

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

TANZANIA FOOD INSECURITY

7 April 2004

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 over 181 countries.

In Brief

This Information Bulletin No.1/2004 is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

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For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

The Situation

Tanzania has been facing a worsening food security situation following poor harvest in both 2002 and 2003 cropping seasons as a result of inadequate rainfall. This has led to a national food deficit of approximately 500,000 MT of grain for 2003/4 based on an estimated availability of food of 8,000,000 MT with a domestic utilization of 8,500,000 MT.

A preliminary crop production forecast by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security in May 2003 revealed acute food shortage in 52 districts with the worse affected being Dodoma, Singida and Shinyanga. The latest published results of a Rapid Vulnerability Assessment conducted in June 2003 by the Food Security Information Team composed of government representatives, the UN agencies and NGOs identified 1.9 million people in 47 districts in need of food assistance of 77,490 MT. Latest government statistics reveal that this figure has risen to 4.1 million by February 2004 including 1.09 million in the three worst affected regions. While the situation remains precarious for a large number of households, there is no evidence of any deaths or acute malnutrition caused by reduced access to food.

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The Tanzania government released 32,540 MT from the Strategic Grain Reserve to be sold to vulnerable households at a subsidized price of 50 shillings per kilogram, banned grain exports and removed duties on food imports to stabilize the situation. WFP launched an emergency operation from December 2003 to May 2004 for the distribution of 44,949 MT on a food for farming basis in which vulnerable households receive 12 Kg. per person per month in return for farming their own plots. Only 65% or 29,000 MT of grain has been received and 26,000 MT already distributed. Phase 1 distribution ended in March while Phase 2 for the distribution of 14,785 MT is ongoing till the end of April. FAO also appealed for 3,200 MT of seeds and 22,500 MT of fertilizer to be distributed to affected farmers but has only received 29% of seeds and no fertilizer.

Food aid resources have not kept up with the increase in numbers of vulnerable people. FEWSNET estimates that 33,666 MT was available in March compared to the newly estimated needs of 41,722 MT based on a minimum calorie intake of 400g per person per day. Food aid needs for April and May are 32,230 MT according to this measure which might not be matched by food aid distributions. The Government has imported 10,000 MT of maize to be distributed at a subsidized price of 50 shillings per kilo which may be beyond the purchasing power of many people. However, government may distribute grain free of charge to the most vulnerable. In addition, the Government tendered for another 20,000 MT at the end of March to be sourced from neighbouring Kenya but is unlikely to arrive and be distributed before the period of critical food shortage.

A crop assessment to be conducted by the Food Security Information Team in May followed by a Rapid Vulnerability Assessment will provide a clear picture of the food situation and provide a guide to further action by both the government and humanitarian organizations.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

Discussions have been held with [Tanzania Red Cross Society](#) and other humanitarian organizations on possible scenarios for a Red Cross intervention. The Federation has also initiated contact with donor organizations for funding for a potential drought response operation with the national society.

A team from the Federation and the Tanzania Red Cross undertook an assessment of the food security situation in the country with particular focus on three regions of Dodoma, Singida and Shinyanga from 23 March-4 April. Based on information collected in the villages and statistics provided by the region, the situation is as below:

In **Dodoma**, 300,000 or 23% of the total population is affected across 84 villages. The current food gap is 6,000 MT until end of May while over 3,000 MT of food assistance has been distributed over last few months by a number of church organizations. In **Singida**, 106,952 people in 31 villages out of a total population of 106,952 are affected with a food deficit of 4,160 MT until the end of May. They have already received 7,460 MT of food aid over the last few months. Finally, in **Shinyanga**, 2,750,000 out of total population of 2,805,580 are affected in all villages in the region. The current food gap is 3,392 MT. They have already received 8,685 MT of food aid over the last few months distributed by World Vision, Oxfam and church organizations.

The assessment team witnessed high market price for maize, the staple crop which have risen beyond the range of vulnerable households in these regions; a kilo retails at 300 Tanzania shillings in Dodoma which is nearly three times the normal price. Prices of other foodstuffs are also high in comparison with normal years. Many vulnerable households in the more marginal areas have resorted to damaging coping mechanism including selling productive assets such as livestock and ploughs in order to buy food after exhausting their food stocks from the 2002/3 harvest. This influx has driven down prices and consequently the terms of trade between livestock and maize are very low despite livestock conditions improving markedly as a result of good grazing pasture from recent rains.

Food stocks in the country are minimal and surpluses are expected in principle after the main harvest in May and June. The food security for a lot of households will therefore not improve until May and there is likely to be further deterioration in some areas. Production estimates for the 2004 harvest in the villages visited expected from April were in the order of 10% to 40% of the normal harvest and are dependent on some rainfall throughout March to April. In Kinampanba, Kishapu district in Shinyanga a lot of the farmers are unlikely to harvest any crop at all. Production levels are also likely to be adversely affected by migration by some men in search of employment and

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food which has reduced time devoted to farming, the lack of seeds and smaller areas planted as a strategy to reduce the risk of wasting seeds owing to erratic rainfall.

HIV/AIDS given to be at 12% by the Ministry of Health is also having an impact on the productive capacities of households. Some villages in Shinyanga have difficulties in accessing health services and clean water with the nearest health facility being seven kilometers away. Some areas have unprotected wells while the water in Sagara village in Singida is very salty and people have to walk four kilometers to access better water. This environment combined with increasing food insecurity is extremely damaging to people's lives and livelihoods.

The Tanzania Red Cross acted as implementing partner for WFP in Mtwara with the distribution of 2,139 MT of maize to 89,000 people in 81 villages in January and February 2004 using 38 volunteers assisted by the disaster management officer from the headquarters. The national society experience in a number of operations and runs a major refugee operation with the Spanish Red Cross for 279,000 refugees in six camps. The disaster management department at headquarters has a director, a disaster response officer and two officers responsible for disaster preparedness. The health department has a director and two officers for health and Watsan respectively. The organizational development department is charged with branch development with one director.

The Dar es Salaam branch has a 55 member Red Cross Action Team trained in first aid, site management and SPHERE standards. There are branches in Dodoma and Shinyanga but no branch in Singida. The branch in Shinyanga is very active with a regional office, six district branches, a regional action team, and over 1,000 volunteers running mainly youth activities. The branch has participated in social mobilization for measles campaigns for two years running.

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