

Operations update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Zimbabwe: Food Insecurity

Emergency appeal n° MDRZW003
GLIDE JT-2008-000097-ZWE
Issued 17 September 2008
Update No. 2

Period covered by this Operations Update
No. 2: 26 August – 16 September 2008;
Appeal target (current): CHF 27,727,566
(USD 26,837,020)

[<click here to view the attached
Emergency Appeal Budget>](#)

Appeal coverage: Approximately 18.3%

[<click here to go directly to the updated donor
response report, or here to link to contact details
>](#)

Appeal history:

This preliminary emergency appeal for 27,755,314 CHF (USD 26,837,020) was launched on 6 August to support 260,100 people infected or affected by HIV and AIDS for nine months. Drawn from the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society's (ZRCS) existing home-based care programme, these beneficiaries are spread across 25 districts throughout the country's ten administrative provinces.

Summary: The food supply situation in Zimbabwe is critical. Serious socio-economic decline, the aggravated effects of climate change, limited agricultural inputs and low crop performance have left millions of people without access to food.



The response to the previous operations update (issued on 26 August) has been significant both in terms of donor support and media interest. On 9 September, the Swedish Red Cross pledged approximately 3.2 million CHF of funding from the Swedish Red Cross in support by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) – funds sufficient to cover the entire recovery component of the planned operation. A bilateral pledge of approximately one million CHF has been received by the Danish Red Cross from the Danish International Development Assistance (Danida).

In addition, ongoing and positive discussions with the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) could see that organization contribute the majority of the food supplies needed for the emergency food distribution phase (seven out of nine months requested in the appeal). However, even under a best case scenario, there remain serious concerns about the receipt of necessary support for the full nine months of the operation.

The ZRCS and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) will start initial food distributions today (17 September) in eight provinces: Masvingo, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, Midlands, Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West.

The situation

Zimbabwe is facing a dire food security situation – one that is widely regarded as the worst on record. According to the 18 June 2008 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) joint crop and food supply assessment (CFSAM), the total number of food insecure persons in rural and urban areas will be 2.04 million persons for the period between July and September 2008, rising to 3.8 million people between October and December 2008 and peaking to 5.1 million people between January and March 2009.

Several negative factors have contributed to this situation, including unpredictable weather patterns and socio-economic decline. The country's predominantly subsistence agriculture economy is particularly prone to the changing weather patterns resulting from climate change. Zimbabwe is also adversely affected by the world's highest inflation rate (over 11 million per cent by the end of August 2008). Most rural communities rely on agricultural production and food security and livelihoods are severely affected.

On top of all this comes the burden of HIV and AIDS. According to latest UNAIDS statistics, approximately 15.6 per cent of the country's population is living with HIV, with 650,000 children having been orphaned or made vulnerable by the pandemic. As ever, it is these communities that are suffering most severely from the food crisis. For example, in Masvingo Province, health authorities estimate that in some districts as many as 70 per cent of people on anti-retroviral treatment (ART) have defaulted on their treatment as a result of the serious side effects that occur when these drugs are taken without food.

The impact of recent political developments on the food crisis remains unclear at this point in time. On 29 August, the government lifted its suspension of food security field operations, a commitment reiterated during the 15 September signing of an agreement between the country's major political parties. As noted previously, the Red Cross Red Crescent was not affected by the ban.

Coordination and partnerships

The ZRCS is initially targeting 12.5 per cent of the estimated total of vulnerable people from July – September 2008. It is understood that other agencies will also carry some of the caseload. WFP still intends to launch a multi-million dollar food security appeal which will most likely make them the single largest non-governmental provider of food during this project period. Negotiations with WFP to provide seven months of the nine months of planned food aid have continued, and have been increasingly positive. However, even if this agreement is reached, there remain serious concerns about the receipt of necessary support for the full nine months of the operation. A letter of intent has been received from WFP, though no field level agreement has been signed.

Negotiations are also underway with the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) to support the livelihoods component of this appeal through the provision of seeds in areas where that organization is not operational.

National Society Capacity Building:

The ZRCS is preparing for the recruitment of field and headquarters staff for this operation.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress:

- The first food distributions will start today (17 September). Trucks will be loaded in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare with 383 metric tons of maize, beans and cooking oil. This food will be distributed to about 24,000 people in eight provinces: Masvingo, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, Midlands, Manicaland, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland West.
- Distributions will now take place on a daily basis, reaching 260,100 people with monthly food support.
- The recruitment of two delegates (operations coordinator and relief and logistics coordinator) is completed. A food security assistant has been engaged and the recruitment of a finance officer and a logistics officer will soon be finalized. Preparations are still underway to recruit a water and sanitation officer and three drivers for the operation. The appointment of these positions and two additional Food Security Delegates depends on the level of support for this appeal and the workload.
- Vehicles have been ordered from Dubai for the operation and these are now being registered.
- It is noted that all loading must be done in September with distribution finalized in the first week of October.

Challenges:

- Time remains a major constraint in the implementation of this operation. Considering the lengthy procurement processes, it is vital that donor support solidifies soon in order to meet this timeframe.

Communication:

- The zone communication delegate traveled to Masvingo at the beginning of September to gather materials to promote the appeal and the work of ZRCS. The trip prompted an increase in media coverage, with interviews done with Al Jazeera International, BBC and World Service, DPA, AFP and AP. Stories about the Red Cross operation and the food crisis have since appeared in Time Magazine, the International Herald Tribune, the Washington Post and on BBC Online.
- A special section on the IFRC's website has been developed. Please visit www.ifrc.org/zimbabwe for more information on the operation, including photos, audiovisual material and feature stories.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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[<Updated donor response report attached below; click here to return to the title page>](#)