

# ***MONGOLIA: SNOWFALLS***

*7 April 2000*

*Appeal no. 5/2000 (revised)*

*situation report no. 3*

*period covered: 7 March - 6 April 2000*

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*More than 400,000 people are now affected by the disaster, which has killed 1.7 million head of livestock. The relief operation has already delivered three-month food rations to 19,100 herders and their families and further distributions are being scheduled to reach the remaining 16,000 beneficiaries.*

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## ***The context***

Severe snowfalls in large areas of Mongolia have caused the death of over one and a half million head of livestock, the mainstay of the rural economy and the sole source of food for herders and their families.

Over 400,000 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. The government and the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) have already distributed emergency supplies to the worst affected areas, drawing on funds and goods donated locally.

In response to the disaster situation, the International Federation launched an initial Appeal on 22 February 2000 to provide support to 30,000 beneficiaries over a 3 month period. Further assessments of the situation indicated that the situation was likely to deteriorate further with far reaching consequences for the affected population. The Federation therefore revised its Appeal on 29 March in order to increase support to 35,000 beneficiaries over a 12 month period.

## ***Latest events***

Although it is now springtime in Mongolia, bitter winds and freezing temperatures pose a major challenge to herders who are already mentally and physically exhausted after the harsh winter and the trauma of losing large numbers of their livestock.

The lambing season began in March. It has been badly affected by the loss of animals and the weakened state of those remaining which, in many cases, has led to premature births or sickly offspring that cannot be adequately fed by their mothers. Not only has this placed an additional burden on herders trying to care for weak newly born animals which are crucial to the regeneration of their herds but it has had a serious impact on the availability of the traditional 'white foods' or dairy products, which form the main component of the herders' diet during the spring and summer periods. In addition, winter supplies of dried food stocks are now running out. This disruption of the food security system is likely to cause a serious deterioration in the population's nutritional and health status.

Out of necessity, herders have had to travel outside their normal ‘otor’ nomadic patterns of movement in search of better pasture for their remaining animals. In many cases, this has resulted in a separation of families, as the stronger members move with the herds and leave behind the elderly, sick and children. This is placing a strain on host communities and local services in neighbouring Aimags who are having to care and provide for those who are now considered to be internally displaced.

By 30 March, statistics showed that 412,000 people (77,833 households) in 13 of the country’s 21 Aimags (provinces) -- or 50% of the total population in those 13 aimags -- have now been affected by the multiple ‘dzud’ disaster. Seven deaths have been directly attributed to this disaster.

The total death toll of livestock now stands at 1.7 million, with a loss of 1.5 million in the worst affected aimags, as detailed in the table below. These aimags have been targeted to receive assistance from the Federation\MRCS through the Emergency Appeal.

<b>Aimag</b>	<b>Affected soums</b>	<b>Affected households</b>	<b>Affected people</b>	<b>Livestock loss per Aimag</b>	<b>Number of households that have lost all their livestock</b>
Dundgobi	15	8,074	33,730	484,789	160
Uverkhangaï	19	15,842	57,031	367,070	258
Zavkhan	24	14,700	95,550	313,987	
Uvs	19	9,319	65,914	184,778	
Bayankhongor	6	3,841	23,046	98,447	
Tuv	12	8,837	53,022	86,197	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>60,613</b>	<b>328,293</b>	<b>1,535,268</b>	<b>418</b>

One of the main priorities for the herders is the restocking of their livestock around which their lives are based. Animals provide the herders with the following:

- their main source of food (meat and dairy products)
- transportation - to medical facilities, and schools and to enable the herders to maintain their nomadic way of life
- fuel - dung is used in stoves to provide warmth and for cooking
- income (through the sale of wool) and barter\exchange for other items
- inheritance - to be passed on to future generations

Traditionally, March is the best time of year for the herdsman to sell their cashmere when the quality of wool is at its best. Income generated is then used to cover education, the purchase of additional food items and clothes. The loss of goats means that there has been a significant decline in cashmere sales and consequently a loss of a vital source of additional income for the herders.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

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

#### ***Plan of Action 1***

By the end of March, Plan of Action 1 had been completed and 2,600 families (19,100 people) had received 50 kgs of wheatflour and 25kgs of either rice or millet. 600 winter boots were purchased centrally in Ulaan Baatar and distributed to 600 families in Dundgobi, Zavkhan and Uverkhangaï.

The poor condition of the roads and heavy snowfall resulted in a 2 day delay in the distribution of relief items in Uverkhangaï, Bayankhongor and Zavkhan Aimags. As far as possible, distributions took place

in either the Aimag or Soum Centres. Due to the often isolated and remote locations of the most affected herders, Red Cross volunteers in some instances have had to travel over 100 kilometres to reach beneficiaries who have moved out of the soum or aimag in search of better pasture. Each Aimag Red Cross Branch is responsible for supporting its own herders even if they have moved to neighbouring areas.

Six members from the MRCS headquarters travelled to the Aimags to support the Aimag Branches in the procurement and distribution of the relief items and in reporting back to headquarters.

#### **April - September 2000**

It is likely that there will be a further 2 plans of action to complete Phase 1 and distribute a 3 month ration of wheatflour and rice\millet to the remaining 16,000 beneficiaries, thus ensuring the Federation\MRCS reach their target of providing support to 35,000 beneficiaries.

Following the launching of the revised appeal, the Regional Logistics Delegate from the Kazakhstan Delegation and a Procurement Officer from the Secretariat will travel to Mongolia to work with the MRCS on the tendering and procurement of the relief items and on drawing up a delivery\transportation schedule of the supplies to the affected provinces.

A member of the Red Cross Society of China who provides logistical support to the DPRK operation and the Federation's Regional Office in Beijing will also join the team as part of a regional training initiative.

#### ***Beneficiary selection criteria***

Discussions are being held within MRCS to finalise a detailed set of criteria which will take into consideration household size and composition (including the number of children), able-bodied household members and livestock numbers according to the 1999 livestock census, and the loss of animals since the start of the disaster. First priority will be given to those who had less than 300 head of livestock to start with.

#### ***MRCS***

The MRCS Red Cross Committees in the Aimags continue to collect data and information on the disaster situation and are working closely with the State Emergency Commission (SEC) and the National Statistics Office on the compilation of data and figures from the affected areas to ensure that there is consistency and accuracy.

This month, the MRCS will start a weekly 5 minute radio programme on Mongolian national radio to disseminate information on future Red Cross distributions and to help facilitate communication among the Red Cross Branches.

#### **Federation Delegation •**

The Federation Liaison Delegate completed his 3 week assignment to work closely with the MRCS in the early planning and implementation stages of the operation. He was replaced by a Field Delegate from the Japanese Red Cross at the beginning of March. The Delegation office in Mongolia is also supported by 2 national members of staff and the Mongolia Snowfalls emergency operation by the Regional Delegation's in Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Moscow and Almaty.

#### **National Action w**

The SEC, the government body responsible for co-ordinating the overall emergency response, has taken measures to deliver hay, basic emergency supplies (flour, rice, millet, milk powder, tea, candles), essential medical supplies and warm clothes to the affected population. All soums housing displaced herders have been instructed to provide health care free of charge.

The Ministries of Agriculture and Industry and Health and Social Welfare have recently carried out a survey to identify outstanding urgent needs. Besides wheat flour and rice, the herders are also in need of sugar, vegetable oil and dairy products and vitamins.

Representatives from the MRCS, the SEC, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture and Industry meet on a weekly basis to share information on the disaster relief efforts.

#### **Other Agency Relief Efforts •**

On 3 April, the United Nations launched an inter-agency appeal for Mongolia seeking USD 2,981,000. The UN appeal will focus on providing assistance to the following sectors: livestock, food security through agriculture, water supply and pastureland irrigation, nutrition, health, education, and co-ordination and monitoring.

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) are currently carrying out a needs assessment mission. Their findings will be incorporated into the appeal in the near future.

## ***Outstanding needs***

The consequences of the 'dzud' are both complex and devastating and it is widely recognised that the disaster situation is reaching a critical stage. The herders' winter food stocks are running out and due to the high loss of animals and weakened state of those remaining, the lambing season is not yielding the required dairy products which are the main food source over the spring and summer months .

Immediate assistance is needed to ensure that those affected by the disaster are able to cope during the lean months. The Federation urgently needs funds to provide a supplementary food ration and winter boots, as outlined in the revised Appeal, and so respond to this emergency in a timely and effective way.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

A Federation Information team worked with a Mongolian camera crew for one week to collect information and footage on the general situation and on Red Cross activities and response. Edited footage and script has now been released to AP and Reuters in Beijing . A press release accompanied the launching of the revised Appeal and was circulated to media contacts in Ulaan Baatar, Beijing and Moscow. Updated information and a human interest story have been posted on the Federation's website [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)

The MRCS, the Federation Delegation in Ulaan Baatar and the Regional Office in Beijing continue to provide information to interested media representatives and to participate in interviews. The MRCS have been instrumental in providing support and advice and facilitating visits to the affected areas where possible.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1

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

Director  
Operations Funding & Reporting Department

Director  
Asia & Pacific Department

<b><u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u></b>		Annex I
Mongolia - Snowfalls		
AP05/2000		
	<b><u>Initial Budget</u></b>	<b><u>Revised budget</u></b>
<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>	IN CHF	
Clothing (Winter boots)	23,150	172,485
Flour	336,150	2,160,900
Millet /Rice	129,600	308,700
<b>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</b>	488,900	2,642,085
<b><u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u></b>		
Vehicles	18,000	58,570
Computers/fax/radio equipment	3,500	36,719
<b><u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u></b>		
Programme management	53,408	273,904
Technical support	15,988	81,992
Professional services	17,730	90,929
<b><u>TRANSPORT STORAGE &amp; VEHICLE COSTS</u></b>		
Transport of goods/Storage (inspections fees)	149,000	604,000
Vehicle maintenance	1,200	24,800
<b><u>PERSONNEL</u></b>		
Expatriate staff	30,000	90,600
National staff	7,500	47,870
<b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</u></b>		
Travel & related expenses	9,435	18,520
Communication & Information expenses	5,790	24,400
Administrative & general expenses	3,750	36,564
Evaluation/Assessment	5,500	31,097
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>
<b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>		<b>(782,454)</b>
<b>NET REQUEST</b>		<b>3,279,596</b>