

# **ZIMBABWE: DROUGHT RELIEF**

17 September  
1999

*appeal no. 06/99;*

*Programme extension - end date revised to 28 February, 2000*

*situation report no. 4*

*period covered: June, July and August 1999*

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*The longer term partnership relationship developing with UNICEF demonstrates the confidence placed in the Zimbabwe Red Cross to implement effective supplementary feeding programmes with their network of trained volunteers, a positive sign that the Red Cross is seen as a key player in addressing problems of food insecurity for vulnerable children. As predicted, Chiredzi District in Masvingo Province has had an adequate harvest this year, but the situation in parts of Mwenezi and Matobos South Districts remains serious and the shift to more targeted feeding within the worst affected areas is intended to address the needs. The assistance provided to date is now being complemented by community health training in the affected areas to ensure that sound nutritional advice and knowledge is provided to strengthen the health of the beneficiaries and their families. This appeal is extended for eight months (until 28 February, 2000) due to a revised strategy targeting food to selected underweight children in areas where the harvest had not been adequate.*

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## ***The context***

The Government of Zimbabwe declared Matabeleland South a state of disaster on 21 August 1998 as a result of poor rainfall during the agricultural season of 1997 and 1998.

The Zimbabwe Red Cross Society (ZRCS) with assistance from the Federation carried out a field assessment during the months of September and October 1998 in response to requests for assistance from the communities affected and the Government.

The assessment teams identified one Matobo South District in Matabeleland South as well as Mwenezi and Chiredzi Districts in Masvingo Province as being hardest hit by the drought. The assistance focused

on the most vulnerable group consisting of 40,000 children under the age of 5, with 20,000 in Matobo and 10,000 each in Mwenezi and Chiredzi.

Delays in launching the Emergency Appeal were experienced, pushing back the timing for the plan of action. However, the Netherlands Embassy and UNICEF (with support from the Danish Embassy) donated sufficient funds to Red Cross to commence a supplementary feeding programme in Matobo South in February for a total number of 13,000 beneficiaries. Once the appeal was launched, the response from donors enabled the Red Cross to commence feeding in Chiredzi and Mwenezi in April, just one month before the expected harvest.

## ***Latest events***

The Child Supplementary Feeding Programme was carried out during the months of June, July and August during a period when erratic feeding was taking place due to the harvest of grains as well as Mopane worms (a customary high protein supplement to the most common diet of maize porridge).

Extensive monitoring was carried out by the National Society and the Federation and figures were compiled on the situation on the percentage of underweight children in all areas. Weighing has been limited in the early part of the programme as assistance promised by Ministry of Health was slow in materialising. However, recent figures show that there has been a considerable drop in recorded under-nutrition rates from around 18-20% to around 10%. While the figures vary from area to area, there is clear evidence that the programme has had an impact in the generally improved health of the children.

In some areas (particularly within Matobo) the harvest was much better than expected, and the children in many cases did not attend feeding on a regular basis. It was therefore decided to move the stock of food from those areas to others where the demand for food was high. During the month of July, serious food shortage problems on account of drought were reported from Mashonaland East Province, where in the District of Chiota an underweight figure of 20% was found. It was decided to assist 2,000 children with a supplementary meal until late November.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

Although the operation was originally intended to be completed during July, the disruption caused by the activities of the beneficiaries' families during the harvest and the fact that some areas had produced adequate crops led to a reconsideration as to how to most effectively use the remaining funds from the appeal. As some areas still faced acute food shortages, it was decided that the most effective strategy would be to undertake selected target feeding of those remaining most in need. An assessment was thus carried out to select underweight children within target areas. This exercise has been carried out and the following number of children will be fed until the end of November:

w	Matobo South District:	4,000 children.
w	Mwenezi District:	4,000 children.
w	Chiota District:	2,000 children

The Netherlands Embassy and UNICEF agreed to the extension of the programme in Matobo South District until 15 November, and others donors have indicated support for this modification in the plan of action.

## ***Outstanding Needs***

Training of 20 volunteers each in Masvingo Province and Matabeleland South Province will take place in September, with an emphasis on community based health care, as well as sanitation, HIV/AIDS, food

security awareness, and first aid training. The volunteers will be provided with training of trainers skills, enabling them to pass on their knowledge to the communities as part of a long-term training programme. It is planned to bring the volunteers together again in October to assess progress in implementing community health training activities and to refresh training skills.

An external consultant will review the feeding programme in Mwenezi in September, similar to the review carried out in Matobos for the Netherlands Embassy. An internal evaluation of the entire programme will be undertaken in late November.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

The excellent relationship with both the various governmental offices and other aid organisations such as UNICEF and WFP continues, as well as with other NGOs working in the area.

Various meetings between UNICEF and Zimbabwe Red Cross/Federation have resulted in a long-term working agreement with UNICEF. A 6 month feeding programme in Umzingwani District in Matabeleland South Province is being planned in partnership with UNICEF. Some 4,000 children have been identified as underweight and will be fed from mid-September until February 2000.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

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**ZIMBABWE  
DROUGHT**

ANNEX

**APPEAL No. 06/99**

**PLEDGES  
RECEIVED**

**09/17  
/99**

DONOR	CATEG ORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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**CASH**

REQUESTED IN APPEAL----- ----->				480,000	01/01/ 68.62% 99	
CANADIAN - RC		3,000	CAD	2,878	05/10/99	
DANISH - RC		100,000	DKK	21,510	03/03/99	
FINNISH - RC		150,000	FIM	39,990	02/26/99	
ICELANDIC - RC		200,000	ISK	3,913	02/24/99	
JAPANESE - RC		1,300,000	JPY	15,855	03/12/99	
MONACO - RC		20,000	FRF	4,874	03/16/99	
NETHERLANDS - GOVT				89,500	12/15/98	EMBASSY IN HARARE
NORWEGIAN - RC		150,000	NOK	27,809	03/15/99	
SWEDISH - RC		100,000	SEK	18,010	03/03/99	
AMERICAN -RC		50,000	USD	73,225	03/20/99	
UNICEF				31,800	01/15/99	DIRECT TO DELEGATION
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH</b>				<b>329,364 CHF</b>	<b>68.62%</b>	