

# 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

## ***UZBEKISTAN: DROUGHT***

**Appeal no:27/01**  
*21 August 2001*

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,006,653  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 20,000 BENEFICIARIES WITH FOOD FOR FOUR  
MONTHS AND UP TO 150,000 BENEFICIARIES WITH  
ESSENTIAL DRUGS AND PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE***

### ***The Situation***

The government of Uzbekistan has formally requested the international community to provide assistance during a second year of drought and severe water shortages. Food assistance has not been specifically mentioned, but is “welcomed” if it arrives. Local authorities in the province of Karakalpakstan have been more explicit in their requests for assistance. They appealed to an OCHA/UNDP mission, between 1–7 July, for wheat flour and vegetable oil to supplement the increasingly depleted resources and food stocks of the most vulnerable families.

The OCHA/UNDP final report concludes that the humanitarian situation is likely to deteriorate in the short and medium term. Specifically, there is a sharply reduced access to drinking water and other supplies; reduced access to food; deteriorating health and sanitary conditions; and massive unemployment causing emigration.

The republic of Uzbekistan, independent since 1991, has handled the enormous economic challenges that followed the end of the centralized and integrated Soviet economic system relatively well. The availability of important natural resources, such as gas, oil, gold and cotton, has helped as has the absence of serious violent conflicts. The government holds the view that its policy of strictly controlling the transition period from the Soviet era may also have played a role in creating relative social and economic stability.

Under the surface of relative calm, however, there are several serious structural problems. One of the most important being water management. Dating back to the Soviet period, the two main rivers of Central Asia - the Amu Darya and Syr Darya - were heavily exploited to irrigate cotton production. The ecological consequences - as well as the economic ramifications of developing one-dimensional economies within specific republics - were not a major concern. The most visible legacy is the depletion of the Aral

Sea, the world's third greatest inland sea. It is now about to disappear with one of the principal reasons being the huge amount of water being diverted to the cotton fields.

The one dimensional nature of Uzbekistan's economy was starkly felt after independence. The breakup of the Soviet Union meant that the republic lost supplies of grain that had previously come through the central system of reallocation of economical inputs and commodities.

Deprived of this, Uzbekistan had to provide for its own cereal supplies. As such, food production increased at the cost of cotton production which provided needed foreign currency. At the same time, grain imports increased. During this period, water shortages - in Uzbekistan and throughout Central Asia - became more severe. This was compounded by a badly maintained irrigation network. There was also little regional cooperation to confront the issue.

The already serious situation worsened last year when low rainfall and a heatwave caused water levels in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers to fall further. This has had grave consequences for agriculture and the availability of drinking water.

To some extent, Uzbekistan succeeded in limiting losses in grain production. A Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)/ World Food Programme (WFP) crop and food assessment last year said this was mainly achieved through a 30-40 % reduction in the surface used for cotton and vegetable production. This was possible because agriculture in Uzbekistan is almost 100 per cent irrigated, enabling water resources to be distributed between different crops.

There were, however, pockets of severe hardship. In the province of Karakalpakstan - which had the status of an autonomous republic during Soviet times and is inhabited mainly by Karakalpaks - water shortages were severe. In many cases, water has been contaminated by heavy metals and fertilisers. Karakalpakstan, located near the Aral Sea, received insufficient water from the Amu Darya. During the dry months the river disappeared in the desert before even reaching the Aral Sea.

The FAO/WFP estimate that in 1999, agricultural production in Karakalpakstan dropped 54 per cent, leading to severe food shortages for 45 000 of the 1.4 million population. This year's cereal production figures are not yet available. There is, however, no doubt that there is a serious wheat deficit in Karakalpakstan.

- **Government Action**

On 26 May 2001, the Prime minister of Uzbekistan requested UN attention to the drought. The government issued a decree on 8 June for specific emergency actions, such as deployment of water trucks, drilling wells and provision of water purification facilities. Certain groups - 20 000 children, 4,500 women and 1,500 retired people - have been received in health centres outside the affected region. Farmers have also been exempted from land tax for one year, credits have been provided for cattle and small cash allocations have been slightly increased.

- **Red Cross/Red Crescent Action**

After a request for assistance from the Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan (RCSU), a field assessment and coordination team (FACT) was deployed in Tashkent by the International Federation on 29 July 2001. The team comprised a leader from the Austrian Red Cross; representatives from the Norwegian and Spanish Red Cross; a representative from the Federation's coordination office for the EU, as well as three specialists from the Federation regional delegation in Almaty.

The team, supported by the RCSU, assessed the needs in four rayons in the two westernmost oblasts of Navoi and Khorezm, as well as in two rayons in Karakalpakstan. These areas were considered to be the most affected. The FACT confirmed the severity of the situation, reflected in other UN and NGO reports. As a result, and in cooperation with the RCSU, it devised a plan to assist 20,000 of the most affected and vulnerable people in two rayons - Chimbay and Kegeli - the northwestern of Karakalpakstan. The RCSU,

as a national and community based organisation has a comparative advantage to deliver assistance to the most vulnerable.

- **Other Agencies' Action**

In response to a Government request, OCHA/UNDP visited parts of the country most affected by the drought to mobilize donor support and coordinate international response. An OCHA emergency grant of USD 50,000 was made as were offers of emergency water supplies. In terms of immediate needs, the team recommended the implementation of initiatives through NGOs. The mission also concluded that there was a need for more coordination, information management, monitoring and resource mobilisation.

In Uzbekistan, there are several actors involved in improving water supply systems, especially in Karakalpakstan. A limited number of NGOs are also providing assistance with medical programmes and food support. Many organisations are considering broader intervention to confront the crisis.

The UN has a leading role in coordinating intervention, in cooperation with relevant Uzbek authorities. A database of activities is about to be established by UNDP. The Federation and RCSU are monitoring the situation. Exchanges of information will continue at both central and regional levels. In the rayons, programmes will be carried out by the RCSU - monitored by the Federation - in cooperation with local authorities.

## *The Needs*

FACT went into three affected oblasts after analysing existing reports and holding two days of discussions with the RCSU, representatives of ministries and other organizations in Tashkent.

The mission travelled westwards to Navoi, Khorezm, Karakalpakstan, with the situation getting progressively worse the farther it went. Economic development was also less in western areas.

After discussions with oblast authorities and representatives, two of the worst-hit rayons in each oblast were visited - in Navoi the rayons of Khatirchi and Kiziltepo; in Khorezm the rayons of Khiva and Koshkopyr; and in Karakalpakstan the rayons of Takhtakopyr and Kanlykul. The team talked with local authorities and Red Cross branch representatives and visited households, farms, health institutions and local markets.

Following discussions, the team concluded that RCSU and Federation activities would have the greatest impact in the two rayons in Karakalpakstan. Communities in both have severe needs but two other key considerations were taken into account: first, other organisations are unable to offer coverage; and second the National Society has the capacity to assist vulnerable communities there.

### **Access to Food**

Harvests in the most affected regions are down significantly. This hits income - both cash and in-kind - and at the same time, families need to buy extra food to cover the shortfall. Food is available in the markets but people's access to this is limited because of their lower income. The effects tend to be more severe for bigger families.

In some regions, crop fields have not been planted this year so as not to waste seeds. Even if families could harvest vegetables in their gardens, stocks will only last into autumn because of the perishability of vegetables. Selling is an option but market demand is low.

Most agricultural families are suffering more than during the first year of drought. Harvests were stronger than as were coping mechanisms. For some vulnerable groups, the selling of livestock started months ago to cover needs during summer.

These families will need support to cover the gap between their income and means to have sufficient food until the next harvest. Therefore, it is planned to provide a selected group of families in the Chimbay and Kegheile rayons of Karakalpakstan with supplementary food from December to March to prevent further rises in malnutrition as well as to reduce the threat of increasing morbidity and children mortality.

### **Health and Water**

Lack of potable water is an increasing problem. In Karakalpakstan, minimum humanitarian standards (Sphere) are not met in terms of quantity and quality of water. The population does not know how to treat the available water.

As a result, the population is more at risk from waterborne illnesses and respiratory infections. In addition, the need to pay for medicines further increases the gap between funds available and those needed to buy food.

## ***The Proposed Operation***

### **Overall objective:**

To assist the most vulnerable groups - not fully covered by the activities of other organisations - to meet their nutritional needs until next harvest season. Also, to reduce the effects of water borne and infectious diseases and prevent further increases in vulnerability.

### **Food support**

**Objective 1:** To support the nutritional status of the most vulnerable people in the selected rayons through **distribution of supplementary family rations to 20.000 selected beneficiaries the Chimbay and Kegheile rayons, of Karakalpakstan, within four months.** This is intended to cover the gap between income and funds needed for sufficient foods until the next harvest.

Food rations will be 20kg per household per month and distributed in two cycles (January and March), hence 80kg in all. Larger families will be eligible for an additional ration. The food items to be distributed are wheat flour, rice, edible oil, lentils and iodised salt. The distribution will be in accordance with minimum humanitarian standards, under the Sphere project.

Beneficiaries will be selected according to the following criteria:

- low cash disposal
- no livestock
- no harvest on family plots
- four or more children under 16
- lack of support from other organisations or the RCSU's existing Aral Sea programme

The selection of beneficiaries will be the responsibility of the RCSU in coordination with the local authorities, especially the Mahallat. Staff and volunteers will be trained on the selection process.

Monitoring will be conducted as below:

- Pre-distribution, to verify beneficiary lists will be compiled in collaboration with local administration based on the random evaluation of 5% of selected households.
- Post-distribution, one month after the first distribution and two months after the second to confirm coverage, cross-check consumption and utilisation of food parcels.

### **Health**

**Objective 1:** To reduce the effect of the waterborne diseases, acute respiratory infections (ARI) and anaemia in the selected rayons to prevent further increases in vulnerability.

Under this objective, the RCSU and Federation will provide sufficient amounts of essential drugs - through one-off distribution - focusing on outbreaks of seasonal diseases (ARI and diarrhoeal diseases) to 30 health posts. These cover 150,000 people within the selected area. They will also distribute iron and folic acid through these health posts to 7,500 pregnant and lactating women suffering from iron deficient anaemia.

The programme will have the following key elements:

- the National Society coordinator will train health staff in treatment procedures, such as the administration of antibiotics, and standard treatment schedules, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health.
- the National Society regional health officer will coordinate activities, selection of volunteers and monitoring procedures.
- the distribution of medicines will be monitored by the National Society, from arrival into the country to delivery to beneficiaries.
- trained monitors will regularly visit health posts to monitor procedures. Spot checks on medicines will be conducted and families will be visited to check that medicines are being provided free. Monitoring of household sanitation and hygiene practices will also be observed.
- statistics received from health institutions will be analysed and reported on monthly.
- all activities will be discussed with the Ministry of Health, local authorities as well as other organisations before implementation.
- at the end of the programme, evaluation will be jointly conducted by the Federation and National Society.

### **Objective 2**

To launch a health promotion campaign and public awareness programme on water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases to decrease the suffering from these diseases.

Thirty thousand health education materials and 500 posters will be distributed. Community members, teachers and families will be targeted. One hundred volunteers will be trained to help disseminate the campaign.

### **Objective 3**

To provide 30 water filters to selected health posts and institutions. This equipment will be bought, transported and distributed to the selected sites. The use of water filters will be monitored during regular visits to health care facilities.

Overall, the key indicators of the health programme will be:

- rates of diarrhoea and ARI will have improved as well as a decreased incidence of anaemia in targeted women.
- awareness among the population on prevention has increased
- hygiene behaviour has improved
- the availability of safe water at health posts and institutions will have improved.

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

Involvement of the National Society's staff and volunteers in this operation will strengthen capacity and improve technical skills in terms of assessment, targeting, beneficiary identification, coordination, distribution, monitoring and reporting. Long term preparedness will also be improved.

The operation will build on existing structures and capacities and also link in with on-going programmes, such as health (visiting nurses scheme, and TB campaign), disaster preparedness and the Aral Sea programme. The operation will also be an opportunity for the National Society to recruit more volunteers.

### **Coordination w**

Uzbekistan is covered by the Federation's Central Asia regional assistance strategy (RAS), developed after consultations with National Societies. The operation will complement overall regional objectives. The food intervention in Karakalpakstan will coordinate with the existing Aral Sea programme to avoid duplication. UNDP and several NGOs are operational - particularly in terms of water supplies - and coordination will be formalised with these organisations. Health activities will be in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and relevant NGOs in the area.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation w**

The Federation field delegate will be responsible for supervising the programme. The National Society programme coordinator will take overall responsibility for implementation and will train RCSU monitors on procedures. The National Society regional health officer will coordinate activities and the selection of volunteers.

### **Capacity of the National Society w**

The RCSU has limited capacity and experience in emergency response operations, apart from the Aral Sea food distribution 2000-2001 and some small scale operations.

### **Present Capacity of the Federation w**

The Federation has an office in Tashkent with one delegate as a programme coordinator, supported by three local staff. The regional delegates based in Almaty, provide technical assistance in their respective areas to the National Society. The Federation's regional assistance strategy plans for the RCSU to take the lead in disaster response and preparedness. The Federation's capacity in the region means it is in a position to provide support as local staff develop their knowledge and expertise.

The field structure for the whole health operation will be:

- Federation field delegate, supported by a delegate assistant
- National Society programme coordinator
- National Society regional health officer
- two health monitoring teams (two people each)
- two food monitoring teams (five people each)
- 100 volunteers to be trained and train in the health campaign

## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

*For further details please contact: Susanna Soderstrom, Federation Desk Officer, Phone: 41 22 730 4424 ; Fax: 41 22 733 0395; email: soderstr@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 website.*

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

Jean Ayoub  
Director  
Disaster Management and Coordination

Didier J. Cherpitel  
Secretary General

**BUDGET SUMMARY ANNEX 1 Appeal 27/2001**

<b>Uzbekistan</b>		
TYPE	VALUE	
<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>	IN CHF	
Shelter & construction		
Clothing & textiles		
Foods & seeds	538'575	
Water	8'100	
Medical & first aid	43'200	
Teaching materials		
Utensils & tools		
Other relief supplies		
<b>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</b>		<b>589'875</b>
<u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u>		
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>		
Programme management (automatic calculation)	67'879	
Technical support (automatic calculation)	20'319	
Professional services (automatic calculation)	22'534	
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE &amp; VEHICLE COSTS</u>	86'558	
<u>PERSONNEL</u>		
Expatriate staff	90'232	
National staff	50'428	
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</u>		
Travel & related expenses	11'070	
Information expenses	27'000	
Administrative & general expenses	25'758	
Expert fees	15'000	
Workshops & seminars		
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</b>		<b>416'778</b>
<b>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES</b>		<b>1'006'653</b>
<b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>		
<b>NET REQUEST</b>		<b>1'006'653</b>