

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

19 February 2002

Appeal No. 7/2001

Launched on February 2001 for CHF 2.8 million for 12 months. The operation will be extended until 31 May so that support to vulnerable people can be effectively implemented.

Beneficiaries: 7,022 families targeted for food aid and 15,000 families for first aid kit and radio distributions.

Operations Update No.7 Period covered: November 2001 - December 2001

Last Ops Update issued: 2 November 2001, report no. 6

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 124.5%

Related Appeals: East Asia regional programmes 01.37/2002

Outstanding needs: Covered

The Disaster/Situation: The Federation’s Snowfalls 2001 operation is almost complete. Fifteen thousand radios still need to be bought and distributed. As such the operation will be extended by three months. Activities have supported a population that was desperately in need, and which is currently being hit by a new spate of severe weather.

Operational Developments:

Ongoing drought and another severe winter has added to the suffering of vulnerable herders. After three months of winter and the expected cold and windy conditions in spring, the situation will probably worsen in 2002. More animals will perish and few will be born, as weakened mothers have naturally aborted their young. Poor health has prevented animals from lactating, resulting in fewer dairy products, an essential part of herder family diets. Furthermore, animals in poor condition will not produce meat that is palatable or saleable. More information on this developing situation can be sourced from Information Bulletin No. 2 (30 January 2002).

In Mongolia some 50 percent of the population is directly dependent on the livestock sector for their livelihoods. As with other parts of the economy, the livestock sector has also been subject to radical reforms and the break-up of large state enterprises into smaller units. Economic reforms have affected households in a number of negative ways including a significant increase in poverty, loss of employment, reduction in consumption, cuts in safety nets and social sector services. The two unprecedented dzuds of the last two years, which cost the lives of a number of people and more than four million head of livestock, showed the seriousness of the problem.

Amongst vulnerable groups of most concern are those that have least access to financial resources for the purchase of food, especially in a situation where purchasing power has been significantly eroded by high inflation. These groups include the unemployed, the elderly, female headed households, children, pensioners and small herders. Without additional assistance these groups, especially a growing population of abandoned "street" children, will face great hardship in the years ahead as their ability to counter food supply problems remains highly constrained. For more information about the Federation's ongoing development programmes in Mongolia refer to our 2002 Annual Appeal.

Mongolia is experiencing another severe winter with temperatures ranging between minus 15 degrees Celsius during the day and minus 25 degrees in the evening. Some provinces in the north and the middle part of the country are already experiencing heavy snowfalls. Meteorologists are predicting extremely cold temperatures in January, which can fall to minus 35 degrees Celsius or lower. In 2001, the Red Cross assisted over 22,000 herder families in 80 counties with food and the distribution of basic first aid kits. Phase 2 distributions were completed by the end of November.

Red Cross Red Crescent action w

The considerable contributions from national societies and other donors have enabled the Red Cross to respond to the present prolonged and complex disaster. The 2001 Snowfall Relief operation was divided into two phases: Phase 1 - March to September 2001 and Phase 2 - October to December 2001. The objectives and a summary of progress against these are outlined in the table below:

Objectives	Status
1. Wheat flour procured and distributed to herder households.	Both phase 1 and phase 2 distributions completed in November 2001.
2. 15,000 radios and first aid kits procured and distributed to herder households.	First Aid Kit distributions completed November 2001. Procurement of radios will take place in January/February 2002 (refer to Objective 2 progress description).
3. 11 vans procured and distributed to RC provincial branches.	Completed in early August 2001.
4. Reinforcement of RC provincial branches' capacity.	Involvement of branches in planning, implementation and monitoring.
5. Reinforcement of provinces' storage and disaster preparedness capacity	16 shipping containers delivered to 11 provincial branches completed November 2001.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society w

Phase 1: March to September 2001

Phase 1 distributions were completed by the end of July 2001. A total of 1053.3 metric tonnes (MT) of wheat flour was distributed to a targeted 80 counties covering over 7,000 herder families (approximately 38,600 beneficiaries). All distributions were attended and managed by members of Red Cross Distribution Commissions as well as monitoring representatives from the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) headquarters. Distributions were conducted smoothly without major constraints. The interim months of August and September were used to monitor Phase 1 distributions, tender and procure relief items for Phase 2 distributions.

Phase 2: October to December 2001

Objective 1: To provide a total of 35,000 beneficiaries (over 7,000 herder families) in the 11 worst-affected provinces with supplementary emergency food assistance.

A total of 1053.3 MT of wheat flour was distributed to the same 7,022 herder families targeted in phase 1. Each family was entitled to six month rations of 150 kgs (6 sacks x 25kgs = 150kgs), which represents the equivalent of a daily ration of 155 grams (considering the average household size as 5.5). Targeting the same beneficiaries increases the impact of food aid by strengthening of food security and preserving households' assets over the difficult winter season.

The last distribution was carried out and completed on 18 November in Sukhbaatar aimag. As in Phase 1, all distributions in 80 counties were attended and overseen by members of Red Cross Distribution Commissions, Red Cross provincial secretaries and the monitoring representatives from the MRCS headquarters.

Aimag (province)	Number of soums (counties) assisted in Phase 2	No of households who received assistance	Wheat flour distributed (metric tonnes)	Status of distributions at the end of November 2001
Arkhangai	8	805	120.75	Completed
Bulgan	9	770	115.5	Completed
Huvsdul	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
Total	80	7'022	1'053.3	

Through beneficiary interviews, the following information about the impact of the food assistance was identified:

- Food security strengthened

The target group was households who had lost all or significant proportions of their livestock. Therefore, these households not only lost a source a food but also a source of income for purchasing other basic food and household items. The provision of adequate amounts of food for a period of six months, which was culturally appropriate, in the form of wheat flour, improved households' food security.

- Limited need for survival strategies

Households stated that the food aid has helped them save up to six sheep. In Mongolia, one sheep can be bartered for a sack of wheat flour (25 kgs). The livestock that was not bartered, therefore, provided a source of additional food in the form of dried meat or a source of income when sold or bartered. Therefore, the food aid eliminated the need for survival strategies that could have resulted in long-term negative consequences to household viability and livelihood security.

- Allowed household resources to be invested for recovery

The food aid allowed families to save some cash to buy other essential items and/or pay for education/health services. Many said they would buy warm clothes for children with the money saved.

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

Radios

A long consultation process has been necessary to ascertain the most suitable radios for Mongolia. This has taken longer than anticipated due to a range of complex issues, mostly related to the pros and cons of distributing conventional battery operated radios or freeplay/hand wind radios, which are a new technology. Criteria for selecting to the most appropriate model included:

- acceptability within the community (conventional and accepted technologies versus new technologies)
- technical effectiveness in cold temperatures
- environmental considerations
- durability
- transportability and storage
- cost

There was a lengthy testing process, in consultation with other agencies with previous experience distributing radios. There was also ongoing dialogue between the National Society, the Federation Delegation in Mongolia, the Secretariat Telecommunications Department. After all this, it was decided that the battery operated radios are currently the most suitable option for Mongolia. 15,000 battery operated radios will be distributed in March/April 2002. We are also considering the purchase of a small amount of freeplay radios to conduct further testing to better inform future radio selection processes.

First Aid Kits

The distribution of first aid kits was carried out together with the wheat flour. Initial beneficiary lists were drafted during bagh (sub-county) meetings. These lists were then submitted to county distribution commissions for finalization. The criteria used to identify target households is outlined below. Those that 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, disabled member of the family and who support elderly persons.

The last distribution was completed on 18 November in Sukhbaatar province.

Aimags (provinces)	No of soums (counties) receiving first aid kits	No of beneficiary households to receive kits	Distributed quantity of first aid kits	Status of distributions at the end of November
Arkhangai	8	2'000	2'000	Completed
Bulgan	9	2'000	2'000	Completed
Huvsgul	12	2'500	2'500	Completed
Gobi-Sumber	3	200	200	Completed
Dornogobi	7	1'200	1'200	Completed
Bayan-Olgii	3	600	600	Completed
Gobi-Altai	10	1'800	1'800	Completed
Hovd	6	1'250	1'250	Completed
Umnogobi	6	1'000	1'000	Completed
Khentii	8	1'050	1'050	Completed
Sukhbaatar	8	1'400	1'400	Completed
Total	80	15'000	15'000	

During interviews with households family members stated that the availability of a First Aid kit at home provides a sense of 'reassurance' that they have the basic tools to respond to minor accidents.

Objective 3: To provide 11 vans to assist the MRCS with local monitoring and micro-distributions

The last two field monitoring missions to Arkhangai, Sukhbaatar and Khentii provinces confirmed that the supply of vans had considerably strengthened the working and monitoring capacity of the provincial Red Cross branches. Lack of reliable vehicles was previously the major constraint for the branches in visiting counties, which are often hundreds of kilometers away. The provision of vans enabled them to oversee all distributions. It was also confirmed the vans had been utilized to conduct micro-distributions as well - delivering aid items directly to beneficiaries - for those families who were unable to attend distributions due to sickness or lack of transportation.

Objective 4: To reinforce the capacity of the local aimag (provincial) branches involved in the operation by providing fax machines

11 fax machines were distributed to the provincial branches. Fax machines have helped facilitate communication capacity and enhance more speedy, reliable and regular contacts between the branches and the headquarters.

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

The 16 shipping containers were used to transport the wheat flour and first aid kits to the 11 provinces. The containers are being utilized as mobile storage facilities to stock emergency items for the current and future disaster operations. As many provinces lack proper storage facilities, the containers will enable Red Cross branches to securely store items for times of emergency. The chart below indicates the distribution status of the containers as of the end of November.

Aimag (Province)	Quantity of container(s) delivered	Status of delivery November 2001
Arkhangai	2	Completed
Bulgan	1	Completed
Huvsdul	2	Completed
Gobi-Sumber	1	Completed
Dornogobi	1	Completed
Bayan-Olgii	2	Completed
Gobi-Altai	2	Completed
Hovd	2	Completed
Umnogobi	1	Completed
Khentii	1	Completed
Sukhbaatar	1	Completed
Total	16	

Objective 6: To reinforce the staffing levels at both headquarters and aimag level during the course of the operation

As previously reported, the 80 county Red Cross Distribution Commissions continued to manage the distributions over the reporting period. Maintaining the same staffing at the county level enabled successful preparations and distributions. As in Phase 1, experienced staff at the headquarters and provincial level were involved in managing and overseeing the distributions.

Monitoring of Phase 2 distributions

The existing Red Cross distribution system in all 80 counties continued to be responsible for Phase 2 distributions. The diversity in the make-up of the Commission members (which include both professional MRCS staff as well as representatives from the herder communities) has ensured a fairer and more transparent decision making process in the selection of beneficiaries and the implementation of distributions.

Over the reporting period, the MRCS weekly five minutes programme on the national radio entitled “Eight Eleven Information Time” continued to broadcast up to date information on distributions and disaster preparedness. Other communication mediums used during the operation have included:

- broadcasts on the local county radio station, including the reading of beneficiary names;
- beneficiary names posted at the county center;
- local county Red Cross Distribution members or the head of Bagh (sub-county) informing identified Red Cross beneficiaries; and
- word of mouth amongst herder families.

A joint Federation/MRCS field monitoring team visited eight Phase 2 distribution points in Sukhbaatar and Khentii provinces in early November. The main objectives of the mission were to oversee distributions and to

conduct beneficiary interviews to ascertain if the selected beneficiaries met the set criteria and to assess the impact of the food aid.

Independent checks on the quantity and equity of distributions

Distributions were organized by the local RC Distribution Commissions with support from provincial branch secretaries, staff, volunteers as well as the monitoring representatives from the headquarters. In most cases distribution sites were set up in front of local government administration, which are well known by the local population. Upon the receipt of goods, each beneficiary signed the Distribution Justification sheet. Food aid beneficiaries received a second allocation of 150 kg of wheat flour (one sack 25kg x 6 = 150kg). The local Distribution Commissions were already familiar with the distribution preparations and organizations from Phase 1 experiences and distributions were efficiently implemented at all sites visited.

Deliveries and storage of goods

It was reported that deliveries of goods to soums had been made on schedule. Drivers delivered the goods with the RC distribution document, "Goods Received Note", leaving one copy to the Commissions and brought another copy back to the MRCS headquarters for accounting purposes. There was no damaged or contaminated goods reported by the Commissions.

Many soums visited utilized the storage space or warehouse of local clinics or administrative buildings. The storage facilities visited were secure and clean. The keys were kept by the Commission members.

End user monitoring

The Field Delegate interviewed five groups of food aid and first aid kit beneficiaries at five distribution points. Average household size of interviewees was six in comparison with the commonly stated average of 5.5. The majority of the beneficiaries reported having approximately 100 livestock before the dzud but after the dzud their herds were reduced to less than 25 animals, which clearly indicates their desperate situation.

All beneficiaries were aware of the aid that they were to receive although some were uncertain about the amount of the wheat flour ration. The most common form of transportation were horses or camels with wagons (some families who had lost all their animals had to borrow animals to collect their rations). All interviewees stated that they the wheat flour provided by the RC had been their main source of food for the past months. Some had had access to dried meat. They agreed the wheat flour was the most needed item. They appreciated the quality of the domestically produced wheat flour (distributed during Phase 1). The wheat flour is mainly used to make bread, pastries and noodles. Most beneficiaries had finished or nearly finished the previous allocation of wheat flour, which was provided in July. These interviews, confirmed that the Phase 2 food distributions were conducted at an appropriate time. None of the interviewees said had bartered food aid since it is the staple and the most needed food item for them.

Through beneficiary interviews, the following information about the impact of the food assistance has been identified:

- **Food security strengthened**

The target group was households who had lost all or significant proportions of their livestock. Therefore these households not only lost a source a food but also a source of income for purchasing other basic food and household items. The provision of adequate amounts of food for a period of six months, which was culturally appropriate, in the form of wheat flour, improved households' food security.

- **Limited need for survival strategies**

Households stated that the food aid has helped them save up to six sheep. In Mongolia, one sheep can be bartered for a sack of wheat flour (25 kgs). The livestock which was not bartered, therefore, provided a source of additional food in the form of dried meat or a source of income when sold or bartered. Therefore the food aid eliminated the need for survival strategies which could have resulted in long-term negative consequences to household viability and livelihood security.

- Allowed household resources to be invested for recovery
- The food aid allowed families to save some cash to buy other essential items and/or pay for education/health services. Many said they would buy warm clothes for children with the money saved.

Beneficiaries also expressed that the assistance provided through the Red Cross was an important source of psychological comfort.

Federation Delegation

The Programme Coordinator continues to be responsible for coordination and development of the National Society's programmes and is giving the highest priority to the finalization of the relief operation.

Government Action

Following the prospect of difficult conditions for the winter, the Mongolian government has emphasized the need to prepare hay and fodder. As of the beginning of December, 415,900 tons of hay and fodder have been produced this year, which is 19 % higher compared to last year. Given the lack of proper pastureland caused by overgrazing and the last summer's drought which affected nearly 70 % of the country's territory, it is reported that 16,000 herder families and 4.2 million animals will need to migrate to other provinces and counties.

Coordination

The Federation and the Mongolian Red Cross Society continue coordination efforts with the government and international partners at both local and central levels.

Outstanding needs

Thanks to considerable contributions made by Participating National Societies and other donors, the operation is fully funded. The Federation is considering contacting donors to discuss the issue of how surplus funds can be utilised.

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>.

John Horekens
Head
Relationship Management Department

Hiroshi Higashiura
Head
Asia Pacific Department

Mongolia: Snowfalls						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. AP07/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED			18.02.2002	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				2'864'472		TOTAL COVERAGE 124.5%
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT		250'000	AUD	216'275	26.02.2001	WHEAT FLOUR
AUSTRIAN - GOVT		72'673	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/RC		561'798	DEM	423'090	22.02.01	850 MT WHEAT FLOUR, INCL TRANSPORT
GERMAN - GOVT/RC		264'045	DEM	198'852	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		112'360	NLG	77'224	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	
SWISS - PRIVATE (CHAINE DU BONHEUR)				26'240	19.09.2001	
PRIVATES ON LINE				2'430	10.04.01	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				3'460'398	CHF	120.8%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Japan	Delegate(s)			40'082		
Australia	Delegate(s)			35'482		AB
New Zealand	Delegate(s)			29'240		AB
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				104'804	CHF	3.7%