

ZIMBABWE: DROUGHT RELIEF

3 June 1999

*appeal no. 06/99
situation report no.2
period covered: April 1999*

With harvesting now underway in most areas of southern Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Red Cross (ZRC) and Federation-implemented supplementary feeding programme provided assistance which successfully bridged a period of nutritional need. The feeding programme will continue until the end of June. The longer-term issue of food security in a drought prone region has prompted calls for a clear framework for disaster mitigation and response, and efforts are underway to increase the capacity of the ZRC in this respect.

Context

Since 1991, southern Zimbabwe has been affected by a series of droughts. Insufficient, short rains severely affected the harvest in 1998, resulting in a critical food shortage. The Government of Zimbabwe declared Matabeleland South Province a disaster area on 21 August 1998. In September/October, 1998, the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society, together with the International Federation, carried out an assessment of the most severely affected areas; namely the Matobo South, Gwanda South, and Beitbridge Districts in Matabeleland South Province, and Mwenezi and Chiredzi Districts in Masvingo Province.

Based on the findings, a plan of action was prepared seeking assistance to feed approximately 40,000 children under the age of five for eight months, and to launch an integrated water and sanitation programme. With funding from the German Red Cross, the water and sanitation programme was implemented in late 1998. Funds and food were secured through the Netherlands Embassy and UNICEF respectively to begin the feeding programme in Matobo South District for 13,000 beneficiaries. An Appeal for CHF 480,000 was launched on 22 February, 1999.

Latest events

The supplementary feeding programme in Matabeleland South Province, Matobo South District, ran well during the April period, monitored by ZRC staff and the Federation consultant. Food supplies were received and distributed to 17 holding points, and collected by supervisors at 354 feeding points. Feeding took place every day of the week, although at some feeding points attendance problems were encountered as parents needed to work in The fields and collect caterpillars (Mapane), which are used as a high protein supplement to the normal diet of maize (sadza).

With funding for the programme in Masvingo partly in place (approximately 65% coverage) and training of village health workers and Red Cross volunteers completed, 54 tonnes of food (Nutrimeal) was purchased and distributed to 18 holding points, and subsequently delivered to 221 feeding points in Mwenezi District, Maranda area, and to 9 holding points and 155 feeding points in Chiredzi District, Matibi II area.

As many of the holding and feeding points are at schools, registration of children was delayed due to school holidays, and an accurate number of recipients cannot be established until the completion of the first month's feeding in late May.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Further training of supervisors at holding points took place in Matobos South District in Matabeleland South Province. Supervisors were trained in 'reading' the various forms completed at the feeding points, showing names and ages of the children and the attendance rate. Forms also show the amount of food issued on a daily basis compared to the number of children fed. There have been cases where these forms have not been completed correctly. The supervisors at feeding points are often semi-literate, and the holding point supervisors have needed to maintain support in showing the feeding point supervisors how to complete the forms.

Monitoring in both provinces has been carried out by ZRC staff and the Federation consultant. Emphasis has been put on stock control, attendance, and accurate weighing. The Ministry of Health has not been able to meet expectations regarding weighing the under five age group, but following further discussions there is some improvement in this area. It is estimated that, on average, a child attended feeding 20 days a month - a figure which compares well with those of UNICEF and other NGOs.

Several meetings have taken place with various government officials, village chiefs and headmen, village health workers and parents to estimate the impact of the harvest. By the end of April, many households had harvested and while some had reasonable yields, most had very poor results.

Indications are that most households will have sufficient food to cover only 3 - 4 months. Based on funds available, it has been decided that feeding should continue until the end of June in both provinces. A revised budget has been developed to conclude the programme. This includes the utilisation of funds for community based health training of Red Cross volunteers deployed in the programme.

Outstanding needs

Planning for the community based health training programme is in preparation. The course is being designed to help address community health needs and to build coping mechanisms.

Red Cross Objectives

By closing the programme in Matabeleland South at the end of June, the agreement with the principal donors, i.e. the Netherlands Government and UNICEF to feed the under 5 children for 5 months will have been met.

The late funding for the Masvingo Province programme will mean that by closing at the end of June the programme will have run for 3 months instead of the expected 4 months. However, with the harvest now completed, the need for further feeding is not as critical.

The issues surrounding approaches to food security in a drought prone region (Southern Africa) has prompted the need for a clear framework for disaster mitigation and response in addressing such situations. The British Red Cross has agreed to make a consultant available to the Federation in the future to work with National Societies in the region and consult with governments, organisations, and other stakeholders in the region. Terms of reference for the project have been developed and the consultancy is expected to start in May.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The co-operation with the various government departments, including the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, and the various government departments on provincial as well as district levels, has been very good. Frequent meetings to keep the departments informed of the progress of the programmes have been held.

In Matabeleland South, where UNICEF has funded part of the programme as well as the programmes of other NGOs, exchange of experiences with other NGOs has taken place on a regular basis.

UNICEF has requested assistance from the Zimbabwe Red Cross and the Federation in preparing a drought mitigation plan for the future and are seeking a closer working relationship with the Red Cross.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details. Two further contributions that are still to be officially recorded are a grant from Netherlands Government and food from UNICEF totalling in value CHF 122,000. Full details will be provided in the Annex of the next situation report.

Conclusion

With the start of the feeding programme in Masvingo Province, some 30,000 children are receiving food on a regular basis. The plan is now to develop a community based health training programme which will strengthen coping mechanisms in the Provinces and the capacity of the Zimbabwe Red Cross.

Peter Rees-Gildea
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NAME: ZIMBABWE DROUGHT

APPEAL No. 06/99

**PLEDGES
RECEIVED**

06/03/99

DO	DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE
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CASH

	REQUESTED IN				480,000	01/01/99
	APPEAL----- ----->					
DEN	DANISH - RC		100,000	DKK	21,510	03/03/99
FIN	FINNISH - RC		150,000	FIM	39,990	02/26/99
ICE	ICELANDIC - RC		200,000	ISK	3,913	02/24/99
JAP	JAPANESE - RC		1,300,000	JPY	15,855	03/12/99
OT	MONACO - RC		20,000	FRF	4,874	03/16/99
NOR	NORWEGIAN - RC		150,000	NOK	27,809	03/15/99
SWE	SWEDISH - RC		100,000	SEK	18,010	03/03/99
USA	AMERICAN -RC		50,000	USD	73,225	03/20/99
	SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				205,186 CHF	

**KIND AND SERVICES
(INCL. PERSONNEL)**

DO	DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE
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SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES	0.00 CHF

**NOT REQUESTED IN
APPEAL**

DO

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE