

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

MAURITANIA: DROUGHT AND FOOD SECURITY

06 May, 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 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No. 05/03

Launched on 13 February 2003 for 1,056,000 CHF for 3 months for 18,000 beneficiaries; budget reduced to CHF 721,000 (as of 15 April).

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 100,000

Operations Update No. 1; Period covered: 15 March to 15 April

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 8.2%

Related Appeals: 2003 Annual Appeal for the Sub-Sahel (no. 01.41/2003)

Outstanding needs: CHF 661,983

Summary: The appeal budget has been reduced by approximately 25% due to:

- the support of the PNS's currently operational (French and Italian Red Cross) which has allowed the Federation to reduce the number of delegates to one (from the four planned).*
- a participatory method involving the beneficiaries themselves which will make it possible to use fewer volunteers.*
- a recent French Red Cross contribution to the Mauritania Red Crescent Society (MRCS) has helped to defray transportation and vehicle costs.*

The diminished availability or degradation of natural resources (primarily polluted surface water and a serious fall in water table levels) have increased the overall vulnerability of the population, and had an impact on livestock and agricultural production. This, together with the already existing severe poverty in rural areas, has decreased coping mechanisms and increased general malnutrition. Despite the obvious needs, the initial donor response has been low, and the Federation has adjusted the operation accordingly.

The four communities originally identified and included in the appeal have been classified as extreme or high vulnerability zones by the Food Security Commission (FSC). The Federation is strengthening the existing Centres Alimentation Communautaire (CAC) which will serve as bases for the operation while distributions of dry rations are carried out to the vulnerable groups that have been identified. In the second phase the Federation will consider creating new CACs and continue with distributions, depending on the donor response and support, and the evolving nature of the operation.

The Situation

The general food security and drought situation in Mauritania is characterized by:

- poor agro-climatic conditions provoked by the late onset of the rainy season, and insufficient rains which have undermined Mauritania's cereal harvest for the second consecutive year.
- a decrease in cereal production for 2002/2003 (estimated at 99,705 tonnes), down 18 percent from 2001/2002 (which was itself down 32 percent from 2000/2001).
- rising market prices and overall short supply of local grains (millet, sorghum and maize)
- the plummeting price of livestock (40 to 60 percent depending on the region), with agro-pastoralists obliged to partly de-stock because of insufficient pasture and to purchase cereals.
- pasture lands which will not cover more than 3 months of livestock consumption, with a resulting reduction in milk and meat production in 2003, and indications that migratory grazing will start earlier and will be more intense.
- the anticipated need to import 322,534 tonnes of cereals to meet the country's requirements.
- a deficit of 94,504 tonnes to be covered by additional food assistance.
- thousands of people who have been seriously affected by the succession of poor harvests, and some 411,000 persons throughout the country who now require emergency food aid. The situation is particularly worrying in Aftout, in the south of the two Hodhs, in southeast Konkossa, on the plateau strip between Tagant and Affolé and in east Trarza.

Operational Developments

Emergency Appeal no. 05/03 initially proposed to target communities in Adrar (northern Mauritania) and Trarza (southern Mauritania) which were recognized as vulnerable by the Food Security Commission (FSC) but not included in WFP food distributions. The specific nature of the planned interventions involved:

- creating community feeding centres for children, pregnant women, and nursing mothers;
- distributing dry rations to vulnerable groups (the old, disabled and sick);
- organizing information and awareness-raising meetings in respect of nutrition and hygiene in the intervention zones;
- revitalizing the MRCS branches participating in the operation. Capacity strengthening initiatives were strongly linked to Principles of the Movement, disaster preparedness, initiation into financial, logistical and management procedures, and governance.

In the course of the initial response phase the food situation has deteriorated, with considerably increased vulnerability in rural districts. The water shortage has given rise to a dramatic decline in the harvest and the state of health of the livestock. The Federation has held several meetings to revise and plan the operation according to needs and in line with the material response to the emergency appeal.

In consultation with partners in the Movement, WFP, and the FSC, as a priority the Federation has programmed distributions in the appeal zones where the food situation has deteriorated. In the north the communities of Choum and El Meddah (classified as high vulnerability communities by the Food Security Observatory in March) have been selected, while in the south-west Thieikane and Leixeiba 2 will be the focus of Federation interventions. The urban community of R'kiz which was originally selected has been put aside in favour of rural zones in much greater need.

The presence of CACs, supported by the Italian Red Cross, at Choum and el Meddah, favoured the choice of these two communities. The Federation intends to strengthen and use the two CACs as a base from which to launch distributions. They are familiar to vulnerable people in respect of food (regular distribution of meals to children suffering from malnutrition) and their collaboration with the local branch of the MRCS will facilitate the participatory approach of our action. The Federation delegate, a IRC representative, two people from MRCS headquarters, local committee leaders, committee volunteers and the inhabitants of the villages concerned establish the vulnerability criteria, identify the vulnerable, participate in distributions and the report. Evaluation of results will be undertaken during the month following the distribution.

Preparatory meetings for the operation in the villages will ensure transparency of the distributions: three people from the village (two women and one man) will be responsible for identifying beneficiaries against the vulnerability criteria (families with old or disabled people, sick children, women in charge of the household,

etc.). A positive response to this revised appeal will allow the Federation to implement the planned activities: the training of teams assigned to wet distribution, and the survey and establishment of new CACs.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives

This operation is based on the principle of improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable by focusing on village leaders nominated by their communities and local Red Crescent committee leaders trained by their headquarters who will pass on the Red Cross messages in an effort to modify behaviour in their areas. The Federation will also emphasise a long-term strategy of training volunteers to be sentinels in their communities, to respond to both disaster prevention and general education. A secondary aim of the operation will be to raise awareness within the community:

- *Fundamental principles:* mutual support will be promoted in an independent manner with the representative government, the volunteers will assist the vulnerable whatever their ethnic background, on the basis of their degree of vulnerability.
- *Gender:* each community will be requested to designate two women and one man to represent them. Women will be in the majority for distributions and hygiene education.
- *HIV/AIDS:* The Federation will play an educational and awareness-raising role in the CAC's towards the beneficiaries.

Federation's Delegation

During this initial preparatory period the Federation has trained teams, planned future distributions, contacted suppliers for food, transport and storage, and prepared information and awareness-raising meetings on nutrition and hygiene. Creation of CACs will be carried out done in a second phase depending on the response to the revised appeal.

French Red Cross

Established chiefly in a region of high vulnerability, the Assaba-Gorgol-Brakna triangle, the FRC is developing:

- A project to fight STI-HIV/AIDS at Kiffa, in cooperation with the MRCS and the Ministry of Health. The project is made up of two components, sensitization/information and screening.
- Microprojects for community support: In 2001 and 2002 the FRC carried out two distribution operations, each of 600 tonnes.

Italian Red Cross

The IRC has been firmly established in the northern zone, Inchiri, Adrad and Tiris Zemmour, since 1997.

The Society signed a cooperation agreement with the MRCS covering three sectors: nutrition, integrated development projects and women's cooperative projects, and institutional support for local committees. The IRC now takes care of 51 CACs and five Recovery and Nutritional Education Centres in this zone, and during the month of March distributed food (oil, rice and salt) for 800 vulnerable families in the Trarza.

Coordination w

The Movement

The MRC and the Federation held an initial meeting at the MRCS's headquarters with the French and the Italian Red Cross to develop a cooperation strategy to provide "appropriate and coordinated aid" to the MRCS and to study how each of the programmes can strengthen the capacities of the MRCS. A meeting with the ICRC Head of Delegation and the regional cooperation delegate (Tunis), on mission in Nouakchott, also afforded an opportunity to coordinate respective programmes. The Spanish Red Cross also plans to send a representative to Mauritania in mid-May to assess possible support to the MRCS and the partners to address the crisis.

The government

Faced with a growing serious food situation, the government prepared an emergency relief operation in March 2002. An inter-ministerial committee for emergency situations assisted by an ongoing coordination and

follow-up unit is working on the development and implementation of a national emergency plan. Covering a number of aspects, this plan is intended to offer a rapid response to the situation of the people and livestock in various sectors of the rural economy: food security, cattle fodder, human and animal health, pastoral water table. The FSC will coordinate, follow-up, and evaluate the plan.

To meet the food deficit estimated at 161,000 tonnes, the government launched an emergency plan in which it provided a total of 80,000 tonnes of cereals in each department (sold at a subsidized price). With WFP providing 43,000 tonnes, the shortage amounted to 34,000 tonnes.

The FSC recently provided new food risk mapping of the rural communities, indicating a negative trend in the food crisis. The number of communities at risk has risen from 150 to 180, and that of extremely vulnerable communities from 47 to 78. The FSC took note of the MRCS's first intervention zones and the training and distribution calendar, and assured the Federation of their support for the operation. A representative of the FSC will provide support and assistance in the local contacts with the departmental authorities.

WFP/NGOs

With a view to harmonizing food security activities with that of the other humanitarian agencies, the Federation participated in coordination meetings between the WFP and NGOs. The WFP is subcontracting food distribution in the southern zone of the country to a limited number of national and international NGOs (Oxfam, MSF, World Vision, Accord, FLM, Caritas and Intermon). The MRCS is not among the partners of the WFP.

The MRCS

The National Society is a member of the FSC. The MRCS programme coordinator has taken the regional disaster preparedness and management courses and participates in the national crisis unit. All the MRCS branches have a departmental committee and 4,117 volunteers have been trained during the various operations by the FRC, SRC, IRC, ICRC and the Federation. This current food security operation provides an opportunity to survey all the volunteers who are still active within the committees and to create an information card for each volunteer with details of his/her availability. The youth officer will direct the project over the coming three months.

Objectives, activities and results w

During this initial preparatory phase of the operation, the Federation has focused efforts on planning, methodology, resources and partnerships in order to implement an operation that can be flexibly modified or adjusted according to the funds available.

Health and care w

Objective 1: Organize information and awareness-raising meetings on nutrition and hygiene for women in the communities of the intervention zones in order to improve their basic knowledge and understanding of the effects of unhealthy practices.

The Federation has planned the organization of information and awareness-raising meetings in the villages (Choum, El Meddah, Thiekane and Lexeiba 2) where it intends to carry out distributions. Activities already undertaken include:

- identifying teaching materials.
- preparing the MRCS training team.
- arranging a calendar of visits.
- organizing a meeting with the Ministry of Health in respect to awareness-raising activities in the communities.

Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items w

Objective 1: Targeted food distributions in Choum, El Meddah, Thiekane, and Lexeiba

Distributions will take place in May, and the following activities have been undertaken:

- procurement and transport: the estimates received were compared with those from other operators, including the WFP and IRC and FRC, in order to obtain the best cost/quality ratio;

- warehousing: the local committees and CAC concerned have been informed and will take care of storing the goods.
- food distribution: 18,000 beneficiaries will receive a ration of 400 grams of wheat flour, 50 grams of lentils and 25 grams of oil per day. A quantity for a two-month ration will be distributed to each beneficiary. Total planned distribution will be 432 MT wheat, 54 MT of lentils and 27 MT of oil.

The beneficiary population's will participate in the operation. Three people nominated by the community, two women and one man, will work with the MRCS volunteer team to identify the vulnerable and carry out distributions. Leadership, monitoring, and reporting will be the responsibility of the Federation delegate and MRCS programme staff. Evaluations will be carried out one month after the distribution, and will summarize: the evolution of diseases associated with malnutrition, anaemia and avitaminosis; and the outflux of families.

National Society Capacity Building w

The following activities have been carried out:

- daily meetings with the head of the programme to take stock of the operation;
- weekly meetings with all department heads to involve them in the programme;
- the logistics unit provided training on procedures and norms to be followed during the operation;
- launching of the self-evaluation process.

Federation Delegation w

One Federation delegate will now support this operation, with support from the FRC and IRC.

Outstanding needs w

See Annex 1 (list of contributions) and revised appeal budget. The operation requires funding of some CHF 540,000 in order to achieve the intended objectives. If sufficient funding is not received, only part of the planned activities and distributions will be implemented, and the MRCS will not receive the critical capacity building support needed for longer-term planning and disaster response.

For further details please contact:

- *In Dakar (Federation sub-office): Andrea Wojnar-Diagne; Federation Head of Sub-office; phone: +221 842 2341; email: ifrcsn03@ifrc.org*
- *In Geneva: Mark Willis, Phone: 41 22 730 4260; Fax: 41 22 733 0395; email: mark.willis@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>

Mauritania: food security						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 05/2003		PLEDGES RECEIVED				07.05.2003
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				721'000		TOTAL COVERAGE 8.2%
DANISH - RC		185'000	DKK	36'445	28.02.03	
FRENCH - RC		5'765	EUR	8'506	11.04.03	
LIBYAN - RC				3'000	03.03.03	
MONACO - RC		7'500	EUR	11'066	13.02.03	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				59'017	CHF	8.2%
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	

<u>REVISED BUDGET SUMMARY</u>			
	APPEAL No. 05/2003		
Mauritania: food security			
TYPE	ORIGINAL	REVISED	VARIANCE
RELIEF NEEDS			IN CHF
Food & seeds: wheat, wheat soya blend, sugar, oil, beans	245'000	245'000	
Other relief supplies	5'000	5'000	
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS	250'000	250'000	
<u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u>			
Cars for NS	50'000	25'000	-25'000
Computers & telecom. equipment	44'000	16'000	-28'000
Office furniture & equipment	11'000		-11'000
Generators & lighting	12'000		-12'000
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>			
Programme support (6.5% of total)	69'000	47'000	-22'000
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS</u>			
Transport and storage	235'000	260'000	25'000
Vehicle costs	51'000		-51'000
<u>PERSONNEL</u>			
Expatriate staff (4 delegates, 4 months)	192'000	38'000	-154'000
National staff	98'000	36'000	-62'000
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES</u>			
Travel & related expenses	12'000	6'000	-6'000
Administrative & general expenses	32'000	34'000	2'000
Workshops & seminars		9'000	9'000
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS	806'000	471'000	-335'000
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES	1'056'000	721'000	-335'000
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)		59'017	
NET REQUEST		661'983	