

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## **MONGOLIA: SNOWFALLS**

27 August 2001

*Appeal No. 7/2001*

*Launched on February 2001 for CHF 2.8 million for 12 months. Budget increased to CHF 2.8 million in February 2001.*

*Beneficiaries: 35,000*

*Operations Update No.5 Period covered: March 2001 - March 2002 (last Ops Update issued: 10 July 2001, report no: 4)*

### *“At a Glance”*

*Appeal coverage: 121.9%*

*Outstanding needs: Covered*

*The Disaster/Situation: The support to the appeal was excellent. It enabled a major response to a complex crisis and also allowed the Mongolian Red Cross Society to considerably increase its operational capacity. Extensive monitoring of the operation has also been conducted.*

### **Operational Developments:**

The continuing shortage of rainfall throughout the country during the summer has meant that the grasslands the traditional herders rely on to graze their herds have not been able to regenerate. In the areas that did receive some early rainfall, the pastures are very dry, further threatening the livelihoods of the herders. The government has already warned of the possibility of a third successive summer drought, which may lead to another dzud if there are heavy snowfalls during the coming winter. Many herders have already exhausted their food reserve and without any obvious coping methods to restock their lost animals, they face severe food shortages. The Federation and the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) have already provided 150 kg of wheat flour to more than 38,000 beneficiaries in the 11 affected provinces during the Phase 1 distributions. The Federation and MRCS are now gearing up for the second phase of distributions which will help a similar number of herders survive the winter.

**Red Cross Red Crescent action w**

The considerable contributions from national societies and other donors have enabled the MRCS to respond to the present prolonged and complex disaster. The 2001 snowfalls relief operation has been divided into two phases: Phase 1 - March to September, and Phase 2 - October to December 2001. During the reporting period, distributions of supplementary food in the form of wheat flour have been smoothly carried out in the selected provinces. Main objectives included in the current relief operation are as follows:

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Status</b>
1. Wheat flour distributions to herder households	Phase 1 distributions completed. Second distributions expected to start in October
2. Radios and first aid kits distributed to herder households	Delayed but expected to start during phase 2
3. 11 vans distributed to RC provincial branches	Completed by early August
4. Reinforcement of RC provincial branches' capacity	Ongoing
5. Reinforcement of provinces' storage and disaster preparedness capacity	Ongoing

**Red Cross and Red Crescent Society w**

Phase 1: March to September 2001

**Objective 1: To provide a total of 35,000 beneficiaries in the 11 worst-affected provinces with complementary emergency food assistance.**

Distributions of wheat flour - begun in mid-June and early July in nine provinces - have been completed. The last two distributions, in Bayan-Olgii and Hovd provinces were, implemented in mid- July and completed by the end of July. A total of 1,053.3 tons of wheat flour have been distributed to a targeted 80 counties. All distributions were attended and managed by members of Red Cross distribution commissions as well as monitoring representatives from the MRCS headquarters. The average timeframe to complete a distribution was 10 days. The table below shows the wheat flour distribution status of the Phase 1 plan, as of the end of July.

<b>Aimags(province)</b>	<b>Number of soums (counties) assisted by the Phase 1 operation</b>	<b>No of beneficiary households that received assistance (Average household -5.5 people)</b>	<b>Distributed wheat flour amount (metric tonnes)</b>	<b>Status of distributions at the end of July</b>
Arkhangai	8	805	120.75	Completed
Bulgan	9	770	115.5	Completed
Huvsgul	12	1'225	183.75	Completed
Gobi-Sumber	3	245	36.75	Completed
Dornogobi	7	617	92.55	Completed
Bayan-Olgii	3	280	42	Completed
Gobi-Altai	10	980	147	Completed
Hovd	6	420	63	Completed
Umnogobi	6	490	73.5	Completed
Khentii	8	595	89.25	Completed
Sukhbaatar	8	595	89.25	Completed
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>7'022</b>	<b>1'053.3</b>	

Deliveries of wheat flour to counties were carried out as scheduled without any major constraints. The Federation and the MRCS are in the process of planning for Phase 2 wheat flour procurement, which is expected to take place in September. The only constraint foreseen for forthcoming distributions during Phase 2 of the operation are the early onset of snowfalls, which could start in mid October. Early planning, therefore, will be essential to ensure good preparations and to minimise delays in implementation before severe winter sets in. As for the Phase 2 procurement, the Federation logistics

standards will be strictly followed to assure transparency in the tendering and procurement process.

**Objective 2: To provide a total of 15,000 radios and first aid kits to families**

Following poor results from earlier field tests on the initial samples, two modified wind-up radio samples were sent to Mongolia for testing in early July. Initial results have shown that the latest samples are able to pick up the main radio stations with an increase in the quality of reception. The telecommunication department in the Federation Secretariat has been continuously updated on test results and it is hoped that a final decision can be made on the purchase of these radios soon.

Procurement of first aid kits with revised composition of contents is expected to take place in early August. After consultation with the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health, it was agreed to remove some items from the kits. The items will be donated to the Ministry of Health. The items were replaced with more appropriate supplies including Vitamin C and additional bandages. Due to the delayed procurement process, the kit distributions will be carried out together with radios during the Phase 2 starting in September.

**Objective 3: To provide 11 vans to assist the MRCS with local monitoring and micro-distributions**  
**Objective 4: To reinforce the capacity of the local aimag (provincial) branches involved in the operation**

A contract has been signed and 11 vans have been procured from Russia and shipped to Mongolia by train through a local supplier. All vans were handed over to the 11 Red Cross provincial branches at the end of July. The vans will enable Red Cross branches to implement monitoring of distributions as well as micro-distributions. Vans will greatly improve the monitoring work of Red Cross branches who often need to travel hundreds of kilometers to visit a neighboring county. For those beneficiaries who are unable to attend distributions due to sickness or lack of transportation, these vans will assist branches to deliver aid items to these beneficiaries.

**Objective 5: To reinforce the storage and disaster preparedness capacity of the provinces**

A contract has been signed with a local supplier and 12 out of 16 shipping containers have been inspected and found satisfactory. The remainder of the containers are all expected to arrive in the capital by early August. Containers will be utilized as mobile storage in selected a 16 branches to stock emergency items for disaster preparedness purposes. As many provinces lack proper storage facilities, the containers will enable Red Cross branches to securely and appropriately store and efficiently mobilize these items in times of any emergency.

**Monitoring on relief distributions**

A total of 80 county local Red Cross Distribution Commissions have been established. These are responsible for distribution preparations and implementation. Commissions consist of five persons selected from different parts of the community. Women are actively recruited. A typical distribution commission comprises: the head of local parliament, soum RC branch secretary, school/clinic director, social worker, bagh (sub-county) heads and herder representatives. The diversity of the group members ensures a fairer and more transparent decision making process in the selection of beneficiaries and the implementation of distributions. The group is responsible for the storage and movement of goods, accounting and the production of regular reports on the progress of distributions.

A Federation/MRCS joint field team visited three distribution points in Sukhbaatar province early July. The main objective was to assess the transparency of aid distributions. In total, seven random monitoring interviews were conducted at distribution points based on a monitoring questionnaire. Initial turn up of beneficiaries at two soums was both over 70 per cent (over 50 out of 70 beneficiary households), which was good considering the distances many had to travel.

- **Beneficiary lists prepared by Distribution Commissions**

The initial lists of beneficiaries were drafted during bagh (sub-county) meetings. These lists were submitted to county distribution commissions for finalisation. For Phase 1 food assistance, 38,621 beneficiaries (7,022 households) were identified based on the criteria outlined below. Target households were those who have:

- suffered the highest livestock loss;
- been most affected by recurring natural disasters such as drought, snowfall, steppe and forest fires, strong wind and rodent infestation;
- more than five members;
- single head households; and
- many children, a disabled member of the family and who support elderly persons.

The selection criteria was developed for the 2000 Snowfalls Operation. In June 2001, the Federation Field Delegate conducted household visits to families who had received assistance in 2000 to assess the validity of this selection criteria. The delegate found that the criteria had been appropriate in identifying the most vulnerable households.

During Phase 2, wheat flour will be distributed to the same beneficiaries as those targeted in Phase 1. This ongoing assistance is required to continue fostering the recovery of these households.

- **Independent checks on the quantity and equity of distributions**

The Federation Field delegate and a Mongolia Red Cross representative conducted a field mission to three distribution sites in Sukhbaatar province in early July to observe the distribution process. At each site, key information about distributions including starting date, selected counties, number of beneficiaries to be assisted, type of aid, total tonnage of food to be distributed was marked on a large Red Cross banner.

Red Cross staff and volunteers from provincial and county level branches were present at each site to assist the commissions with the distributions. Beneficiaries received 6 sacks of wheat flour (each sack 25 kg x 6 = 150 kg per household) and signed for supplies on distribution justification sheet.

No major problems were identified during the distributions.

- **End user monitoring conducted**

The Delegate interviewed beneficiaries at three distribution points. Beneficiaries were randomly selected and the interviews were conducted based on a monitoring questionnaire. Average household size of interviewed beneficiaries was 6.6 compared to 5.5 of typical size. The plans were developed based on 5.5 average household size. The variation identified during the interviews is being discussed with the Mongolia Red Cross. Many of the beneficiaries reported having only 70 heads of livestock, which is considered under subsistence level in Mongolia.

Family and community supports to vulnerable people appear to be a common practice amongst herders when resources are available. Half of the interviewees were receiving small material assistance ranging from food to transportation either from relatives or neighbors. Some had to borrow wheat flour from others to complement their food shortage. One family had exhausted all dried meat by May and has been living on non-meat products, which indicates a serious shortage of staple food and significant loss of livestock.

All interviewees stated that they had been informed about their entitlement to food aid. Communication mediums stated included:

- The MRCS weekly five minutes programme on the national radio called “Eight Eleven Information Time” - provides up to date information on the Federation/MRCS programme and upcoming distributions.
- Broadcasts on the local soum radio station, including the reading of beneficiary names.
- Beneficiary names posted at the county centre.
- Local county Red Cross distribution members or the Head of Bagh (sub-county) informed identified Red Cross beneficiaries.
- Word of mouth among herder families.

To date all persons interviewed (men, women and children) expressed their satisfaction with the selection of wheat flour.

Beneficiary interviews confirmed that the Red Cross assistance is enabling families to recover. Less livestock will need to be slaughtered while food rations are available, therefore allowing them to rebuild their livelihoods.

From August 2001, the Federation will extend its monitoring activities to random households visits. Household visits will provide more information on the acceptability of the ration and how people use it. Household visits will also enable the identification of people who meet the selection criteria but who are not receiving food aid.

### **National Society Capacity Building w**

The MRCS with the support of the Federation has been involved in planning, implementing and monitoring of the relief operation over two consecutive years. The National Society's intensive involvement in this complex operation has significantly strengthened the Society's relief capacity in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at national, provincial and county level. More specifically the Society has gained skills in the following areas:

- Designing, reviewing and ensuring timely implementation of plans of actions;
- Development of beneficiary selection criteria;
- Establishment and coaching of community distribution committees;
- Monitoring distribution sites and systems;
- Household interviews;
- Establishment of procurement and logistics systems;
- Appeal preparation and donor reporting.

### **Federation Delegation w**

A highly experienced programme coordinator will be arriving in country in late August. He will be responsible for coordinating overall national society development programme as well as the relief operation. A finance officer continue to work closely with contracted Arthur Anderson audit company who provides financial management support to the delegation. The delegation also enjoys the strong support from the Federation's Regional Finance Unit in Kuala Lumpur.

### **Government Action**

Early July the Minister of Food and Agriculture reported there was a high possibility that a third consecutive disaster could hit the country in forthcoming winter due to drought already affecting some parts of the country. Working groups have been already sent to the drought-affected regions to assess the situation. In spite of repeated requests from the government to herders to draw necessary lessons learned from the last two disasters, currently only 6 per cent of all herders have insured their livestock.

### **Coordination**

The Federation and the MRCS continue to liaise with the government and international partners at both local and central levels. Regular field monitoring visits to affected areas and Red Cross beneficiaries will be coordinated with local governments to continuously assess the disaster situation.

### **Outstanding needs**

Thanks to considerable contributions made by sister National Societies and other donors, the operation is fully funded.

*For further details please contact: Aurelia Balpe, Phone : 41 22 730 4352; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: balpe@ifrc.org*

*All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.*

*This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.*

*For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.*

Peter Rees-Gildea  
Head a.i.  
Relationship Management Department

Hiroshi Higashiura  
Head  
Asia Pacific Department

Mongolia: Snowfalls						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. AP07/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED				24.08.2001
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						<b>TOTAL COVERAGE</b>
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>2'864'472</b>		<b>121.9%</b>
CASH CARRIED FORWARD						
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT		250'000	AUD	216'275	26.02.2001	WHEAT FLOUR
AUSTRIAN - GOVT		72673	EUR	110'412	09.05.01	
BRITISH - GOVT/DFID		245'098	GBP	590'686	13.03.01	RELIEF GOODS & OPERATIONAL NEEDS
CANADIAN - RC		20'000	CAD	21'650	20.02.01	
CANADIAN - GOVT/CIDA		108'900	CAD	122'676	17.04.2001	NOT TO BE USED FOR PURCHASE AND/OR TRANSPORT OF ANY FOOD ITEMS
DANISH - RC		231'250	DKK	47'638	20.02.01	
ECHO (01001)		370'000	EUR	562'141	17.04.01	FOOD, FIRST AID, RADIOS, VEHICLES
FINNISH - GOVT		84'094	EUR	129'370	07.03.01	
GERMAN - GOVT		500'000	DEM	393'300	22.02.01	850 MT WHEAT FLOUR, INCL TRANSPORT
GERMAN - GOVT		235'000	DEM	184'851	22.02.01	10'000 FIRST AID KITS, INCL TRANSPORT
JAPANESE - RC				143'000	01.03.01	
KOREA, REPUBLIC - RC				20'000	20.03.01	
LIECHTENSTEIN - RC				50'000	30.03.01	
NETHERLANDS - RC		100'000	NLG	69'808	07.03.01	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		700'000	NOK	130'964	09.04.01	
OPEC		100'000	USD	162'800	02.04.01	PROCUREMENT OF RELIEF ITEMS
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		1'000'000	SEK	173'700	20.02.01	RELIEF (60%) AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS
SWISS - GOVT				250'000	14.02.01	WHEAT FLOUR, RADIOS
SWISS - PRIVATE				1'250	07.03.01	
PRIVATES ON LINE				2'387	10.04.01	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				3'382'908	CHF	118.1%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Japan	Delegate(s)			30'226		
Australia	Delegate(s)			19'712		AB
New Zealand	Delegate(s)			60'000		AB
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				109'938	CHF	3.8%