

***BELARUS,  
MOLDOVA,  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION,  
UKRAINE:  
WINTER EMERGENCY  
1997-1998***

**appeal no: 15/97  
7 October 1997**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 22,742,000  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 1,057,500 BENEFICIARIES FOR SIX MONTHS***

***Summary***

This appeal seeks to provide food and warm clothing to more than one million people during the six months of what could be an unusually harsh winter. Its beneficiaries will be particularly vulnerable people living below the poverty line. The appeal targets and beneficiary numbers for each country are:

- Belarus: CHF 1,663,000; 30,000 vulnerable.
- Moldova: CHF 860,000; 20,000 vulnerable.
- Russia: CHF 14,090,000; 777,500 vulnerable.
- Ukraine: CHF 6,129,000; 230,000 vulnerable.

## *The Disaster*

The four countries targeted by this appeal are struggling to switch from one political and economic system to another, diametrically different, in a record lapse of time. Inevitably, the transition period is causing acute social hardship for increasing numbers of their populations. Hyper-inflation (which peaked at 2,000 to 7,000 per cent) gobbled up salaries and savings, while bottlenecks in payment systems and other consequences of restructuring have further reduced incomes. On the social front, the old health and welfare structures have ground to a halt before new alternatives could be put in place.

The overall result is a situation in which huge numbers of people find themselves on or below the official poverty line. Government statistics from the four countries indicate a combined total of 73 million individuals in this category.

The change-over is particularly hard for those on fixed incomes, such as the elderly and the disabled, who have had their real purchasing power reduced, but its effects extend to families with several children, the unemployed, single parents, low-income families, pregnant women and young mothers. In remoter regions, where efforts to reconstruct economic life and institutions have yielded fewer results, vulnerability is even more severe.

The onset of winter, driving up the costs of heating, clothing and transport for everybody, will test the ability of the existing support systems to their limit, especially if, as forecast, the El Niño weather system causes especially severe conditions. For the vulnerable groups described above, plus those in institutions (orphans, the mentally or physically disabled, prisoners) it means increasing destitution -- a further decline in living standards that constitutes a silent but spreading disaster.

This appeal seeks support for a programme of action which targets one million of these individuals. It does not pretend to bring about long-term changes: it has been constructed as an immediate, urgent operation that aims at tiding beneficiaries over the next difficult six months.

## *The Intended Operation*

### **Assessment of Needs •**

Needs assessment missions were conducted in August and early September in all four countries. The regions to be surveyed and the potential population groups to be assisted were initially selected according to pointers from government statistics and a World Bank survey on poverty and cross checked against data supplied by local Red Cross branches. Teams comprised representatives of the Operating National Society (ONS), one or more Participating Societies (PNS), the Federation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and local Red Cross branch committees. Briefing sessions for all assessment teams before and after each mission took place in the Federation delegations, in the presence of ONS representatives.

### ***BELARUS* •**

Four districts in two regions (Minsk and Brest oblasts) were visited 21-26 August by: representatives from the Swiss RC, Belarus RC, the Ministry of Social Protection and the Federation's Minsk Delegation.

### ***MOLDOVA* •**

The assessment was made by representatives from Minsk Delegation (Liaison Officer, Kiev Office) and the Moldova RC (Vice President). National and regional representatives of the Ministries of Social Protection and Health were interviewed.

## ***RUSSIA •***

Assessment teams travelled to three regions:

### **Volga and Volga-Vyatsky regions:**

Penza Oblast, Mordovia, Chuvashia and Mary El Republics (13-25 August) Finnish RC, Russian RC, Federation Moscow delegation.

### **East Siberia:**

Khakassia, Tuva and Buryat Republics (13-27 August) Swedish RC, Russian RC and Federation Moscow delegation.

### **Central Region:**

Ivanovo and Kostroma oblasts (25 August - 2 September): Canadian RC, Russian RC and Federation Moscow delegation.

## ***UKRAINE •***

The assessment team visited Kirovograd Oblast and met representatives from three other oblasts in Kiev. The team consisted of representatives from the Netherlands RC, Ukraine RC, the Ministry of Social Protection, and Federation's Minsk Delegation (Kiev Office).

## ***Operational Outline***

The area surveyed has a combined total population estimated at 215 million. The assessment teams concluded that a total of 1,057,500 people were at serious risk and would need emergency assistance beginning as early as October.

The Winter Relief operation will tackle the most basic needs of the target population by supplying warm winter clothing and footwear for children and adults, and supplementary parcels of basic food and hygiene items. Institutions catering for children, the handicapped and the elderly will receive basic medicaments (nursing kits), bed linen, diapers and some hygiene items.

The operation will last the six months of winter, when temperatures in areas such as Eastern Siberia drop to minus 50° C. It may be extended for a further two months (May - June) depending on the weather. The distribution of winter clothes, shoes and hygiene items will take place from October to December; foodstuffs will be distributed in December, February and April, when privately grown food stocks have been used up. Finally, a limited amount of locally-procured seeds will be supplied next Spring to the most vulnerable people in rural areas.

### **Red Cross Objectives •**

- To alleviate the impact of factors such as malnutrition, disease, stress, alcoholism and protect the dignity of one million beneficiaries;
- To maximise the use of local resources: human resources, goods and services;
- To strengthen local capacities by providing sustainable infra-structural support to the national headquarters and branches of the local Red Cross societies and government institutions;
- To promote partnerships between ONSs and PNSs.

The target population includes:

- families with many children, single parents, orphans;
- single and other pensioners;
- severely handicapped adults and children — both at home and in institutions which the governments are struggling to support;

- unemployed and homeless.

#### **Co-ordination •**

Co-ordination mechanisms on a country basis are currently not in place but will be established in preparation for the implementation of this Appeal (see also below ). When the operation begins, traditional strong ties between the Red Cross and the local authorities should ensure both efficient distribution and properly targeted assistance. Close co-operation with the Federation's delegations in Moscow and Minsk and its representative office in Kiev will contribute to regional co-ordination of the operation.

#### **Personnel •**

It is planned to recruit two Relief Co-ordinators to support the Moscow and Minsk Delegations. Their primary task will be to monitor and evaluate. Two national logistics co-ordinators will support the implementation of this Appeal in both Delegations. Given the size of the region and operation in Russia, two Russian Red Cross Relief Co-ordinators at Headquarters level and 18 local co-ordinators at Oblast level will support the implementation ; in Ukraine two at Headquarters level and two for each Oblast (a total of 54 staff).

#### **Transport, communications •**

Funds for the local procurement of five 4WD vehicles will be allocated to the Minsk region and Russia. Limited communication equipment — two fax machines and two mobile (local capability) phones for the Minsk region and ten fax machines and four mobile (local capability) phones for Russia — will be supplied.

#### **Media •**

A Federation media team accompanied some of the assessment teams in order to compile a media kit. This kit will be made available to all National Societies and organisations supporting this Appeal.

Media events to promote the Appeal include a public launching at press conferences in Moscow, Kiev, Minsk and Chisinau on Tuesday, 7 October, preceded by an embargoed press briefing of international media in Geneva on Monday, 6 October. Several donor National Societies were also planning national publicity events.

#### **Anticipated Later Needs/Expected Results •**

Ongoing economic reform in all four countries is expected to bring a gradual improvement in social conditions.

It is anticipated that the overall winter operation (which will necessitate improvements in logistics and communication) will improve the capacity and image of the local RC branches . Regarding sustainability, the experience gained through this operation should assist local RC branches in coping with needs the following winter.

## ***National Society/Federation Plan of Action***

### ***Time schedule***

*August* - assessment teams to identified areas - media team to Minsk, Ivanovo, Mogilev and Velijka

*September* - compilation of the emergency appeal - compilation of the media kit for the October launch - donors meeting in Geneva to discuss the assessments and appeal

*October* - launch of the winter emergency appeal - recruitment of Delegates - transportation of donated clothing and shoes to the operational areas for distribution - purchase of transport and communications equipment

*November* - distribution of clothing - set up and opening of soup kitchens - purchase and transport of food and other commodities to the operational areas for distribution

*December* - first distributions of food and commodities - continued operation of soup kitchens

*January* - monitoring of beneficiaries - continuation of soup kitchens - purchase and transport of food and commodities ready for second distribution

*February* - distribution of food and other commodities - continuation of soup kitchens

*March* - monitoring of beneficiaries - continuation of soup kitchens - purchase and transport of food and commodities ready for third distribution - purchase of seeds - impact analysis and report

*April* - final food distributions - last month of soup kitchens - distribution of seeds - monitoring of beneficiaries and start of final reports

*May* - completion of final reports for donors.

### ***Plan of action, country by country***

#### ***BELARUS***

- \* procurement and distribution of bed linen, diapers and footwear to 8,000 people
- \* provision of 540 hot meals daily (8 oblasts, one RC institution)
- \* production and distribution of 30,000 food and 30,000 hygiene parcels
- \* procurement and distribution of 430 nursing kits
- \* local purchase of five vehicles and communication tools

#### ***MOLDOVA***

- \* procurement and distribution of new/second hand clothes and footwear to 20 ,000 people
- \* provision of 200 hot meals daily (in two cities)
- \* production and distribution of 20,000 food parcels and 15,000 hygiene parcels
- \* procurement and distribution of 40 nursing kits
- \* procurement and distribution of basic medicines
- \* local procurement and distribution of seeds and tools

#### ***RUSSIA***

- \* distribution of second-hand clothes and shoes to 593,500 people
- \* procurement and distribution of new winter clothes and shoes to 94,000 people
- \* procurement and distribution of blankets and bed linen to 9,000 people, diapers to 18,000 children and anti-parasitic shampoo to 27,000 beneficiaries in social institutions
- \* provision of 640 hot meals daily in 16 cities
- \* production and distribution of 360,000 family parcels to 120,000 families (1 parcel per family every two months)

- \* local purchase of 5 vehicles and communication tools
- \* local purchase and distribution of seeds and tools

## ***UKRAINE***

- \* distribution of new/second hand clothes and footwear to 100,000 people
- \* provision of 4,000 hot meals daily in 50 places
- \* production and distribution of 150,000 food parcels and 50,000 hygiene parcels
- \* procurement and distribution of 500 nursing kits
- \* procurement and distribution of basic medicines
- \* local procurement and distribution of seeds and tools.

### **Evaluation •**

An impact evaluation on the effects of the operation will be conducted and a full report supplied to donors.

## ***The Response so far***

### **Government Action •**

Funding of social welfare services continues, but officials state that they are receiving as little as 30% of their full budgetary allocations. Food and other humanitarian assistance is provided, as well as limited social programmes for the elderly and disabled. Many institutions for orphans, abandoned children, mentally and physically handicapped children and adults, pensioners and prisoners are overcrowded and under-funded. Considerable efforts are made by staff in these institutions (many of whom are potential beneficiaries themselves, due to low salaries) to maintain acceptable living standards.

### **Red Cross/Red Crescent Action •**

Reflecting developments in their countries, all four National Societies are themselves in transition. Without the state subsidies supplied by the previous system, each Society has had to rethink its structure, policy and fund-raising. The Red Cross is still generally accepted as one of the foremost organisations providing assistance to the vulnerable, but there is a large gap between a genuine *desire* to help the needy and the *means* to do so. All four Societies have an extensive network of branches and chairpersons, most of whom work on a largely voluntary basis. Many have good relations with the local authorities. National Society activities currently include visiting nurses services, blood donor recruitment services, emergency assistance programmes, and some clothes and food distribution programmes.

Participating National Societies are supporting a relief programme in Northwest Russia, and institutional and resource development programmes, and are providing relief goods and medical supplies.



## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 2 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

The combination of economic decline and a long harsh winter is a fatal blueprint for a growing, silent disaster that will put increasing numbers of people at risk. Although the root causes of the problem are many and complex and unlikely to respond to quick solutions, the international community can nevertheless help to reduce their effects on individuals by providing immediate basic material and financial support. Besides this direct aid, procuring as much of the supplies as possible in the affected countries should help to stimulate the local economy, while the experience for implementing National Societies of working on a bigger scale should improve their ability to cope with problems in the years to come.

This appeal for CHF 22,742,000 million represents CHF 22 per beneficiary, or CHF 3.7 per person per winter month. The International Federation requests donors to respond generously and rapidly in support of this crucial operation.

Margareta Wahlström  
Under Secretary General,  
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

George Weber  
Secretary General

### **Annex 3 - Tables of beneficiaries and needs**

*Table 1: Locations and Beneficiaries*

Country and province	Beneficiaries
<b>BELARUS (8 oblasts)</b>	<b>30,000</b>
<b>MOLDOVA (6 oblasts)</b>	<b>20,000</b>
<b>RUSSIA:</b>	<b>777,500</b>
<i>Central region</i>	<b>162,800</b>
Ivanovo Oblast	98,400
Kostroma Oblast	64,400
<i>East Siberian region</i>	<b>205,100</b>
Buriatia Republic	110,050
Khakassia Republic	70,050
Tyva Republic	25,000
<i>Volga region</i>	<b>409,600</b>
Chuvashia Republic	111,800
Mary El Republic	75,975
Mordovia Republic	93,050
Penza Oblast	128,775
<b>UKRAINE (27 oblasts)</b>	<b>230,000</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>1,057,500</b>

*Table 2: Immediate needs*

Commodities	Belarus	Moldova	Ukraine
Food parcels, pcs *	30,000	20,000	150,000
New/second hand winter clothing, pcs	-	20,000 / 20,000	50,000 / 50,000
Footwear, pairs	8,000	5,000	50,000
Soup kitchens	9	2	50
Bed linen, diapers	8,000	-	-
Hygiene parcels, pcs **	30,000	15,000	50,000
Nursing kits, pcs	430	40	500
Basic medicines	62,000 CHF	37,000 CHF	355,000 CHF
Seeds	-	5,000 CHF	7,000 CHF

\* Food parcels contain rice, wheat flour, macaroni, canned meat, canned fish, oil, sugar, tea

\*\* Hygiene parcels contain household soap, washing powder

*Table 3: Beneficiaries*

Beneficiary groups	Belarus	Moldova	Ukraine
Families without support	4,000	500	20,000
-children in large families	16,000	2,500	109,000
Lone elderly	9,500	16,500	116,000
Handicapped and bedridden	4,500	1,000	5,000
<b>Total beneficiaries</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>230,000</b>

*Table 4: Russia -- Needs*

<b>Commodities</b>	<b>Central region</b>	<b>Volga region</b>	<b>Siberia region</b>	<b>Total</b>
Family parcels, pcs ***	66,000	186,000	108,000	<b>360,000</b>
Winter clothing (new), pcs	17,000	44,000	33,000	<b>94,000</b>
Second hand clothing, pcs	125,500	303,000	139,700	<b>568,200</b>
Winter shoes (new), pairs	17,000	44,000	33,000	<b>94,000</b>
Second hand shoes, pairs	28,000	83,000	51,000	<b>162,000</b>
Soup kitchens	2	4	10	<b>16</b>
Blankets, pcs	2,000	4,000	3,000	<b>9,000</b>
Bed linen, sets	2,000	4,000	3,000	<b>9,000</b>
Diapers, pcs	4,000	8,000	6,000	<b>18,000</b>
Anti-parasitic shampoo, bottles	6,000	12,000	9,000	<b>27,000</b>

\*\*\* Family parcels contain buckwheat, rice, cereals, sugar, macaroni, vegetable oil, canned meat and fish, tea, toilet and laundry soap.

*Table 5: Russia -- Beneficiaries*

<b>Beneficiary groups</b>	<b>Central region</b>	<b>Volga region</b>	<b>Siberia region</b>	<b>Total</b>
Families without support	22,000	62,000	36,000	<b>120,000</b>
- children in large families	45,000	127,000	84,000	<b>256,000</b>
Children and invalids	3,800	16,100	5,400	<b>25,300</b>
Lone pensioners, unemployed, homeless etc.	97,500	220,000	88,700	<b>406,200</b>
<b>Total individuals</b>	<b>162,800</b>	<b>409,600</b>	<b>205,100</b>	<b>777,500</b>