

24 January, 2001

## ***RUSSIAN FEDERATION: SEVERE POVERTY IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES***

*appeal no. 24/00*

*situation report no. 2*

*period covered: 25 October 2000 - 12 January 2001*

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*This programme was launched on 19 September to assist 209,000 beneficiaries (primarily children in institutions) with food and clothes. The programme also includes a development component to involve the vulnerable northern people in small-scaled economic projects. The only component of the programme which has started consists of a tender for seeds procurement, but there is not enough funding support to start the procurement of other relief supplies and development projects. With severe frosts, lack of fuel for heating, and shortages of state food supplies to the targeted regions, there is a dramatic deterioration in the living conditions of the northern people and funding is critical for the programme to achieve a minimum impact.*

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### ***The context***

Russia continues to suffer through a period of chronic economic dislocation and social unrest. One third of the population lives on less than a dollar a day; old and new virulent diseases are contributing to a dramatic decline in the country's population which fell by almost half a million in the first half of 2000.

For the last three years, the Russian Red Cross (RRC), supported by the Federation, has implemented several large-scale humanitarian programmes across Russia, providing humanitarian assistance to five million of Russia's most vulnerable citizens. While the previous winter appeals were designed as broad-spectrum, emergency aid programmes intended to deliver assistance to the most vulnerable through the long, cold winter months, this appeal is different. Concentrating almost exclusively on Russia's most vulnerable and critically isolated Northern Territories and Far Northeast - Nenetsk AO,

Taimyr AO, Yakutia Republic (Arctic regions only), Magadan, Kamchatka (including Koriak), Chukotka, and the Tuva Republic (included because it is the worst affected republic) where the children and impoverished communities have absolutely minimal coping mechanisms, the RRC and Federation aim to alleviate the suffering and restore a measure of dignity to 209,000 beneficiaries while assisting the RRC to develop to its full potential. This appeal also reflects two core areas of Strategy 2010 (Health and Care in the Community and Disaster Response) by concentrating on support to health centres and directly to families through the establishment of community canteens, which will provide a platform for micro economic projects, thereby drawing communities closer together.

The objectives of the appeal are:

- Improve the level of food security and nutrition of children in remote areas, urban centres and institutions.
- Enable the most vulnerable children to remain warm, active, more healthy and able to attend school.
- Encourage beneficiaries to become more self sufficient.
- Improve the health and welfare of infants and families, and equip rural medical stations.
- Establish community development focal points and explore openings for Russian Red Cross income generation.

## ***Latest Events***

The State Statistics Committee reported that if existing mortality trends continue, only 58% of young men aged 16 now will reach their 60th birthday. Committee experts noted that this was only slightly better than the projections for 16-year-olds in 1897 when 56% were expected to reach the age of 60. However, the Russian Health Ministry noted that infant mortality in the country fell to 15.8 per 1,000 live births in the first ten months of 2000. In 1999, the rate had been 16.9, and in 1990, it was 17.4. Infant mortality was highest in Ingushetia with 34.7 children dying before age one. Similar to recent years, citizens across the Russia's far east have suffered major disruptions to the power supplies.

As a result of the somewhat positive economic developments in Russia in 2000, the number of vulnerable Russians has declined from 60 million to 46 million -- but the decline still leaves one-third of Russia's population below the poverty line, according to a report in "Trud" all-Russia newspaper.

## ***Red Cross/ Red Crescent Actions***

Due to the critical lack of funding support, the programme is experiencing a significant delay. Taking into consideration the current severe weather conditions in the targeted regions with freezing temperatures and shortages in fuel and food supplies, the Delegation's relief team started a tender for seeds procurement despite the fact that the currently available funding will not cover all the expenses for seeds and fertiliser purchases.

The 48,000 seed and fertiliser sets are planned to be distributed among the vulnerable population of Kamchatka (14,000 sets), Magadan (14,000 sets) and Tuva (20,000 sets). Seed sets will contain: tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, beets, onions, carrots, vegetable marrow, radish, dill, and parsley. If no further donations are received, fertiliser will not be procured for the Tuva Republic.

The proposal to supply fishing nets for beneficiaries was discussed during a field trip to Magadan with the local Red Cross committee chairlady and district authorities. The chairlady considered that the best way to implement the programme was to enter into agreements with local authorities. This would overcome problems with licences and, more importantly quotas. Authorities in the settlements suggested that fishing teams could be raised in the community, quotas agreed upon and a proportion of the catch retained to pay a small salary. Although Magadan fishing is controlled by cartels, an innovative branch income generation scheme was under discussion.

## ***Outstanding Needs***

With only 2.7% of the appeal covered, funding is urgently needed to complete seed procurement and finish distributions in time for the planting season.

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

Efforts to increase the visibility and profile of the programme have involved:

- the information delegate and the information officer conducting a field trip to Nenetsk from 23 to 26 November together with 13 journalists from NTV Russia and five international companies (BBC, Sky News, Reuters, Knight Ridder newspapers, Icelandic TV and Swedish TV) to cover Red Cross activities. During the trip, local industrial enterprises and social institutions supported by the programmes were visited in Naryan-Mar; a helicopter trip to Indiga, a settlement of indigenous people, including reindeer-breeders, at the Barents Sea was conducted to cover FFPs distribution to beneficiary families; a local hospital and school were also visited; regional administration and Red Cross workers were met. The trip was made possible due to a donation from the Icelandic Red Cross.
- the Delegation's relief co-ordinator and relief assistant conducting a four-day field trip to Magadan on 30 October together with a journalist from *The Daily Telegraph*, one of the largest UK newspapers. Visits to the remote settlements of Sokol and Ust-Umchug were made to visit local social institutions and beneficiary families. Meeting with district administrations took place in particular to discuss the possibility of distributing fishing nets and organising fishing teams, that would control the quotas and licences and ensure that the catch was distributed as per Red Cross guidelines. Meeting with the Magadan region deputy governor and a supplier of food parcels were also held during the trip.

## ***Contributions***

See annex for details.

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**This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>**

Russian Federation: relief assistance						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 24/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED				01/23/01
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>17,617,400</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 2.7%</b>
BRITISH - RC		25,000	GBP	63,250	14.12.00	
FINNISH - RC		50,456	EUR	75,891	10.01.01	
JAPANESE - RC		10,000,000	JPY	156,610	25.09.00	
MONACO - RC		40,000	FRF	9,316	19.09.00	
SWEDISH - RC		1,000,000	SEK	176,100	13.12.00	SEEDS AND TOOLS
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				481,167	CHF	2.7%
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%
<b>ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
<b>THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:</b>						