

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

KENYA: DROUGHT

14 July 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. 2/2004) is being issued for information only. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time. However, should the situation deteriorate, the Kenya Red Cross/Federation may consider international support through an Emergency Appeal.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In Kenya: Mary Kuria, Secretary General, Kenya Red Cross Society, Nairobi; Email Mary.Kuria@KenyaRedCross.org; Phone 254.20.30.35.93; Fax 254.20.60.35.89
- In Kampala: Anitta Underlin, Federation Head of East Africa Sub-Regional Office, Kampala; Email ifrc42@ifrc.org; Phone 256.77.76.05.65; Fax 256.41.25.81.84
- In Kenya: Jaap Timmer, Acting Head of Regional Delegation, Nairobi; Email ifrc05@ifrc.org; Phone 254.20.271.42.55; Fax 254.20.271.84.15
- In Geneva: Josse Gillijns, Federation Regional Officer for Eastern Africa, Africa Department, Geneva; Email josse.gillijns@ifrc.org; Phone 41.22.730.42.24; Fax 41.22.733.03.95

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The situation

On 6 July 2004, the President of Kenya officially appealed for relief food assistance to aid people affected by the drought currently facing parts of Kenya. This follows a report from a two-week inter-agency assessment in some of the most severely affected districts that places over 1.4 million people to be in urgent need of food aid. The inter-agency assessment was coordinated by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group (KFSSG) of the Office of the President and comprised representatives from the Office of the President, WFP, World Vision, UNICEF, Care, OXFAM, AMREF and [Kenya Red Cross Society](#).

The prevailing drought situation is the accumulated effect of several years of poor rainfall in the country. The 2004 long rains effectively ended in May, one month earlier than usual. Although most pastoral areas benefited significantly from the generally heavy rains in April, the rains in May were very poor; save for parts of the northern western pastoral districts, very little rainfall was experienced in all the pastoral, agro-pastoral and marginal agricultural areas of the country.

Similarly, the key growing areas in western Kenya, including the country's 'grain basket' districts, experienced exceptionally heavy rains in April followed by low and poorly distributed rain in May. The marginal agricultural areas also had a particularly poor cropping season, especially in the lowlands of Coast, Eastern, Central and

Nyanza Provinces. The Coast Province in particular received almost no rain during most of the season in addition to poor rains through most of 2003. The recent flooding in parts of the country also negatively affected farming prior to the onset of the drought.

The June-August climate outlook offers little hope. Most pastoral areas projected are to remain characteristically dry, while the northwestern Turkana is likely to experience drier than normal conditions.

Some of the findings of the inter-agency assessment are outlined below:

Eastern Province: up to 80% of the maize has been destroyed due to the poor rainfall. Provisionally, around 330,000 people in Kitui, Mbeere and Mwingi Districts are in need of external food assistance.

Coast Province: After a late start, the exceptionally poor long rainy season in 2004 lasted less than a month in Kwale, Kilifi, Malindi and Taita Taveta districts. As a result, close to 80% of the maize crop in Kilifi, Kwale and Taita Taveta districts have wilted. The next harvest is not anticipated until February 2005. The rainfall prognosis for the July-August period is good for the coastline although the hinterland is expected to be mostly dry during that period. Pasture, browse and water had recovered well after the June rainfall with the exception of the lowlands of Kwale District. Nevertheless, water shortages are expected in mid-August.

North-Eastern Province: The rains in the province were poorly distributed and short-lived. Turkana pastoralists are now bracing themselves for a long dry spell expected to last up to the beginning of the short rains in mid-October. Child malnutrition had reached an alarmingly high Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of 34% in the north eastern divisions in March. However, malnutrition rates in children under five years in Turkana and Marsabit have stabilized due to supplementary feeding and general food distribution in these districts. High malnutrition observed in Mulot, Osopuko and Loita of Narok district, as well as acute malnutrition of over 20% and 30% GAM respectively in Marsabit and Turkana still prevail. The Arid Lands and Resource Management Project of the Ministry of Agriculture has also reported deepening food insecurity in other pastoral areas including Marsabit, Ijara, Mandera, Kajiado and parts of Wajir, Garissa, Narok and Tana River Districts.

According to the report, the condition of maize is still good in Western, Central Rift and North Rift provinces. However, 40% of the maize crop in the lowlands of Nyanza Province is in poor state. There has been about 70% crop failure in Central and Eastern provinces, while nearly 80% of the crop in Coast province was lost. Poor production in the marginal areas is attributed to poor rains in May and a failure of the rains to restart in June in most areas.

In view of the foregoing, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) has been forced to reduce its national maize projection for the second time to 1.97 million MT from an earlier projection of 2.27 million MT. The MoA has also revised expected bean output downwards to 100,000 MT from an original projection of 225,000 MT.

Maize stocks at the National Cereals and Produce Board stands at around 100,000 MT. The National stocks continue to diminish rapidly as the Government of Kenya endeavours to provide relief food to the drought-affected households, as well as to replace contaminated maize in Eastern Province. It is projected that the country may experience commercial maize shortage of about one million bags before the start of the main maize harvesting period in November 2004. The actual levels of shortfall will however depend on maize inflows into the country through cross border trade.

Fortunately, 80% of the remaining crop is grown in Kenya's 'grain-basket' where rains normally continue through early September. In addition, seasonable light showers in June and July in areas close to Mt. Kenya are expected to have a beneficial effect on the crop that had started to exhibit significant moisture stress.

The report cites substantial movement of livestock in Turkana, West Pokot, Wajir, Mandera, Garissa, Isiolo, Mwingi and Kitui districts to areas that received better rainfall. These migrations have caused tension and conflict among pastoralist communities in the past; the migration of livestock herders from Tana River and Garissa districts into Mwingi district is already creating some tension.

Most pans and dams have dried up, as they never absorbed adequate water in the long rainy season. The major source of water for both livestock and domestic use are boreholes, shallow wells and river dams. Farmers have

resorted to increasing livestock sales in order to avoid losses during the long dry spell. Water trucking has been provided to all settlements without water sources in Turkana, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, as well as to aflatoxin affected areas in Makueni and Kitui Districts.

The Kenya Food Security Steering Group is targeting an estimated 1,409,236 affected persons who will require a total of 28,465 MT of food for the next six months from August 2004 to January 2005.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Besides being represented in the inter-agency assessment coordinated by the Kenya Food Security Steering Group of the Office of the President, branches of the Kenya Red Cross were also part of rapid assessments to evaluate the impact of food security at district level.

The Government has in the past requested Kenya Red Cross to take a lead role in specific districts in previous drought interventions. On 9 June 2004, the Kenya Red Cross dispatched three ICRC trucks to Kitui and Makueni trucks with part of a consignment of 10,000 bags of maize and vegetable oil from the Office of the President in addition to another 450 bags of beans.

Following the appeal for food aid by the President on 6 July 2004, Kenya Red Cross is preparing to launch an international appeal for targeted assistance to the areas it will be assigned by the government. The Federation's Nairobi Regional Delegation disaster management coordination unit is working closely with the national society and is providing technical assistance and support in preparing the drought appeal.

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

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

[Click here to return to the title page or contact information.](#)