOWFALLS

6 November
2000

appeal no. 5/2000

situation report no. 8

period covered: 19 August - 31 October 2000

The Federation appeal seeks to assist 35,000 of the most vulnerable over a 12 month period with food assistance and provision of winter boots. Phase 1 of the operation comprising 3 distributions was completed in September. Phase 2 covering the period from October to March is underway, although there are delays as a result of difficulties relating to procurement of food, and is made up of two distributions. An assessment is scheduled to take place at the close of the operation. The Mongolian Red Cross Society, supported by the Federation, will continue to monitor the situation in view of the forecast of particularly harsh winter conditions and the difficulties faced by the population.

The context

Severe snowfalls and extremely low temperatures last winter affected large areas of Mongolia and was preceded by the worst drought in 30 years. This and other factors combined to create what is locally called a multiple 'dzud' and caused the death of over two million head of livestock, the mainstay of the rural economy and the main source of food for herders and their families.

Over 450,000 people in 13 aimags are affected by the food shortages in the immediate term, and by the loss of their livelihood in the longer term. Throughout the year, the government and the Mongolian Red Cross Society have continued to distribute emergency supplies to the worst affected areas.

In response to the disaster situation, the Federation launched an initial appeal on the 22 February 2000 to provide support to 30,000 beneficiaries over a 3 month period. Further assessments indicated that

the situation was likely to deteriorate further with far reaching consequences for the affected population. Consequently, the Federation launched a revised appeal on 29 March seeking CHF 4,062,050 to support 35,000 beneficiaries over a 12 month period with wheatflour, rice or millet as well as distributing 8,000 pairs of winter boots.

Latest events

A culmination of historical, environmental, climatic and socio-economic conditions leave Mongolia facing what many predict will be another harsh winter and spring. This summer's drought which has affected some 60% of Mongolia has adversely affected the regeneration of the pastureland over the short summer and autumn period. Officials in Zavkhan, Bayankhongor and Overkhangai report that over 75% of their territories have experienced very dry conditions and the whole of Dundgobi has been affected by dry conditions, high temperatures and much lower than average precipitation.

This has affected the summer grazing pastures and preparation of winter hay throughout the country. At the beginning of October, the State Emergency Commission (SEC) held a meeting to discuss preparations and provisions being made for the forthcoming winter. According to the SEC, approximately USD 540,000 should be made available to renew and increase the State reserve hay and fodder stocks and to repair well and water points in 8 aimags. In addition, some USD 64,500 will be made available to Dornogobi and Omnogobi aimags to enable them to build up their winter reserve stocks. Aimag and Soum authorities have also been encouraged to build up their own reserves of hay and fodder. However, since the privatisation of the herds in the early 1990s, the responsibility for the preparation of hay and fodder lies with the herders.

A lack of funding or adequate resources combined with the effects of the summer drought are making this extremely difficult and local authorities and herders face the prospect of another harsh winter and spring with inadequate provisions for their animals. The local authorities in Dundgobi aimag have made agreements with Tuv and Selenge aimags to provide them with hay. Hay produced in Tuv is currently being purchased at USD 0.45 and is being sold in Overkhangai aimag for the equivalent to USD 1.3 per bale and as winter progresses, the prices are likely to increase.

The Ministry of Agriculture has reported that some 2.4 million head of livestock belonging to 7,000 households in 8 aimags will migrate to other aimags and that 4.2 million livestock in 10 aimags will move within their own aimags. Overkhangai alone needs to move more than 400,000 livestock but, to date, no official contract has been made with other aimags.

Herders are likely to start preparing their own winter and spring food sources, such as frozen and dried meat, towards the end of November. Those with few animals may sell or kill them all rather than struggle through another difficult winter and those with a handful of animals remaining are unlikely to migrate far. The collection of dung which will be used for fuel has already started.

Winter has already started in Mongolia and strong winds and snowstorms are forecast to take place before the end of November. There is likely to be higher than average levels of snowfall in Uvs, Zavkhan, Bayankhongor, Overkhangai and Dundgobi aimags. Colder temperatures are also being forecast for the end of winter and beginning of spring (March) which will coincide with the start of the lambing season. Paradoxically, snow is needed to provide a source of water following the summer drought, yet too much snow will prevent the animals from reaching the grass.

Save the Children Fund UK (SC-UK) and ADRA have just carried out nutritional assessments in Bayankhongor and Zavkhan aimags respectively. The SC-UK April 2000 assessment showed that there had been no obvious increase in acute malnutrition because of the 'dzud' and this was further confirmed in their follow up assessment in September 2000. Their report, however, emphasises the

high levels of chronic malnutrition and the number of families that are living in extreme poverty with almost no resources.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Phase 1: March - September 2000 •

Phase 1 of the Mongolia Snowfalls operation which was divided into 3 distributions (March, May/June and July/August) was completed in September. The plan was to provide some 6,300 households (35,000 beneficiaries) in 95 soums of the 6 worst affected aimags with a supplementary food assistance ration as follows:

- Wheatflour: 300 grams (per person per day) x 180 days x 5.5 (average household size) = 300 kgs
- Rice: 50 grams (per person per day) x 180 days x 5.5 (average household size) = 50 kgs

A summary of the distributions that took place during Phase 1 is outlined in the table below.

Aimag	Number of Households	Distribution of rice (kgs) and wheatflour purchased instead of rice	Distribution of wheatflour (kgs)	Distribution of boots (pairs)
Dundgobi	1,415	74,325	424,500	580
Bayankhongor	465	24,575	140,500	360
Zavkhan	1,230	65,650	369,000	580
Overkhangai	1,425	75,875	427,500	580
Uvs	1,000	57,000	305,000	400
Tuv	765	40,075	229,500	327
TOTAL	6,300	337,500	1,896,000	2,827

The Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS)/Federation experienced problems with the provision of rice as part of the supplementary food assistance package. This was caused by a shortage of rice available in Mongolia. Following lengthy discussions, the MRCS/Federation decided to replace the rice with wheatflour.

Other difficulties with the procurement of wheatflour (which have been included in previous reports) were resolved by purchasing wheatflour in Ulaan Baatar and transporting it by road to Uvs.

Six field vehicles have also been purchased for the aimag Red Cross branches to facilitate transportation, monitoring and follow up of the operation. So far, the vehicles have been allocated to Overkhangai, Uvs, Bayankhongor, Dundgobi, MRCS headquarters and the final vehicle will either be allocated to Tuv or Zavkhan Red Cross branches.

Phase 2: October 2000 - March 2001 •

Phase 2 of the operation which covers the winter period from October to March, has now started and is based on the following objectives:

- To provide the same 35,000 beneficiaries with complementary winter food rations for a further 180 day period.
- To continue to assist the MRCS with its staffing needs to adequately monitor, manage and distribute the relief goods.

Due to difficulties in the procurement of food, phase 2 which was due to start in October and has now been delayed until the beginning of November, will be divided into two plans of action (PoAs), focusing on 2 distributions:

- Plan of Action 4 - November/December
- Plan of Action 5 - December/January.

Procurement and transportation of wheatflour

The complementary food ration has been increased for the winter distribution as follows:

- Wheatflour: 450 grams (per person per day) x 180 days x 5.5 (average household size) = 450 kgs

Therefore a total of 225 kgs will be distributed to each household in November/December and again in December/January. The distribution plan for PoA 4 of November/December is as follows:

Aimag	Number of Households	Distribution of wheatflour (225 kgs) per household	Distribution of boots (pairs)
Dundgobi	1,415	318,375	810
Bayankhongor	465	104,625	480
Zavkhan	1,230	276,750	1,456
Overkhangai	1,425	320,625	890
Uvs	1,000	225,000	915
Tuv	765	172,125	619
TOTAL	6,300	1,417,500	5,170

As with Phase 1 of the Snowfalls operation, standard Federation procedures have been followed for the tendering and procurement of wheatflour for Phase 2 of the operation. This process started in mid August and a contract has been signed with a local company to procure 2,205 metric tons. An additional 630 tons still needs to be purchased for Phase 2 and it is likely that an amendment to the contract will be made in December to account for this.

As the supplier does not have any milling facilities in Mongolia, the wheatflour is being processed in Russia and will be transported to Ulaan Baatar by train. Milling procedures, the printing of the bags and the scheduling of railway wagons from Russia to Mongolia have caused delays to the start of the distributions which were scheduled to commence in October.

The latest information available from the supplier indicates that the first shipment of 125 mt of wheatflour should arrive in Ulaan Baatar around 10 November. This will be shipped to Uvs with the boots.

The wheatflour and boots will be transported from Ulaan Baatar to the 95 soums in the 6 aimags by truck. Once the delivery schedule of wheatflour from Russia to Mongolia has been confirmed by the supplier then a detailed in country transportation plan can be drawn up by the MRCS.

With the onset of winter and snow which has already fallen in the western aimags, the MRCS/Delegation fully expect that there will be delays with the transportation to the soums. The delegation is currently in discussion with the transportation company regarding the current increase in fuel prices and an additional charge that might be levied for trucks being caught in the snow.

Procurement of Boots

A contract has been signed with a local supplier for the purchase of 5,171 pairs of working boots and these are now ready for distribution.

Mid term evaluation

This was scheduled to take place at the end of August but has had to be postponed and it is now likely that this will take place towards the end of the operation when a more detailed prognosis of achievements and lessons learnt will be carried out. The MRCS/Federation continue to collect feedback from local authorities, aimag and Soum Red Cross branch staff and Red Cross beneficiaries on the impact and appropriateness of the assistance being provided which will be used to feed into the final evaluation.

Programme Management •

The regional relief delegate from the East Asia Regional Office in Beijing visited Mongolia in September to work with the MRCS on their country assistance strategy and development programme planning for 2001. A Federation reporting delegate spent 4 weeks in Mongolia working on specific donor reports and reporting issues and compiling a detailed overview of the operation to date.

The regional finance officer from the regional finance unit in Kuala Lumpur spent 2 days in Mongolia working with the delegation on outstanding financial and reporting issues. The delegation continues to liaise closely with the regional finance unit on the monitoring of the budget and allocation of donor funding to specific budget lines respecting earmarking, timeframes and reporting requirements.

The regional health delegate from the South East Asia Delegation in Bangkok ran a 5 day health workshop in Ulaan Baatar for MRCS project managers on the development of the health strategy.

Outstanding needs

Thanks to generous support received from sister Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the international donor community, the appeal has attained a 100 % (plus) coverage which has enabled the MRCS/Federation to conclude Phase 1 of the operation and to plan and start the implementation of Phase 2 of the operation.

With the onset of what is predicted to be another harsh winter the MRCS/Federation will continue to monitor the situation.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

During the reporting period, the delegation held meetings with ADRA, Save the Children Fund (UK), World Vision and the UNDMT representative to share information on support currently being provided, assessment of the situation and the outlook for the winter. In addition, the UNDMT held a round table meeting for all agencies to present their future plans. The MRCS/Federation delegation have participated in meetings and a one day workshop on the United Nations' lessons learnt process which is currently being carried out by a joint team of national and international consultants.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The impact of last winter's multiple 'dzud' and this summer's severe drought do not augur well for the coming winter and many predict that conditions are likely to be as harsh as last winter, if not worse, with a severe and difficult spring. The MRCS/Federation continue to work closely together to monitor the situation.

Current delays in the arrival of wheatflour in Ulaan Baatar are hampering the implementation of Phase 2 of the operation and are likely to result in further delays with onward transportation to the soums due to winter and snow conditions.

For further information, please contact Marcel Fortier, Desk Officer, on +41 22 730 4268 (e:mail: fortier@ifrc.org).

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head
Operations Funding and
Reporting Department

Hiroshi Higashiura
Head
Asia & Pacific Department

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

Mongolia - Snowfalls						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No 05 /2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED			11/06/00	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				4,062,050		TOTAL COVERAGE 104.1%
Balance carried forward from 1999				0		
AUSTRALIA - RC		16,178	AUD	16,948	04/04/00	
AUSTRALIA - GOVT/RC		98,210	AUD	96,590	04/14/00	
AUSTRALIA - RC		10,000	AUD	10,476	03/02/00	
AUSTRALIA - GOVT/RC		220,000	AUD	215,754	04.07.00	FOOD & BOOTS
AUSTRIAN - RC		34,992	EUR	54,657	16.06.00	
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID		32,000	GBP	82,880	03/14/00	
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID		147,059	GBP	377,942	15.06.00	
BRITISH - RC		4,096	GBP	10,322	18.07.00	
BRITISH - PRIVATE		500	GBP	1,295	03/29/00	
BRITISH - PRIVATE				129	28.07.00	
CANADA - RC		10,000	CAD	10,847	02/25/00	
CHINA, TAIWAN - RC		1,000	USD	1,648	26.05.00	
DENMARK - RC		250,000	DKK	54,125	04/05/00	
DENMARK - GOVT/RC		950,000	DKK	200,640	05/10/00	
ECHO		500,000	EUR	778,100	03.05.00	WHEAT FLOUR / STAFF
FINLAND - GOVT/RC		58,865	EUR	94,861	02/22/00	
GERMANY - GOVT		109,250	DEM	88,919	04/12/00	F/1300 PAIRS OF WINTER BOOTS
GERMANY - PRIVATE				206	17.04.00	
ICELAND - RC		1,000,000	ISK	21,895	03/29/00	
ICELAND - RC		200,000	ISK	4,379	02/29/00	
IRELAND - GOVT		75000	IEP	148,178	22.06.00	
JAPAN - RC				82,000	03/02/00	
JAPAN - RC				121,000	03/31/00	
JAPAN - RC		2,923,723	JPY	45,496	13.06.00	
JAPAN - PRIVATE				157	05.06.00	
REPUBLIC OF KOREA - RC				20,000	02/29/00	
REPUBLIC OF KOREA - PRIVATE/RC		730000	WON	1,083	07.06.00	PUBLIC CONTRIBUTION
LUXEMBOURG - GOVT		1,500,000	LUF	59,921	04/07/00	
LUXEMBOURG - PRIVATE				275	04/06/00	
MONACO - RC		50,000	FRF	11,985	03/29/00	
NETHERLANDS - RC		15,000	NLG	10,973	03/13/00	
NETHERLANDS - RC		75,000	NLG	54,867	03/13/00	
NEW ZEALAND - PRIVATE				811	22.05.00	
NORWAY - GOVT/RC		450,000	NOK	89,089	03/07/00	
NORWAY - RC		80,000	NOK	15,575	03/07/00	
TURKEY - RC		20,000	USD	31,480	03/20/00	
TAIWAN - PRIVATE		983	USD	1,635	26.05.00	
SWEDEN - RC		1,000,000	SEK	186,700	03/31/00	
SWITZERLAND - GOVT				100,000	05/01/00	FOOD AND NON FOOD ITEMS
SWITZERLAND - PRIVATE				1,000	04/12/00	
USAID		618,255	USD	1,043,614	24.04.00	FOOD ASSISTANCE
UNITED STATES - PRIVATE				82	04/04/00	
UNITED STATES - PRIVATE				1,295	10.04.00	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				4,149,829	CHF	102.2%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
AMERICAN - GOVT		36,745	USD	62,044	02.05.00	
Japan	Delegate(s)			17,413		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				79,457	CHF	2.0%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						
PMN504						