

Operations update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Zimbabwe: Food Insecurity

Emergency appeal n° MDRZW003
GLIDE n° JT-2008-000097-ZWE
Operations update n° 6
10 March 2009

Period covered by this Ops Update:
20 January 2009 – 28 February 2009

Appeal target (current): CHF
27,755,314 (USD 26,837,020)

Appeal coverage: 36%; the interim financial report will be made available shortly.

[<click here to link to contact details >](#)

Appeal history:

- A preliminary Emergency Appeal was initially launched on 6 August 2008 for CHF 27,755,314 (USD 26,837,020) for nine months to assist 260,787 beneficiaries infected or affected by HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe.
- The target beneficiary figure has been revised to 199,340 based on the results of the joint Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (ZRCS), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and World Food Programme (WFP) verification exercise conducted in December 2008.
- The emergency appeal is therefore being revised to align to the new target and taking into consideration the global increase in food commodity prices and other operational developments.

Summary: The critical food insecurity situation is exacerbated by the deteriorating socio-economic factors and the breakdown in service delivery. Prohibitive prices of food and other products and service have continued to make the general populace vulnerable, thus increasing the need for humanitarian assistance. The country's food crisis has also been joined in recent months by a cholera outbreak that has claimed almost 4,000 lives and infected a further 85,000.

After an initial distribution of food, the ZRCS carried out a baseline study to verify its beneficiary figures, after which the food aid distribution resumed. The operation continues in 23 districts in eight provinces targeting home-based care clients and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) under the long-term HIV and AIDS programme. The WFP is providing food through its pipeline in 16 districts while the IFRC covers the remaining seven districts. The target beneficiaries have been revised to 199,340 after correction of errors in the initial assessment.

Donor response has continued to be positive and indications are that current resources are adequate to fund the operation until the planned end of the operation in May 2009. However, the revised appeal may seek for an extension as the 2008/2009 harvest is expected to be poor due to limited and erratic availability of agricultural inputs to both subsistence and commercial farmers.



Food distribution in January
Photo: Zimbabwe Red Cross

The situation

Zimbabwe's population is estimated at about 12 million. Of these, almost nine million (i.e. approximately 75 per cent of the population) now require food aid.¹ Zimbabwe has become the world's third largest food aid operation, after Afghanistan (8.82 million) and Ethiopia (8.67 million), and ahead of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (5.58 million) and Bangladesh (5 million).

In June 2008, the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and WFP estimated that 5.1 million people would be in need of food aid by the beginning of 2009. The increase in beneficiaries and low funding of their appeal resulted in the WFP - the largest provider of food relief in Zimbabwe - cutting ration sizes for cereals and pulses (from 12kg and 1.8kg to 10kg and 1kg respectively) from November 2008. There are indications that ration sizes will be restored as from March 2009.

Although the rain season was favourable, negative factors such as the shortage of agricultural inputs indicate that food shortages will continue into 2009 and 2010 as there is likely to be insufficient food from the 2008/2009 harvest. In addition, many small-scale farmers had not planted maize since production prices were not viable in the previous year due to price controls. The government liberalised the sale of agricultural produce at the beginning of 2009, meaning that farmers having an incentive to increase their production as they can now sell in foreign currency on the open market with no restrictions. However, this incentive came too late for the 2008/2009 farming season.

A crop performance assessment is currently being undertaken by FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture with the results likely to be published in March 2009. However, WFP is planning for another major relief operation into 2010².

Coordination and partnerships

The Field Level Agreement (FLA) with WFP has been signed for in-kind support of 28,679.40 metric tonnes (MT) of food. The Danish Development Agency (DANIDA), through the Danish Red Cross, continues supporting the operation bilaterally through food distribution in Beitbridge and Gwanda districts. The IFRC is facilitating all procurements on behalf of the Danish Red Cross.

National Society Capacity Building:

With the support of the IFRC Country Representation Office, ZRCS has recruited staff for almost all open positions for the food insecurity operation. Having a full complement of staff is an important step in achieving the planned emergency activities.

The project management aspect of the operation has been strengthened by engaging PMER (planning, monitoring, evaluation reporting) and finance delegates, who are concurrently providing technical assistance to the cholera operation. Accordingly, the water and sanitation (WatSan) delegate recruited for the cholera operation is providing necessary technical support to the food security operation. The ZRCS and IFRC counterparts work in cooperation, providing each other with local expertise and technical coaching.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The beneficiary verification exercise was prompted by technical discrepancies identified in the list held by various partners operational on the ground. The exercise aimed to define a clear and universally accepted number of people categorized as most vulnerable ensuring that available food rations would adequately cover those most in need. The verification exercise resulted in the revision of targets figures, to 199,430 people – a 16 per cent reduction. Food distribution resumed in the 23 districts, with WFP and IFRC covering 16 and seven respectively.

1 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 29th January 2009.

2 'Lean Season in Zimbabwe sees hunger rising', Reliefweb, 30th January 2009, (<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EGUA-7NSTMB?OpenDocument>)

WFP Pipeline				
Province	Appeal Figures HBC and OVC + HH	Verification Results HBC and OVC + HH	Difference	% Difference
Total	167,376	137,778	29,598	-18%
IFRC Pipeline				
Total	70,110	61,652	-8,458	-12%
Grand Total	237,486	199,430	38,056	-16%

Note: The total excludes beneficiaries initially included in the preliminary appeal i.e. Buhera (19,791 people) and Zvishavane (3,510 people). These are now being covered by Africare another WFP coordinating partner.

Explanations for the reduction in target beneficiaries (based on the beneficiary verification exercise)

HBC Clients

- HBC clients indicated the least change in overall beneficiary figures - a 3 per cent reduction in comparison to initial target figure. The Decline in clients may be attributed to deaths and weaning of clients from the ZRCS long-term HBC programme.
- Mashonaland West, Midlands and Manicaland showed a significant decrease in beneficiaries compared to initial target figures. This is due to an additional number of beneficiaries categorised as most vulnerable.
- There was a 21 per cent increase in the number of verified HBC household members.
- In Mashonaland East, there was a reduction of 12 percent and in Matebeleland North a reduction of 5 per cent. This can be attributed to inaccurate initial reports.

OVC

- The number of beneficiary OVCs decreased by 26 per cent; initially there was double counting on figures adopted from the HBC programme. However, this operation accounts for one OVC per household and the others automatically become OVC household members.
- The corresponding OVC household members' results showed a 30 per cent reduction in comparison to the figure used in the original appeal.

Food Aid (Relief distributions)

Objective: To meet immediate food needs of 199,430 vulnerable people (39,886 households) for nine months through monthly food distributions in targeted areas until the next harvesting season

Progress

Transport and warehouses

In addition to the warehouses in Harare and Bulawayo, the Mutare warehouse is now operational. At present 500 extra pallets have been procured for all three warehouses and an additional 1,000 will be ordered shortly, along with other necessary items that will be delivered to food distribution points (FDPs). Plastic sheeting has also been requested from the IFRC warehouse to protect food commodities from water damage at FDPs.

Food distributions

A total of 128,513 people out of the targeted 137,778 benefited from food distributions under the WFP pipeline in January 2009 (1,305 MT of cereals, 165 MT of pulses, 79 MT of vegetable oil and 374 MT of corn soya blend (CSB) distributed). A further 61,652 people benefited under the IFRC pipeline (616.42 MT of cereals, 59.1 MT of pulses, 36.99 MT of vegetable oil and 167.54 MT of CSB distributed.)

Food distributions did not taken place in Masvingo district and at Dete Clinic in January 2009 due to some irregularities in administration of beneficiaries. ZRCS/IFRC and WFP have been reviewing the report making reference to the results of the beneficiary verification exercise and an amicable solution will be found soon. Distributions in the same two areas and additionally in Chivi district are yet to take place for February due to the same issues.

Table 1: January WFP distributions (food items)

Province	Total Beneficiaries	Cereal (MT)	Pulses (MT)	Oil (MT)	CSB (MT)	Total MT
	HBC and OVC + HH					
Masvingo	11,973	119.73	11.98	7.18	36.46	175.35
Matabeleland North	25,667	275.5	25.64	15.38	77.05	393.57
Midlands	10,053	119.3	46.79	7.68	20.38	194.15
Manicaland	25,929	259.29	25.93	15.56	77.79	378.57
Mashonaland Central	17,663	176.45	17.67	10.60	52.95	257.67
Mashonaland East	5,930	59.30	5.93	3.57	17.79	86.59
Mashonaland West	31,316	313.16	31.36	18.79	92.10	455.41
Total	128,531	1,322.73	165.30	78.76	374.52	1,941.31

Table 2: January IFRC/ ZRCS distributions (food items)

Province	Total Beneficiaries	Cereal (MT)	Pulses (MT)	Oil (MT)	CSB (MT)	Total MT
	HBC and OVC + HH					
Masvingo	5,293	52.93	5.29	3.18	15.88	77.28
Matabeleland South	42,879	428.79	40.34	25.73	112.95	607.81
Mashonaland East	7,158	71.48	7.15	4.29	19.75	102.67
Mashonaland West	6,322	63.22	6.32	3.79	18.97	92.30
Total	61,652	616.42	59.10	36.99	167.55	880.06

Table 3: February WFP distributions (food items) as at 23 February

Province	Total Beneficiaries	Cereal (MT)	Pulses (MT)	Oil (MT)	CSB (MT)	Total MT
	HBC and OVC + HH					
Masvingo	-	-	-	-	-	-
Matabeleland North	25,667	133.56	13.36	8.02	40.07	195.01
Midlands	10,053	41.65	4.18	2.50	12.51	60.84
Manicaland	25,929	259.29	25.92	15.54	77.78	378.53
Mashonaland Central	17,645	143.29	14.33	8.60	42.99	209.21
Mashonaland East	5,930	59.30	5.93	3.56	17.79	86.58
Mashonaland West	31,316	313.16	31.32	18.79	93.55	456.82
Total	116,540	950.25	95.04	57.01	284.69	1,386.99

Table 4: February IFRC/ ZRCS distributions (food items) as at 23 February

Province	Total Beneficiaries	Cereal (MT)	Pulses (MT)	Oil (MT)	CSB (MT)	Total MT
	HBC and OVC + HH					
Masvingo	5,293	52.93	5.29	3.19	15.89	77.30
Matabeleland South	39,513	395.14	39.50	23.70	118.55	576.89
Mashonaland East	7,158	71.58	7.15	4.28	21.42	104.43
Mashonaland West	6,322	191.42	19.13	11.49	57.44	279.48
Total	58,286	711.07	71.07	42.66	213.30	1,038.10

Note: Distributions for February are still in process.

Procurement

The final deliveries of maize meal procured for the seven districts covered by IFRC pipeline has been received (3,134 MT in total). Reconciliation of rain damaged goods is taking place and thereafter final payment will be made to the suppliers. The final deliveries of beans (469.5 MT) are also expected. Procurement of an additional quantity of 122 MT of beans was expected to be finalized by the end of February 2009. A total of 786 MT of CSB is currently being delivered to the Harare and Bulawayo warehouses. Due to the reduction in the number of overall beneficiary numbers, commodities procured to date for the IFRC pipeline are adequate until the end of May 2009.

Operational Challenges:

Late uplifting of food from WFP resulted in January distributions only being finalized on 3 February 2009. These delays were due to loaders' strikes and lack of some food commodities in WFP stocks; however, these issues were resolved. Late arrival of transporters at distribution sites was also a major issue and the IFRC is working with transport companies to address the problems. Inaccessibility of roads due to the rains was cited as one of the causes of delays. Out of four contracted transports companies only one was available for the January distribution thus an additional transporter had to be hired (for the same agreed rates).

Agricultural Production and Livelihoods Recovery

Objectives:

To build agricultural recovery and stabilize household food production of 100,930 people (20,186 households) through distribution of agricultural inputs, strengthening community seed banks and supporting agricultural management for nine months.

To establish sustainable systems which protect livelihoods through diverse interventions to improve household income, food security, nutrition status and self sufficiency of 128,500 people (25,700 households) for nine months.

Progress:

Distributions of seeds (maize, sorghum, beans and groundnuts) and fertilizer were finalized in January 2009 so that these could be utilised before the end of the rainy season. Vegetable seeds (total 2.843 MT) will be distributed as from March 2009, as it was decided that these were not time bound by the rain season and could be planted at any time thus providing sustainable food sources throughout the year. The following quantities of seed and fertilizer have remained in stock and the maize seed may be distributed for the winter planting:

Table 5. Remaining stocks of seeds and fertilizer

Province	Maize	Groundnuts	Sorghum	Beans	Fertilizer
Mashonaland	-	2,610	6,480	3,955	-
Matebeleland	-	0,640	2,300	0,090	20,050
Manicaland	10,380	-	-	-	-
Total	10,380 MT	3,250 MT	8,780 MT	4,045 MT	20,050 MT

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion

Objective: To improve access of households to safe water and health and hygiene promotion for 3,000 vulnerable households (15,000 people) in 26 project sites

Progress

Water and sanitation activities under the food security operation are yet to be implemented. These have, for the time being, been superseded by the emergency cholera operation currently being conducted in all provinces of the country. However, the implementation timeframe of this component of food security is under review and a work plan being prepared. Procurement of necessary items such as treadle pumps and spares for borehole rehabilitation will be planned and conducted in conjunction with livelihood activities. Water and sanitation activities will most likely be implemented after the end of the rainy season in March 2009.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

Local and international news agencies continue to cover the Food Security situation in Zimbabwe and the response of the Red Cross. For example, during this month, the London Guardian published a lengthy feature on the work of the Red Cross in this area. For more information, please see the link below:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/feb/13/zimbabwe-internationalaidanddevelopment>

A special section on Zimbabwe has been developed on the IFRC website. Please visit www.ifrc.org/zimbabwe for more information on the food security and cholera operations including photos, audiovisual material and feature stories.

How we work

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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.

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