

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

ERITREA: IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY

30 September 2003

Appeal No. 33/2002; Operations Update no. 4

Appeal launched on 03 December 2002 for CHF 7,865,000 (USD 5,282,274 or EUR 5,322,949) for 9 months for 41,500 beneficiaries. Budget was revised to CHF 8,061,000. This Update extends the operation until June 2004, and increases to 45,000 beneficiaries.

Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 15,000 (reimbursed).

Period covered: March to September 2003

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

Appeal coverage: 40.9%; See the Contributions List on the Federation's website for details.

Outstanding needs: CHF 4,765,563 (USD 3,604,800 or EUR 3,096,500)

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: Eritrea 2003 Annual Appeal no. 01.04/2003

Operational Summary: Operations Update no. 3 (August 2003) incorrectly revised the number of beneficiaries. This current Update formally revises the number of beneficiaries to 45,000, and extends this operation until 30 June 2004. Delays in donor response, procurement and delivery of relief food items have resulted in a need for additional time for operational implementation. The budget is being reviewed for possible revision; this will be presented in the next Update (no. 5) expected for late November.

Operational developments

Rains and food production.

The rainfall in the 2003 rainy season increased slightly compared with last year; however the essential Azmera short rains from March to May failed completely and resulted in the complete disruption of the long-cycle crop planting season of maize, sorghum, finger millet, wheat and taff, which normally constitute about 20% of the annual crop production in Eritrea.

Farmers usually plant sorghum, pearl millet, barley, wheat and maize during the long Kremti rain season. However, because they started late and were unevenly distributed, farmers abandoned these traditional crops and opted for crops such as chickpea, vetch and fenugreek that have a short maturing period. Nonetheless, erratic thunder and hail storms that accompanied the rains severely damaged the young crops along the "bread-basket" of Eritrea in the Gush-Barka region and in other districts as well.

Ministry of Agriculture performed a Joint Interim Crop Assessment 11-15 August in collaboration with other government institutions, UN agencies, donors, and NGOs. They concluded that, although better than last year, the level of the forthcoming harvest for 2003 would be approximately 210,000 MT¹, or one-third of the national

¹ MT – Metric tonnes

need; this is due to adverse weather and rain patterns. Additionally, only 77.5% of the agriculture area was actually planted and the estimated output is 207,424 MT of cereal, 1,444 MT of pulses and 2,109 MT of oil crops. Beside the poor rainfalls, the shortfall in total area cultivated is also attributed to a shortage of draft animals due to the effect of the ongoing drought on their health, and inadequate mechanized services. Tractor services are too expensive and cost USD 19.26 per hour in the private sector; although government owned tractor service cost USD 4.44, they are too few to meet the need for land preparation. In addition, there is a shortage of man power due to the boarder conflict with Ethiopia as large numbers of men are enlisted in the National Service.

The market price of some crops like white sorghum which is one of Eritrea's staple grains increased significantly in Asmara compared to last year attributed to shortage of cereals in the market; however, not many farming households benefited from it in the areas observed. Sorghum vis-à-vis livestock remained unchanged in Asmara in August from previous months; livestock sellers received somewhat more sorghum per sheep (100 kg) than per goat (93.5 kg). In the past four months, sorghum-goat terms of trade fluctuated between April and June before stabilizing in July.

Dry and dying sorghum field, in Keren sub-zoba, not matured, September 2003.



Regarding the food security situation in the country, the low and late emergency response between January and August 2003 have caused an unstable availability of food items. Out of the 476,000 MT of food aid required, approximately 266,000 MT have been committed and some 160,000 MT (60%) of the pledges have been delivered. As a result, the response to the vulnerable people in the affected districts has been inadequate.

Relief food distribution

The ongoing relief food distribution in Hagaz district was originally planned to commence in February but started in March due to slow response and late arrival of wheat grain. The actual distribution of complete rations by the Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the Federation did not start until the procured wheat stock arrived at the end of June, 2003. However, the Disaster Response department of Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the Federation borrowed 750 MT of wheat grain from the Eritrea Grain Board in mid March which allowed for limited distributions.

Distributions of relief food: March to September 2003.

Distribution; Month(s)	Relief Item	Date received in warehouse	Date of distribution	Amount distributed	No. of beneficiaries	Ration delivered	Comment
Dist. 1; Mar-2003	Wheat grain	14-15 Mar-03	21-29 Mar-03	375 MT	25,000	15 kg/person/month	Borrowed from Grain Board
Dist. 2; Apr/May-2003	Wheat grain	14-15 Mar-03	15-22 Apr-03	375 MT	25,000	15 kg/person/month	Borrowed from Grain Board
	Lentils	03 Apr-03	15-22 Apr-03	60 MT	25,000	1.2 kg/person/month	Fed. procured
	Cooking oil	13 Apr-03	14-22 Apr-03	41.4 MT	25,000	0.83 kg/person/month	Fed. procured
Dist. 3; Jun-2003	No deliveries due to late arrival of procured relief food items.						

Distribution; Month(s)	Relief Item	Date received in warehouse	Date of distribution	Amount distributed	No. of beneficiaries	Ration delivered	Comment
Dist. 4; Jul-2003	Wheat grain	29-30 Jun-03	02-10 Jul-03	450 MT	45,000	10 kg/person/month	Fed. procured
	Lentils	04-06 Jun-03	02-10 Jul-03	36 MT	45,000	0.8 kg/person/month	Fed. procured
	Cooking oil	29 May-03	02-10 Jul-03	27 MT	45,000	0.6 kg/person/month	Fed. procured
Dist. 5; Aug-2003	Wheat grain	13-14 Aug-03	16-22 Aug-03	450 MT	45,000	10 kg/person/month	Fed. procured
	Lentils	04-06 Jun-03	16-22 Aug-03	36 MT	45,000	0.8 kg/person/month	Fed. procured
	Cooking oil	29 May-03	16-22 Aug-03	27 MT	45,000	0.6 kg/person/month	Fed. procured
	BP5 C/food		16-22 Aug-03	16 MT	8,000 child	2 kg/child	Extra from Norwegian RC
Dist. 6; Sep-2003	Wheat grain	13-14 Aug-03	18-25 Sep-03	450 MT	45,000	10 kg/person/month	Fed. Procured
	Lentils	04-06 Jun-03	18-25 Sep-03	18 MT	45,000	0.4 kg/person/month	Fed. Procured
	Cooking oil	31 Jul-03	18-22 Sep-03	27 MT	45,000	0.6 kg/person/month	Fed. Procured

BP 5 C/food refers to high concentration protein biscuits for children.

The distributions were coordinated by the Keren Branch staff and volunteers in close collaboration with the district and village authorities. At the distribution centres, the Disaster Response team of the national society divided the relief food items of wheat grain, pulses and cooking oil in bulk to respective village or sub-division. Village authorities in turn established distribution mechanisms to each household.

A nutritional survey conducted by UNICEF in 2003 shows the alarming need for relief food for adults and children in all regions, highlighting the long-term need for relief food interventions in Eritrea (refer to graphs and summary table below).

Shebek village in Hagaz sub-zoba, 2003



Graph 1 shows increase in wasting (thinness due to acute food shortage) among children below the age of five years; this graph can be seen at the end of this document. The biggest deterioration in the nutritional status of children is seen in Gash Barka region. The studies in Debub region have also shown that malnutrition has reached emergency level of above 10% while the levels of acute malnutrition in Anseba, Northern Red Sea, SRS and Gash Barka regions have gone above 15%. The implication of the high level of malnutrition is impaired early childhood development.

The report also shows a further deterioration on the nutritional status of women of reproductive age, the greatest being in Anseba. This has resulted in low weight in new born babies and risk of maternal mortality. The failure by breast feeding mothers to produce the right quality and quantity of breast milk also exposes children below 6 months to vulnerability. The nutritional status of women is often used as a proxy indicator for household food insecurity. Graph 2 shows the comparison of nutritional status of women in 2002 and 2003, and indicates that household food insecurity is still a huge problem; this graph can be seen at the end of this document.

Prevalence of Wasting by Regions (Zoba) 2003 and Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2002

DHS 2002			Region	Surveys in March and June 2003			Source
% Global Acute Malnutrition (w/h<-2SD)	% Severe Acute Malnutrition (w/h<-3SD)	Female Adult under-nutrition (BMI)		% Global Acute Malnutrition (<-2SD)	% Severe Acute Malnutrition (<-3SD)	Female Adult Under-nutrition (BMI)	
15.6	2.3	43.6	Anseba	19.9	2.0	52.5	Concern, MOH (March)
6.1	0.9	26.0	Maekel	9.1	1.1	30.3	UNICEF/MOH (June)
18.0	3.0	44.4	NRS	17.9	2.1	-	DIA/UNICEF/MOH (March)
13.8	2.8	43.4	SRS	17.9	2.1	-	DIA/UNICEF/MOH (March)
9.8	1.6	37.2	Debub	13.0	1.9	39.5	Concern/UNICEF/CRS/MOH (June)
16.9	2.6	43.2	G/Barka	24.7	3.5	47.7	UNICEF/UNHCR/MOH (June)

Note: All surveys were cross-sectional, two-stage, 30-by-30 cluster sampling, malnutrition measured as weight-for-height ratio (w/h).

Abbreviations: SD-standard deviation; BMI-body mass index; SRS-South Red Sea; NRS-North Red Sea; DIA-Dutch Interchurch Aid; MOH-Ministry of Health; CRS-Catholic Relief Services

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

Emergency and relief food distribution

Objective: To provide general food rations for 9 months for an average of 41,500 people to ensure their livelihood until next harvest (November 2003).

Progress

Distributions conducted between August and September providing 45,000 beneficiaries with relief food items (wheat grain, lentils and cooking oil) during each distribution.

The Federation has facilitated the procurement of 3,390 MT wheat grain; the Egyptian Red Crescent Society has contributed 20 MT of sugar and 40 MT of wheat flour in kind which has been converted locally to 60 MT of wheat grain for the drought operation. The Norwegian Red Cross Society has also made a contribution in kind of 16 MT of compact food, BP5 for children which was distributed to 8,000 children in August.

Impact

It is too early to measure any nutrition impact caused by the relief food interventions.

Constraints

The commencement of the operation and distribution of relief food items was delayed by poor response to the appeal and subsequent delays in procurement of relief grain. The time frame for procurement of relief food needs to provide sufficient allowance than what was given for this operation. However, the loan of wheat grain from the Eritrea Grain Board assisted in easing the suffering of the vulnerable.

The arrival of the consignments of wheat grain in Massawa port in Eritrea overstretched the logistical capacity and planning of the Disaster Relief department of the national society as the two consignments of 750 MT and 910 MT arrived at the same time. Despite the commendable work by the Disaster Preparedness and Response department, and the Logistics and Store departments, the quantities proved to be too much and exceeded the capacity of the National Society's fleet by 67 trucks which proved inadequate to transport all wheat grain to the warehouses in Asmara and to the distribution centres in time to avoid demurrage.

A delivery of 126 MT of lentils from Pakistan procured via a Nairobi based supplier was rejected by the Eritrean Standards Institution on 25 September 2003. The Federation Secretariat legal department, the Regional Delegation in Nairobi, the Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the Federation's Delegation in Eritrea are following up with the supplier to resolve this unfortunate situation. Possibilities of procuring 38 MT of lentils locally in Asmara to bridge the gap for the forthcoming distribution in October are being explored.

There is also a shortage of 15,400 litres of cooking oil occasioned by errors in estimating the need for cooking oil. The standard ration for cooking oil is calculated in kilograms; however, cooking oil was calculated in litres during the planning phase, resulting in a difference of 6%.

The Red Cross Society of Eritrea has requested for continued support from the Federation to strengthen the departments involved in the drought operation and to assist in concluding the present operation in the first half of 2004. However, the prevailing drought situation will not have ended by the time the operation ends. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, the harvest of 2003 will not yield more than the maximum one third of Eritrea's need of agricultural produce and hence it is predictable that there will be need for more relief food aid in early 2004.

Health

Objective 1: To strengthen the provision of health services through outreach programs, volunteer mobilization and training, and provision of an integrated health sanitation education.

No activities haven taken place within the health sector.

Water and Sanitation

Access to sufficient water for domestic consumption and for irrigation remains the most pressing non-food need in Eritrea, affecting approximately 85% of the rural population.

The insufficient rainfall this year has not significantly affected the water table in the country and in some areas in the high and low lands the water reservoirs and dams have been refilled to a higher level than last year. The water table is about ten meters lower than it normally ought to be and it is estimated that it will take about seven to ten years to restore it back to its normal level based on normal rainfall each year.

New well with hand pump by Red Cross in Balwa village, Keren sub-zoba, September 2003



Objective 1: To reduce water stress by provision of safe water supply through water trucking.

The Red Cross Society of Eritrea and the Federation have intervened in three villages to safeguard potable water for the villagers. Through the emergency appeal, water has been trucked to nine villages for 6000 beneficiaries from February to the end of July. This intervention will continue to the end of January 2004 with the earmarked support of the German Red Cross.

Water trucking started in the second half of February to supply 2000 beneficiaries in Shebek village in Hagaz sub-region with water rations. The number of beneficiaries was later increased to 6000 which remained through to the end of July. Two out of three planned boreholes have been successfully drilled while the installation of water pumps is ongoing since October. However, some villages in Hagaz sub-region have requested for trucked water again as their traditional water sources have or are about to dry up already.

Repair and extensions of solar pump installations have been carried out and partly completed. More information on WatSan activities will be provided in next up-date.

Objective 2: Improving the sanitation behaviour of the population.

A Field Officer based in Keren has been added to the operation staff and is responsible for sensitising the communities in Hagaz sub-region on sanitation aspects related to the water interventions being implemented in the operation area.

Federation coordination

No changes have taken place since the last operations up-date in August.

Related activities planned for 2004 will be integrated within the Eritrea Annual Appeal for 2004, due to be launched late November.

Constraints

The telecommunication facilities including internet, email, fax and telephone connections in Eritrea are constantly being disrupted which causes a number of delays and late reporting. In addition, lightning struck the Federation office and burned fuses and adapters to the computers in the first week of August.

There has been limited capacity in reporting for the drought operation. The Federation Representative's mission ended in early July and a replacement did not arrive until first week in August. As a result, the Reporting and Finance and Administration delegate assumed these responsibilities which led to delays in preparing this operations up-date which was due by June.

However, a new schedule for operations updates has been discussed and agreed and as long as no extraordinary events occur, an operations up-date will be submitted to Regional Delegation once a month in connection to each remaining distribution of relief food.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives

The principles and initiative of the Movement are explicitly brought forward by the actions carried out in this operation. They are also captured in the local reports that the Red Cross Society of Eritrea issues periodically.

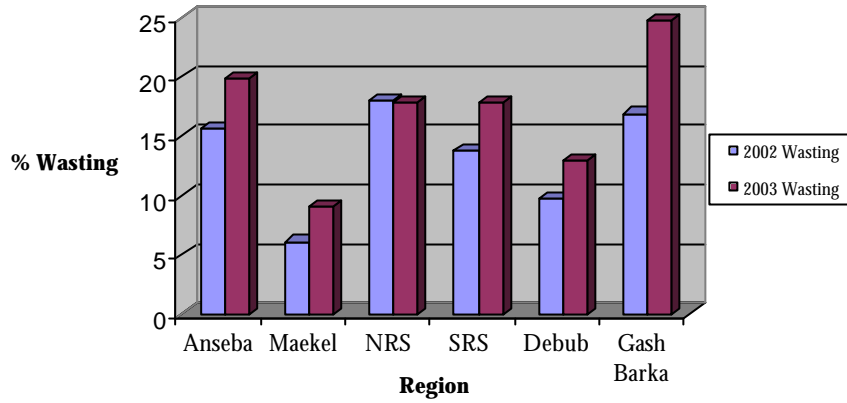
For further information please contact:

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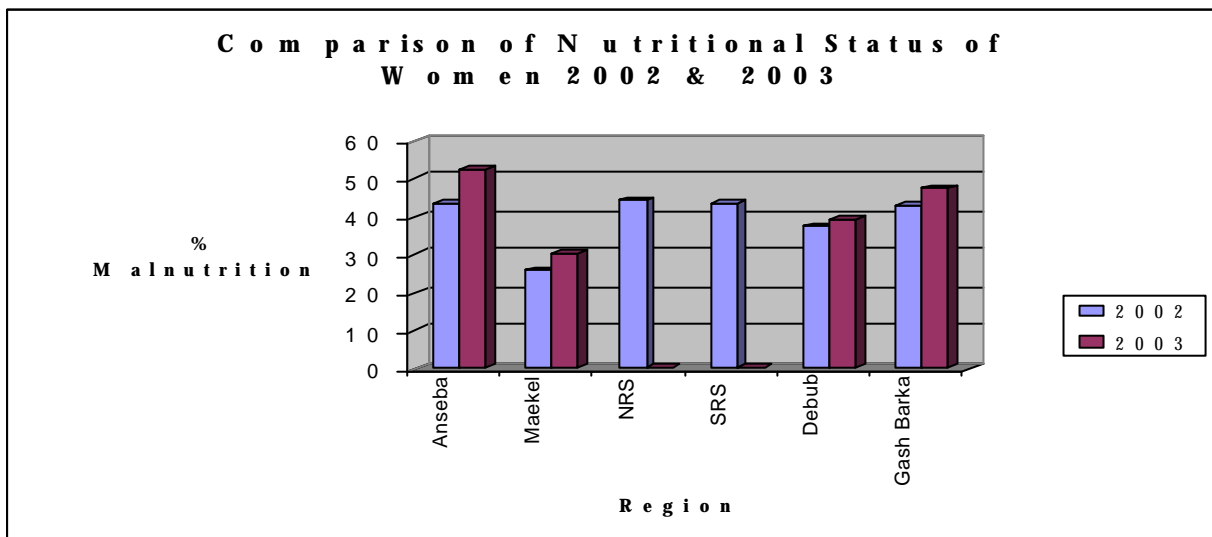
All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable

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

Graph 1: Comparison of wasting based on 2002 and 2003 nutritional surveys.



Graph 2: Comparison of nutritional status of women, 2002 and 2003



Eritrea food security

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 33/2002

PLEDGES RECEIVED

04/11/03

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				8,061,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 40.9%
AMERICAN - RC		50,000	USD	67,975	05.05.03	
BRITISH RC		25,000	GBP	57,708	16/12/02	
BRITISH - RC				15,640	28.03.03	SOLAR PUMP REHABILITATION
BRITISH - RC		23,000	GBP	49,404	29.05.03	
DANISH - RC		462,500	DKK	90,650	27/01/03	
DANISH - RC				16,344	24.10.03	
FINNISH RC		150,000	EUR	219,960	19/12/02	RELIEF ITEMS + TRANSPORT
GERMAN - R^GOVT		110,868	EUR	168,797	17.06.03	
JAPAN RC		160,500	USD	234,683	16/12/02	
KUWAIT - RC		100,000	USD	135,750	04/02/03	
NETHERLANDS - GOVT		278,075	EUR	404,738	23/01/03	FOOD DISTRIBUTION
NETHERLANDS - RC		427,807	EUR	626,096	10.03.03	FOOD DISTRIBUTION
NORWEGIAN - RC		400,000	NOK	75,500	03.06.03	
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		1,078,749	NOK	200,108	19.09.03	
SOUTH AFRICAN - GOVT				16,020	02.04.03	
SWEDISH GOVT		300,000	SEK	48,420	17/12/02	
SWEDISH - RC		500,000	SEK	80,700	17/12/02	
SWEDISH - GOVT		500,000	SEK	79,500	16/01/03	
SWEDISH - GOVT		3,000,000	SEK	480,000	02.04.03	
SWEDISH - RC		350,000	SEK	56,000	12.05.03	
SWISS - GOVT/RC				7,038	08/01/03	PROG. SUPPORT, LOGISTICS SUPPORT
SWISS PRIVATE DONOR				500	20.03.03	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				3,131,531	CHF	38.8%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SWISS - GOVT/RC				77,500	08/01/03	
DENMARK	DELEGATE(S)			10,842		
SWEDEN	DELEGATE(S)			36,796		
SWITZERLAND	DELEGATE(S)			38,768		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				163,906	CHF	2.0%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT

Eritrea food security

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 33/2002

PLEDGES RECEIVED

04/11/03

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	