

# ***MONGOLIA - SNOWFALLS***

*26 April 2000*

***Appeal no. 5/2000 (revised)  
situation report no. 4  
period covered: 6 - 25 April 2000***

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## ***The context***

Severe snowfalls in large areas of Mongolia have caused the death of over two million head of livestock, the mainstay of the rural economy and the sole 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. The government and the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) have already distributed emergency supplies to the worst affected areas.

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 three-month period. Further assessments of the situation indicated it was likely to deteriorate further with far reaching consequences for the affected population. Consequently, the Federation launched a revised Appeal on 29 March to support 35,000 beneficiaries over a 12-month period with wheatflour, and rice or millet, as well as by distributing 8,000 pairs of winter boots.

## ***Latest events***

The impact of this year's multiple 'dzud' has far reaching consequences for the affected households and is not just limited to the winter period. The UN estimates that by June -- the start of the summer and the growing season -- some five million head of livestock will have perished. The Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) recently reported that the latest food emergency in the Asia region is now considered to be in Mongolia, where the food security of an estimated one quarter of the total population of 2.7 million people is under threat.

On a recent monitoring visit to Uverkhangai Aimag, Red Cross staff were informed that herders are already consuming their summer supply of dried meat prepared last Autumn. The significant loss of animals for individual households has considerably reduced their ability to supplement their diet or income through the normal 'barter' exchange channels.

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On a recent monitoring visit to Uverkhangai Aimag, Red Cross staff were informed that herders are already consuming their summer supply of dried meat prepared last Autumn. The significant loss of animals for individual households has considerably reduced their ability to supplement their diet or income through the normal 'barter' exchange channels.

According to the State Emergency Commission statistics, livestock losses in 95 soums in the six worst affected provinces (see the table overleaf) form 81% of the total livestock loss. By 20 April the National Statistics Office estimated that over 2.2 million head of livestock had died. More than 50% of the cattle in Dundgobi province have now perished and one fourth of the so called large animals (horses, camels and cows) have died in Overkhangai and Uvs Aimags.

| <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                    | 8,110                      | 36,495                 | 561,867                         | 160  |
| Uverkhangai  | 19                    | 16,700                     | 64,185                 | 434,406                         | 258  |
| Zavkhan      | 24                    | 14,700                     | 95,550                 | 335,064                         | 266  |
| Uvs          | 19                    | 9,570                      | 71,775                 | 214,189                         |  |
| Bayankhongor | 6                     | 4,250                      | 27,625                 | 148,255                         |  |
| Tuv          | 12                    | 8,870                      | 53,202                 | 107,689                         | 99   |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>95</b>             | <b>62,200</b>              | <b>348,832</b>         | <b>1,801,470</b>                | <b>783</b>   |

Steppe fires which started in Russia in February spread into northern Mongolia and have affected 24 soums in nine Aimags that are located mostly in forest and forest-steppe areas. On 13 April, two Aimags were still affected by the fires, three households have lost their gers -- traditional felt tents -- and pasture land has been badly affected. The State Emergency Commission is working closely with local residents to stamp out the fires.

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

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

The main objectives for Phase 1 of the Mongolia Snowfalls Emergency Appeal are to provide boots to 8,000 households and a six-month supplementary food ration to 35,000 beneficiaries (6,300 households) as detailed in the table below:

- Wheatflour: 6 x 50 kilogram bags per household
- Rice or millet: 2 x 30 kilogram bags per household

| <b>Aimag</b> | <b>Number of Soums</b> | <b>Number of Households</b> |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dundgobi     | 15                     | 1,415                       |
| Bayankhongor | 6                      | 465                         |
| Zavkhan      | 24                     | 1,230                       |
| Uverkhangai  | 19                     | 1,425                       |
| Uvs          | 19                     | 1,000                       |
| Tuv          | 12                     | 765                         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>95</b>              | <b>6,300</b>                |

In addition, MRCS will receive six vans and fax machines to distribute to the Aimag Branches to ease and facilitate transport and communication. Staffing levels at MRCS headquarters and Aimag Branches will also be reinforced throughout the operation.

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***Plan of Action 1 (PoA 1) - March***

By the end of Plan of Action 1, a total of 130 metric tons of wheatflour and 65 metric tons of rice/millet had been distributed to 2,600 households. Each household received 50 kilograms of wheatflour - or a one month ration -- and 25 kilograms of rice\millet - a three month ration -- as follows:

| <b>Aimag</b> | <b>Number of Soums</b> | <b>Number of Households</b> |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dundgobi     | 7                      | 700                         |
| Bayankhongor | 3                      | 300                         |
| Zavkhan      | 4                      | 400                         |
| Uverkhangai  | 5                      | 500                         |
| Uvs          | 3                      | 300                         |
| Tuv          | 4                      | 400                         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>26</b>              | <b>2,600</b>                |

A total of 600 pairs of boots were distributed to households in Dundgobi, Zavkhan and Uverkhangai Aimags.

***Plan of Action 2 (PoA 2) - May***

PoA 2 will conclude the distribution of a three-month supplementary food ration of wheatflour and rice\millet to 6,300 households or 35,000 beneficiaries, in the six worst affected Aimags of Dundgobi, Uverkhangai, Zavkhan, Bayankhongor, Tuv and Uvs. Distributions are likely to take place towards the end of May\beginning of June.

In PoA 2, the 2,600 families from PoA 1 will receive a further 100 kilograms of wheatflour per household (4 x 25 kg bags), representing a two-month supply. By the end of PoA 2, they will have received their three-month supplementary food ration of both wheatflour and rice\millet.

The remaining 3,700 households will receive 150 kilograms of wheatflour (6 x 25 kg bags) and 30 kilograms of rice or millet which represents the full three months supplementary food ration.

In addition to the 600 pairs of winter boots that were distributed as part of PoA 1, 2,277 pairs of working boots will be provided by the end of Phase 1. The Federation\MRCS plan to procure and distribute 5,171 pairs of felt boots as part of Phase 2, bringing the total of boots purchased for the whole operation to 8,048.

So far, two vans have been purchased and supplied to Bayankhongor and Uverkhangai Aimags and 11 fax machines have been supplied to the Aimag Branches to ease communication.

***Plan of Action 3 (PoA 3): July - September***

The target beneficiary group of 6,300 households or 35,000 beneficiaries will receive a further three-month supplementary food ration of wheatflour and rice or millet. This will conclude Phase 1 of the operation and the provision of a six-month supplementary food ration to 35,000 beneficiaries.

***Tendering and procurement of relief supplies***

As PoA 1 has already taken place, a logistics team comprising the Regional Logistics delegate from the Almaty Delegation, a senior Logistics Officer from the Secretariat and the Chinese Red Cross Logistics Assistant from the East Asia Regional Office in Beijing were tasked with setting up and implementing the tendering, procurement and transportation process to complete Phase 1 of the operation.

Wheatflour for five of the six aimags (Dundgobi, Uverkhangai, Zavkhan, Bayankhongor and Tuv) for 5,300 households, will be purchased in Ulaan Baatar and transported to the 76 soums in these Aimags. Given that the sixth aimag, Uvs Aimag, is located some 1300 kilometres from Ulaan Baatar, wheatflour

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to support 1000 households will be purchased locally within the aimag to reduce transportation and warehousing costs. Rice will be purchased in Ulaan Baatar for all of the Aimags.

As rice is not grown in Mongolia, there are no official specifications and therefore samples have been sent to China for testing. Wheatflour is readily available in Mongolia as it is either grown locally or imported and processed in mills located throughout the country. This will also be tested in China.

Based on the test results, suppliers will be chosen and it is likely that contracts will be finalised and signed by the end of this week. Separate transport contracts will be finalised with local companies so that distribution can start towards the end of May.

#### *Monitoring and reporting*

The Federation plans to strengthen the monitoring and reporting capacity of the Delegation\MRCS during PoA 2 distributions by providing, in addition to the team leader, a logistics delegate who will be based in Ulaan Baatar and one monitoring delegate who will be based in the field and work closely with the Red Cross Committees.

#### **MRCS •**

The MRCS has now started its weekly five minute programme on the national radio. It is entitled “Eight Eleven Information Time” as it is run at 8 am and repeated at 11 am every Thursday morning. Three programmes have been broadcast to date. The first focused on providing general information on the disaster situation and the Federation\MRCS Appeal. The second programme encouraged beneficiaries to provide feedback to local Red Cross Committees and Branches on the March distribution and the third programme concentrated on current Red Cross activities.

MRCS plans to use this programme for information on upcoming distributions, feedback from beneficiaries and other Red Cross activities.

#### **National Action w**

By 14 April, the State Emergency Commission (SEC) had reportedly distributed food aid, cattle fodder and hay to the worst affected aimags. It plans to distribute additional flour to the herders and provide fodder supplements for the animals.

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Industry (MoAI) are working on a programme for the safe removal of animal corpses and the dissemination of information on the prevention of infectious disease from the decaying corpses. The MoAI is also looking at a restocking project for those families that have lost all of their animals, and reconstruction work on wells in six Aimags. A project aimed at reducing the steppe rodent population is being organised for Bayankhongor and Dundgobi Aimags, to be followed by Tuv and Zavkhan Aimags.

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

HelpAge International has just completed an assessment of the impact of this year’s ‘dzud’ on older people. A report has been issued providing recommendations for organisations to follow with regard to older persons in future relief efforts in Mongolia.

Save the Children Fund (UK) has just finished a needs assessment designed specifically to look at the nutritional situation of children affected by the ‘dzud’ in Bayankhongor aimag, where it has had a presence since 1995. To date, it has already provided one shipment of food, boots and heating materials to the worst affected soums in Bayankhongor. Its findings indicate there has been no increase in acute malnutrition since the 1999 nutrition survey took place but that there has been some increase in chronic malnutrition. Whether this can be attributed to the dzud or is part of the normal seasonal changes is difficult to judge. SCF (UK) initially plans to supply flour, rice and oil to 400 families in Bayonkhongor who have lost all their animals and to distribute vegetable seeds to schools, kindergartens, nurseries and hospitals.

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The Delegation is currently liaising closely with Save the Children Fund (UK) on support to Bayankhongor Aimag to ensure that there is no duplication of assistance.

The UN has set up a Disaster Co-ordination and Relief Unit to focus on the co-ordination of disaster information and relief assistance activities. So far the Unit has delivered 300 tons of hay and 200 tons of husk to the affected areas.

## ***Outstanding needs***

More relief assistance is urgently required to assist the increasing number of households affected by this year's multiple 'dzud'. Supplementary food rations, animal fodder and medical supplies are the priority for the disaster affected herders.

The Federation\MRCS are looking for additional support to ensure that they are able to provide 35,000 beneficiaries with a 12 month supplementary food ration as outlined in the revised Emergency Appeal.

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

MRCS and the Delegation continue to attend the weekly national co-ordination meeting convened by the Prime Minister's office to share and exchange information on the current disaster situation and forthcoming distributions. There is a need for greater co-ordination amongst humanitarian organisations within Mongolia to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and to ensure that the assistance reaches those who have been badly affected. The second UN co-ordination meeting took place on 21 April and was attended by representatives from the UN agencies, the State Emergency Commission and NGOs. It is likely that this meeting will be continued on a regular basis to ensure co-ordination of all relief efforts.

The MRCS continue to facilitate visits from the international media to disaster affected areas and to provide briefings and background information as required. Representatives from the MRCS accompanied USAID officials to Dundbogi Aimag to assess the situation.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1.

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

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Director  
Asia & Pacific Department

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