

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

SOUTHERN AFRICA: FOOD INSECURITY

28 May, 2002

This Ops Update is intended for reporting on emergency appeals.

Appeal No. 12/02

Launched on 2 May, 2002 for CHF 6,803,000 for 12 months.

Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 50,000

Beneficiaries: 450,000

Operations Update No. 1; Period covered: 3-24 May

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 7.1%

Related Appeals: Southern Africa 2002 Annual Regional Appeal no. 01.16/2002

Outstanding needs: CHF 6,319,400

Summary/Update: Responding to the food and nutrition needs in the region, the Federation launched Emergency Appeal no. 12/02 on 2 May seeking CHF 6.8 million to assist the respective national societies to provide support to 450,000 people in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe for twelve months. The main objective of the appeal is to improve the immediate and medium/long term food security of vulnerable communities in targeted areas in the three countries, with a particular focus on HIV/AIDS affected families and orphans by providing supplementary feeding. The appeal furthermore seeks to capture the many root causes of the food security situation in the region with a multi-sectoral approach, by integrating relief (supplementary feeding) health, agriculture, water and sanitation as well as capacity building. Donor support to date has taken the form of a Swedish Red Cross pledge of approximately CHF 500,000 towards the appeal, and an ECHO application is being prepared.

Operational Developments w

The food insecurity situation in the region is deteriorating even as the current harvest season continues and the limited crop output has somewhat stabilised the situation in some places. With the output of the present harvest in the region so poor it is clear that several countries will fall far short of being able to make it through to next year's harvest without support from the international community. High food deficits will be reported later in the year and action must be taken to avert a disaster, as there are no stocks left in the countries' reserves and limited if no foreign currency to import food.

Other countries in the region such as Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Swaziland also face food shortages caused by a severe dry-spell throughout the region. South Africa traditionally supplies the region with food supplies but has a little surplus to spare. The situation throughout the region requires both a short and long-term perspective with a multi-sectoral approach to avoid a complex humanitarian disaster. As a result of this year's poor harvest and the limited food available, food prices are soaring, forcing poor people to exhaust their coping mechanisms, including selling cattle and other belongings to buy food to feed their families.

The nutritional status is already very bad for many people, particularly young children, the elderly and, in particular, the high number of people living with HIV/AIDS, as the food insecurity situation increases the vulnerability of those already vulnerable. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region in the world most severely affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, with more than 28.1 million people living with the disease. Approximately 3.4 million new infections occurred in 2001. Life expectancy throughout the region is dropping dramatically. The food insecurity situation poses a serious threat to the survival of these most vulnerable people.

The food insecurity situation in the region is complex, and clearly varies from country to country and from district to district, with multi-faceted roots (climatic phenomena such as flooding and dry spells have caused inadequate harvests for two years, poor economic performance, government policies, the role of the parastatals that control the sale, purchase and import of grain, foreign currency shortages, and the socio-economic and humanitarian consequences of the HIV/AIDS pandemic). There are pockets in all three countries where people have little or no access to food at all. This is a slow on-set disaster that is unfolding throughout the region and threatens to become a major humanitarian catastrophe if an adequate response is not mounted to address the immediate and the medium to long-term needs.

A multi-agency UN assessment mission is currently taking place and the results of this will be shared at an Inter Agency Steering Committee meeting in Johannesburg from 6-7 June.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action w

The American Red Cross has undertaken an important initiative to explore ways in which the appeal can be supported and complemented by possible food aid, especially focussing on food for work (FFW) in the agricultural sector of the appeal and food for HIV/AIDS infected and affected families. In addition, possibilities are being explored for embarking on a possible general food distribution. To this end, a meeting is planned in Harare next week to formulate a proposal involving logistics capacities and constraints.

Both Mozambique and Lesotho are also badly affected, and the Federation's regional office is now in consultation with the national societies in both countries involving an assessment team (Lesotho) and the finalization of an appeal for Mozambique.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society w

In all three appeal targeted countries national society plans of action are in formulation. The three national societies have considerable experience with drought situations and food-distribution, however their capacity will be over-stretched if they attempt to carry out the operation alongside their on-going programme activities without assistance. Job descriptions have therefore been submitted to Geneva for the recruitment of a food security coordinator and a food security delegate. Capacity building is, however, one of the main priorities of the Federation, and the appeal aims to strengthen existing rural branches in the three countries, and to build up the capacity of the national societies at the community level to cope with a similar future situation. The operation is hence an opportunity for the three national societies to build up their capacity both at head quarters and branch levels.

The Federation's regional office is working with the three national societies to identify capable staff who will be in charge of the food security operation to ensure a coordinated and successful operation. The regional office has also delegated one member of the team for each national society to promote moving forward as much as

possible with existing resources. National societies have, in particular, identified responsible staff members, specified office space, pre-selected volunteers in the branches, set up communication links, and reserved and set up appropriate warehousing space.

Coordination w

Efforts are underway to maximize impact by coordinating efforts with the UN and other operational agencies. The WFP country representative in Zimbabwe informed the 24 May meeting that the government of Zimbabwe had contracted 240,000 metric tonnes of maize to be imported to the country, out of which 160,000 metric tonnes had already arrived. The WFP appeal, launched in late December last year, has now received approximately 50% coverage - or around 60,000 metric tonnes out of the 120,000 tonnes requested. Roughly 50% of the donations have been in kind. The WFP has distributed 15,000 tonnes of maize to beneficiaries through its implementing partners since food distributions started in late February, with some 10,000 metric tonnes to be distributed in coming weeks and 5,000 metric tonnes still in stock. The aid agencies stated a serious concern about an anticipated break in the food supply pipeline as of June, which would result in severe food shortages in August and September. Although people seem to be coping for the time being due to the on-going harvest season, the considerable decline in agricultural production will be widely felt in the last half of this year.

The Regional Office in Harare also invited embassies and UN representatives to a briefing on Wednesday, 22 May, with representatives from eighteen missions and other aid agencies attending (including the ICRC). The regional office continues to actively participate in a monthly interagency food and coordination meeting in Harare, where more than 30 non-governmental agencies and the UN organisations share information on recent developments and updates on their ongoing programmes.

The Federation's regional delegation has given interviews to the following media: Radio Marocco, BBC Africa (Swahili), Radio Africa (Britain based), The Herald (Zimbabwe), The Daily News (Zimbabwe), ETV (South Africa), Zimbabwe Inter-Africa News Agency. The Inter Agency Standing Committee meeting is coming up 6/7 June with the UN family assessment.

Outstanding needs w

With only 7.1% of the appeal covered, the Federation urgently seeks considerably more support to carry out the objectives and the planned activities.

For further details please contact: Richard Hunlede, Federation desk Officer Phone: 41 22 730 4314; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: hunlede@ifrc.org

Donors providing in-kind relief in response to large-scale emergencies are urged to contact the Federation's Logistics and Resource Mobilization Department to avoid any unnecessary delays in the clearance and delivery of emergency relief assistance.

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>.

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Southern Africa - food insecurity						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 12/2002		PLEDGES RECEIVED				28.05.2002
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						TOTAL COVERAGE
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				6'803'000		7.1%
SWEDISH - RC		3'000'000	SEK	483'600	16.05.2002	MALAWI, ZAMBIA, ZIMBABWE
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				483'600	CHF	7.1%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	