

# EMERGENCY APPEAL



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

## ***SRI LANKA: DROUGHT***

**Appeal no:25/2001  
13 August 2001**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,258,427  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 39,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR SIX MONTHS***

### ***The Situation***

In addition to the armed conflict that affects in particular the north and the east of the country, southern Sri Lanka has also been affected by the effects of a prolonged drought.

Appeals for assistance from the district have been made to the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) by the worst affected families in this impoverished, often forgotten, part of the country.

The southern tip of Sri Lanka does not normally receive rain during the current monsoon. A second, more southerly monsoon season, which generally brings rain, is not due until November/December.

In previous years, this second monsoon season has failed and there has been now been no rain for 21 months, resulting in the loss of three or four crops. Local people are describing the drought as "the worst in 50 years".

The inhabitants of the region live mostly by subsistence farming consisting of paddy cultivation, vegetable gardening and "chenna" - a "slash and burn" system where scrub is burnt off and a rice crop planted quickly when it appears the rains are about to come.



Currently there are no crops growing and there is very little vegetation of any kind. Livestock which have not been moved to the mountains are beginning to die and the remaining cattle and goats are living off felled tree branches, hence adding to the growing environmental damage. "Tanks" (irrigation reservoirs) are almost all dried up and water levels in wells have dropped to danger levels.

Doctors have begun to report cases of malnutrition amongst children and school attendances are falling. Many of the male adults in families are moving to towns in the hope of finding casual work. Some are scavenging for and selling firewood.

Based on information from their RC volunteer network, the Hambantota branch of the SLRCS estimates that some 52,000 families (312,000 people) are directly affected by the drought. The worst affected are situated in four local government Divisions : Tissamaharamaya, Lumugamvehera, Hambantota and Sooriyavewa.

With no rain expected before November, there can be no crops harvested before January at the earliest, leaving those worst affected facing the prospect of six months with little or no food.

## *The Needs*

The SLRCS Hambantota Branch undertook a preliminary assessment in June 2001 and reported a growing need for assistance, especially amongst the poorest farming families. This was followed by a more comprehensive assessment carried out by SLRCS national HQ staff and branch officers in July which confirmed the need for assistance.

The second assessment included a sample survey of 118 families in 51 villages in four Divisions, to establish the needs and income of the most vulnerable families. The average income of these families was found to be LKR 625 per month (CHF 12.5). In normal times this income would supplement their subsistence paddy and vegetable farming. As these crops have failed, this meagre income is insufficient to provide the food they need for their family. Most of these are government relief recipients which entitles them to food coupons to the total of LKR 350 per family per month (CHF 7). This is barely sufficient for basic food for a family for one week.

Following an approach for assistance by the SLRCS to the Federation, senior SLRCS staff and the Federation Head of Regional Delegation visited the Hambantota region last week. They saw some of the worst affected villages, and interviewed families, traders, NGO staff and government officials. The severity of the situation was confirmed.

The Sri Lankan government has the primary mandate for assisting the drought affected population. However the ongoing armed conflict has drained available resources and the local government in Hambantota has no capacity to provide additional food. The Hambantota District Government Agent (top administrative official) has sent a written request to SLRCS for food assistance for 32,000 families.

The only NGO active in the district is World Vision. They provided a limited food distribution in one division in April but although they recognise the need for further intervention they have no funding available.

The SLRCS has asked for Federation assistance to help support to up to 6,500 of the most vulnerable families in the four most disaster affected divisions. Provision of full calorific requirements is not necessary but it is estimated that these families will be 50% short of their nutritional requirements for the next six months.

The Federation has released CHF 100,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund to provide one funds for one initial food distribution.

## ***The Proposed Operation***

### **Objectives and Activities planned**

The overall goal of the SLRCS operation is to provide supplementary food support to the most vulnerable of those affected by the drought until the first harvest of crops due in January 2002.

### **Relief distributions**

Surveys carried out indicate that most of the worst affected families are able to provide for half of their food needs until the next harvest. This operation is designed to make up the other 50% shortfall. Quantities are based on the Sphere minimum nutritional standards and using locally acceptable staples of rice, flour, dal and sugar. Six thousand five hundred families will receive two distributions of food, each sufficient for the average family of six persons for three months. This will provide their nutritional needs until the first crops can be harvested next January. Table 1 below provides further details :

**Table 1 - Food Requirements (Kgs)**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Ration person/day (kgs)</b>	<b>Total Ration /person</b>	<b>Total required/ 6 person family for 6 months</b>	<b>Total required for 6,500 families for 6 months</b>
<b>Rice</b>	0.125	22.5	135	<b>877'500</b>
<b>Flour</b>	0.075	13.5	81	<b>526'500</b>
<b>Dal</b>	0.04	7.2	43.2	<b>280'800</b>
<b>Sugar</b>	0.015	2.7	16.2	<b>105'300</b>

Specific objectives and activities are as shown below :

**Objective 1 : To provide one initial food distribution to 1,000 families in one District for 3 months utilising available DREF funds.**

**Activity 1 :** Personnel from SLRCS NHQ, Hambantota Branch and a Federation delegate, conduct a rapid assessment to identify 1,000 of the most vulnerable families in one Division. This will be complete before the end of August.

**Activity 2 :** Procure and distribute food to the identified 1,000 families by first week in September.

**Objective 2 : To provide one food distribution to an additional 5,500 families and a second distribution to all 6,500 families**

**Activity 1 :** Personnel from SLRCS NHQ and Hambantota Branch, conduct a second assessment to identify a further 5,500 vulnerable families. This will be completed by first the week in September.

**Activity 2 :** Procure and distribute food to the 5,500 families identified, by mid September.

**Activity 3 :** Repeat the procurement and distribution to all 6,500 families in mid November.

### **National Society Capacity Building**

The SLRCS has experience in relief operations and has a substantial number of available volunteers, many of whom have received training in disaster preparedness and vulnerability capacity assessments.

In order to further enhance the capacity of SLRCS to implement the operation and to impart skills useful in future operations and help in programme design the following activities are also planned:

- Employ one project co-ordinator at the Hambantota branch to oversee this programme and to be responsible for training of volunteers.
- Conduct a training workshop for volunteers involved in the distributions to prepare them for their roles. This will be carried out before the main distribution takes place in mid-September.
- Volunteers who have been involved in this programme will be retained within the branch organisation and will be included in the Disaster Preparedness training programme to commence later this year. They will become a focal point for this programme within the Branch but may also be used as resource persons for volunteer training in other Branches.

### **Co-ordination**

As explained above, the only other major NGO active in the region is World Vision with whom a close rapport has been established. Close contact will be maintained with them and relief efforts will be co-ordinated should they obtain further funding for a renewed operation.

The SLRCS will work closely with the Hambantota local government to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and that the most vulnerable families are all identified. SLRCS will nevertheless ensure that it acts independently in the final selection of beneficiaries.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The responsibility for day to day monitoring of the operation will be with the SLRCS, primarily at branch level but supervised closely by an officer at NHQ specifically assigned to co-ordinate the project.

The Federation's Regional Disaster Response delegate will be the overall manager of the project.

Before commencement of the second distribution in November, a survey will be carried out of a sample of beneficiaries to evaluate the impact of the first distribution and to confirm the exact needs for further assistance. This will enable modification of the programme if necessary.

On completion of the programme in January, a further evaluation will be made of the impact on beneficiaries. This will be carried out by a small team, including the SLRCS, Federation and an experienced staff on loan person from within the region. A lessons-learned exercise on programme implementation will also be carried to provide information to assist in further programme design and implementation throughout the region.

### **Capacity of the SLRCS**

In the cyclone that hit Sri Lanka last December, the SLRCS performed well and demonstrated it has the capacity to run a moderate to large relief operation. An additional positive factor, is that Sri Lankan Red Cross Society's constitutional review process has been completed. Key staff who had been involved in this process are now free to work on relief operations. A full time co-ordinator at SLRCS NHQ will be appointed to implement this programme.

### **Present capacity of the Federation**

The South Asia Regional Delegation will be responsible for this programme. A regional Disaster Response delegate has been appointed and will commence at the end of September. He will be programme manager. In the meantime, the programme will be managed through the Regional ID Delegate, who is based in Sri Lanka, with assistance from a temporary DR delegate currently in India.

## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

## **Conclusion**

According to standard working arrangements within the movement (Seville Agreement), ICRC would be lead agency as there is an armed conflict in Sri Lanka. In agreement with ICRC and the Federation, it has been decided to delegate the Appeal to the Federation while maintaining close coordination with the ICRC.

Donor support is sought urgently to enable the SLRCS to provide assistance to these people severely affected by yet another forgotten, slow-onset disaster.

Whilst the CHF 100,000 from DREF will enable an immediate response to the needs of a limited target group, the much wider group of vulnerable farming families face a bleak future without substantial outside intervention.

*For further details please contact: Martin de Vries, Federation Desk Officer, Phone: 41 22 730 4320; Fax: 41 22 733 0395; email: devries@ifrc.org.*

*All International Federation Assistance 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.*

*In line with the Minimum Reporting Standards, the first operations update on this appeal will be issued within 30-days of the launch and the second will be issued over the course of the operation; a final narrative and financial report will be issued no later than 90 days after the end of the operation.*

*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 web site.*

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

Jean Ayoub  
Director  
Disaster Management and Coordination

Didier J. Cherpitel  
Secretary General

<b><u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u></b>		APPEAL No. 25/2001
<b>Sri Lanka drought</b>		
TYPE	VALUE	
<b><u>RELIEF NEEDS</u></b>		
	IN CHF	
Rice	432'000	
Flour	205'000	
Dal	277'000	
Sugar	73'000	
<b>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</b>		<b>987'000</b>
<b><u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u></b>		
Computers	4'000	
Telecom. equipment	1'000	
<b><u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u></b>		
Programme management	84'856	
Technical support	25'401	
Professional services	28'170	
<b><u>TRANSPORT STORAGE &amp; VEHICLE COSTS</u></b>	47'000	
<b><u>PERSONNEL</u></b>		
Expatriate staff	29'000	
National staff	11'000	
<b><u>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</u></b>		
Travel & related expenses	10'000	
Information expenses	14'000	
Administrative & general expenses	17'000	
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</b>		<b>271'427</b>
<b>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES</b>		<b>1'258'427</b>
<b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>		
<b>NET REQUEST</b>		<b>1'258'427</b>