



TAJIKISTAN: DROUGHT

**Appeal no: 26/00
19 September, 2000**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 22,557,278
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 250,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 8 MONTHS***

Summary

A severe drought has struck Tajikistan, compounding the effects of a decade of growing poverty and three consecutive years of reduced harvests, and in the process completely crippling the population's coping mechanisms. As a result, unless immediate assistance is provided, some two million people are threatened with starvation. Following the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) special alert on the drought in Tajikistan, an International Federation Field Assessment and Co-ordination Team (FACT) carried out a comprehensive assessment from 24 August to 10 September of the level of vulnerability of the population. Based on the assessment report, a detailed plan of action has been developed in co-operation with the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST) and in coordination with the WFP.

The RCST and the International Federation, in collaboration with WFP and FAO, are seeking funds to assist 250,000 people with food and seeds in the Khatlon oblast in the south of the country and in the Leninabad oblast in the north. Water and sanitation activities are included in this operation in order to provide the targeted population with safe drinking water and prevent the spread of waterborne diseases, especially diarrhoea and typhoid. Public health awareness campaigns will further add to the containment of diseases and promotion of a healthy lifestyle in local communities. Special attention will be given to the strengthening of the RCST branches in targeted areas, in order to further contribute to the development of the National Society's disaster response and preparedness capacity for the future.

The Disaster

Since its independence in 1991, the Republic of Tajikistan, the poorest of all the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, has been struggling with a deteriorating economy and infrastructure destroyed by the recent civil war. For almost a decade, the 6.2 million inhabitants of this country have been attempting to maintain a minimal standard of living, struggling to manage the remnants of a national economy that has been unable to serve the needs of the country in a sustainable way.

Tajikistan has been traditionally dependent on the importation of cereals from abroad. Last year, a record commercial import of 400,000 MT of cereals was needed to compensate for an already weak harvest. This year, however, the extent of the drought that has struck the country has overwhelmed any attempt to compensate for the crippled harvest with imported supplies. The population has no purchasing power that may stimulate an additional commercial import of cereals. Moreover, income from the two main export branches of the country, aluminum and cotton, cannot finance an additional purchase of cereals.

The agricultural sector is generally suffering from critically out-dated machinery, and a lack of spare parts, fuel and fertiliser. The unavailability and low quality of seeds have contributed additionally to a drastically reduced agricultural output.

This year, the reduced snowfall during winter and a total absence of rain since the month of April has had a subsequent dramatic reduction on harvests, bringing the country to the edge of a major disaster. The rain-fed fields that account for approximately one half of the arable land have provided virtually no production. The irrigation system, already in a state of disrepair and malfunctioning as a result of the lack of maintenance and equipment, is mainly surface-water based and has thus contributed to a reduced harvest both for the country's cotton production as well as for the cereal production coming from the irrigated land.

On 27 July, 2000, the WFP and FAO issued their crop and food supply assessment report. According to this report, the total cereal production of the country in 2000 is estimated at 236,000 tons which is sufficient to meet the national requirements for only 3 months. This represents a serious drop compared to the harvest of the last three years (1997-99) when the domestic production covered the average requirements for over six months. The report indicates that, given the extremely low coping capacity of the population, around 3 million people (or one-half of the population) will very soon face severe food access problems, with two million facing a particularly desperate situation.

In addition to the extremely worrying nutritional situation in the country, the lack of water and seriously deteriorated living conditions have caused a significant increase in the incidence of water-borne diseases (mainly diarrhoea and typhoid) and malaria.

Against this background, the predominantly rural population of Tajikistan has now reached a point where the last coping mechanisms will soon be completely exhausted. The number of livestock has been drastically reduced and many families have already sold off their last personal belongings. The crisis is particularly threatening the health and life of people living in areas where there are no irrigated lands, or where there are no possibilities for seasonal incomes from the cotton field.

The Response so far

Government Action w

In May, 2000, the President of Tajikistan appealed for assistance from the United Nations. The government has, for its part, taken certain measures such as encouraging farmers to plant the second crop (mainly rice and maize) after harvest of wheat in June-July. Furthermore, the government has invited international humanitarian agencies to study the situation in the field and

has facilitated the process by collecting the necessary data on land planted, as well as the actual yield.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w

Following a request for assistance from the RCST related to the drought situation, a Field Assessment and Co-ordination Team (FACT) was deployed in Dushanbe by the International Federation on 24 August 2000. The team was composed of a team leader from the Federation Secretariat in Geneva, two representatives of the German and Norwegian Red Cross Societies (a nutritionist and water/sanitation advisor respectively), a representative of the Ericsson Radio Systems AB, and the Federation's information officer from the Regional Delegation in Almaty. The team, supported by the RCST and Federation delegation staff, carried out an extensive assessment of the needs in 14 rayons of the country considered to be among the worst affected by the drought. Confirming the severity of the situation and thus reinforcing the conclusions of the alarming FAO/WFP Crop and Food Supply Report, the FACT team, in co-operation with the Red Crescent Society and the Federation delegation in the country, elaborated a plan for assistance to 250 000 persons in seven rayons.

Other Agencies' Action w

OCHA issued a donor alert on September 13 aiming at providing food support to a total number of 1.2 million of the most affected. Discussions are underway concerning Federation and WHO collaboration, building on past initiatives related to typhoid and cholera. This operation may also be partly implemented through other humanitarian organisations. A number of NGOs represented in Tajikistan are elaborating their own plans of action to assist the most affected population.

Co-ordination w

Consultations are currently taking place between WFP, FAO, and the Federation at the Rome/Geneva and Dushanbe levels. There is a close co-operation among the relevant UN agencies, NGOs and the RCST and Federation in handling this food crisis in Tajikistan. All involved humanitarian actors are in close contact with different ministries, as well as with the regional and local administration. The formation of a task force, consisting of all relevant parties, has been proposed by UNOCHA in order to co-ordinate the food supply programme. The Federation supports this initiative in order to ensure a rational and effective way of distributing the available aid to all severely affected regions of the country, according to mutually agreed criteria for the selection of beneficiaries and the distribution of food.

The Intended Operation

Assessment of Needs •

Following the discussions with the Government representatives, and with most humanitarian organisations involved in the coming drought operation, the International Federation FACT team carried out a comprehensive assessment of the effects of the drought on the population in the southern Khatlon oblast, the Rayons of Republican Subordination (RRS), west from the capital of Dushanbe, and in two rayons of the Leninabad oblast in the north. Following the suggestions of both the government and WFP, a special focus was put on the Khatlon oblast, where the team visited 10 rayons. Four additional rayons, two in RRS and two in Leninabad, were visited in order to have a basis for comparison, as well as a more comprehensive view of the drought situation in the country.

In all 14 rayons the team held discussions with regional and local authorities, and made numerous visits to private households and farms, collective farms, markets, health institutions and pharmacies. The conclusions of the FACT assessment fully endorse the alarming findings of the WFP/FAO crop and food supply assessment. A severe drought has had a devastating effect on

this year's cereal harvest, with an average yield of 600 kg per hectare on the irrigated land, and 150 kg per hectare on the rain-fed land. This can be compared to a standard harvest on fertilised and irrigated land during a normal year of around 2000 kg per hectare. The total harvest in Tajikistan was less than a half of last year's harvest, already considered unacceptably low.

The drought has affected the majority of the population in the visited rayons. Farmers who depend solely on the yield of their rain-fed plots are most directly affected. At the same time, people employed at the collective and state farms (kolhozes and sovhozes) are affected in an indirect way as the farms do not have sufficient resources to pay farmers' salaries.

The dramatic effect of the drought this year is explained by the cumulative impact of three consecutive years of reduced harvests -- these were more a result of the poor quality of seeds, lack of fertilisers and broken-down irrigation systems -- rather than of the lack of rainfall. During this period, people have been forced to sell their livestock and other personal belongings which crippled their already highly limited coping ability. Today, the population has virtually no more resources to satisfy the most basic needs. Most of the affected population has enough cereals in their stocks for the coming four to six weeks. After that period, people will have no means for survival unless they are provided with direct food assistance.

Red Cross Objectives •

1. Improve people's access to food and contain the occurrence of severe malnutrition among the vulnerable groups through the distribution of 100 kg of wheat and 8 litres of oil per person to 200,000 critically affected in the Khatlon oblast and an additional 50,000 in the Leninabad oblast (in collaboration with WFP who will be servicing these areas).
2. Provide 100 kg of seeds per family for the next season planting (0.5 hectares each), in collaboration with the FAO agronomist based in Dushanbe. The targeted population will be the same as for the food distribution, with the exception of the urban population in the Kulyab rayon.
3. Improve/expand the water-system for the targeted population through repairs and cleaning of water channels within a food-for-work programme.
4. Implement a community-based health programme, focusing on the prevention of waterborne diseases and malaria.
5. Chlorinate up to 100 shallow wells, and replace 3 water pumps to provide safe drinking water to some 18,000 people.
6. Develop the RCST's capacity to be prepared and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable, especially in case of future disasters or emergencies.
7. Improve the National Society's institutional image and relationship with authorities, NGOs, official agencies, the general public and media.

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

Activities to achieve objective 1

- Three workshops for RCST staff will be organised, one in Dushanbe and one in each of the two operational regions. Participants will be trained in beneficiary selection, planning and monitoring of food distribution, and compilation of distribution lists.
- Beneficiary selection will be carried out according to the following criteria:
 - Small farmers, with rain-fed plots as the only source of income, and with no more than 3 heads of livestock per household;
 - Elderly without family support;

- Multi-children families, with more than four children under 16 years of age;
- Families headed by widows.
- Food commodities will be procured and transported to the selected districts according to the plan.
- Four distribution cycles will be organised over a period of eight months, including the distribution plans and preparation of ration cards.
- Food rations, composed of 100 kg of wheat flour and 8 litres of vegetable oil per beneficiary, will be distributed to beneficiaries, according to the distribution plans (four cycles).

Activities to achieve objective 2

- The procured seeds will be transported from Dushanbe to the selected regional warehouses (in collaboration with FAO).
- The distribution of seeds will be organised together with the second food distribution.
- 100 kg of seeds will be distributed per family. Beneficiaries will be the same as for the food distribution component, with the exception of some 89,000 people (15,000 families) living in the city of Kulyab, in the Khatlon oblast, and having no access to land.
- Training and coaching of National Society counterparts to manage the distributions and to manage the warehouse themselves.

Activities to achieve objective 3

- One sixth of the targeted population will be identified for food-for-work activities. This corresponds to the involvement of one member per family (although some flexibility will be extended to the family participation due to the lack of working force in many vulnerable households).
- Exact types of food-for-work activities will be identified in co-operation with the local authorities (jamoats). They will mostly be oriented towards the cleaning and restoration of irrigation canals and repair of water-pumps.
- The necessary material and equipment will be procured.
- Work will be carried out by the selected population, and monitored by the RCST and Federation joint teams.
- Continue training and coaching of National Society counterparts to manage food-for-work activities.

Activities to achieve objective 4

- One community health workshop will be organised in Leninabad, and two in Khatlon oblast. The main stress will be put on the use of safe drinking water and risk awareness.
- Organise training workshops for Community-based health programme facilitators (identified from the targeted communities in close collaboration with WHO).
- Production of training materials for facilitators.
- Community visits and household sessions.
- Production of dissemination materials for community visits and household sessions.
- Production of dissemination material for the general public.

Activities to achieve objective 5

- Contaminated shallow wells will be identified in each region.
- Chlorination will be carried out according to the plan.
- Three water-pumps will be replaced in the Kabadian rayon of the Khatlon oblast. This will enable the restoration of the existing water-supply system for 18,000 people living in five villages.

Activities to achieve objective 6

- Identify potential members of future National Society Emergency Teams and organise training workshops for them on: damage assessment and identification of needs; relief distribution (Federation standards, Sphere, Better Programming Initiative/Do No Harm);

logistics; warehouse management; telecommunication; first aid /rescue; creating basic community-based RCST emergency teams with material support; evaluation and reactivation of the RCST Disaster Preparedness Programme.

- Organise training workshop for facilitators (using the same facilitators from the Community health programme). This programme could incorporate the Community health and disaster preparedness components.
- Production of training materials for facilitators.
- Community visits and household sessions.
- Production of dissemination materials for community visits and household sessions.
- Production of dissemination material for general public.
- National Societies to develop Risk Maps in the affected areas.
- Elaborate a National Society Emergency Plan (National and community level), using branches.

Activities to achieve objective 7

- Organise an institutional image campaign to promote the RCST activities among the general public, authorities and other agencies.
- Establish permanent contacts with media, and design a media strategy to promote the Red Cross/Red Crescent profile.
- Produce dissemination materials such as brochures, posters, videos, and TV spots to support this campaign. The community visits and household sessions in the DP and health programmes would be useful for this dissemination purposes.

Capacity of the National Society •

For a number of years, the RCST has been implementing food assistance activities as part of ECHO-funded Federation programmes. However, the regions selected for this emergency operation have not benefited before from this type of assistance, and the concerned Red Crescent branches will therefore need additional support in relief and logistics aspects of the operation. Through the establishment and training of monitoring teams at the headquarters and branch level, regular household surveys to search for early warning indicators on food availability, training and direct involvement in the planning and implementation of the distribution, the National Society will strengthen its disaster response and preparedness capacity, effects of which will last far beyond the duration of this emergency operation.

The operation presents an excellent opportunity to develop the capacity of the national society to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable through reinforcing its constituency. New branches can be created, and the existing ones can be reinforced by providing relevant community based activities related to health, Disaster Preparedness, and emergency teams. Also the youth section will be created and/or reinforced in these branches by involving young volunteers in the implementation of these activities.

The RCST will be prepared to respond to the effects of future disasters with the training of a core group of people who will be able to manage future operations from the damage assessment stage to the distribution and rehabilitation activities. This will be carried out by a systematic training of identified National Society counterparts with the support of Federation delegates as coaches. This approach will promote and ensure a hand-over of the responsibility of the operation to the National Society in three to four month's period.

The Government of Tajikistan expressed its commitment to supporting the RCST and the Federation in providing additional warehousing and transport facilities for the storage and distribution of relief goods.

Present Capacity of the Federation in Tajikistan •

The magnitude of the planned operation surpasses the present capacity of the Federation delegation in Tajikistan, particularly in terms of human resources needed to successfully support

the RCST to implement the programme. The two selected regions, having no direct communication or logistical connection due to the geographical and social/political factors, will need separate distribution and monitoring systems. Therefore, a Federation field office will need to be opened in Kulyab in the Khatlon oblast with one relief and one logistics delegate for a period of six to eight months. The existing Federation office in Khodjent, Leninabad oblast, will have to be reinforced with one relief delegate for the same period of time. The delegates will focus on training their National Society counterparts.

The present Federation warehousing capacity in Dushanbe will be extended by a further 3,500 square meters for a period of six to eight months.

Monitoring and Evaluation •

RCST programme co-ordinators at rayon levels will be responsible for the preparation of beneficiary distribution lists and distribution reports. All information will be forwarded to the RCST relief co-ordinator at the headquarters. The Federation delegates in the two oblasts will ensure proper planning, implementation and monitoring of the distribution.

Two weeks after each distribution, RCST and Federation monitoring teams will take a random selection/sample of beneficiary families to check the stocks and appropriate usage of the food and seeds in households.

An external evaluation of the operation will be carried out at the end of the operation to assess if the primary programme objectives have been met, the programme design was relevant, appropriate, and sustainable, and if the operation has created learning possibilities for the Federation as a whole to be used in similar drought assistance situations. The Federation delegates' performance will be appraised through their capacity to coach efficiently the National Society counterparts and to achieve a complete hand-over of their tasks to the counterparts in a three to four month period.

The Federation Delegation collaborates very closely with the ICRC in Tajikistan. This operation will be implemented in line with the Seville agreement, and this will be taken into account in the final evaluation.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

While the drought compounds a pre-existing, escalating situation caused by economic crisis, the emerging disaster in Tajikistan challenges the donor-community to address not only people's immediate needs for survival, but also issues of human dignity. Any emergency operation aiming at covering only the immediate effects of this year's drought will not have any effect as the coping mechanisms of the population are virtually non-existent, and it is expected that people will face challenges of the same type and magnitude in the next year. The food-security component of this appeal, coupled with public health (mainly risk awareness campaigns and advocacy for health) and water safety activities, is intended to directly address this element.

The International Federation is fully committed to supporting the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan in assuming an active role in this operation, and, consequently, building its capacities for response to future disasters.

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

<u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u>		APPEAL No. 26/2000
Tajikistan drought		
TYPE		VALUE
RELIEF NEEDS		
		IN CHF
Wheat flour: 25,000 mts		11,250,000
Vegetable oil: 2,000 mts		3,300,000
Seeds: 3,300 mts		2,260,500
Water equipment		127,704
Teaching materials		54,000
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS		16,992,204
<u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u>		
Vehicles: 4 Lada Niva		34,252
Computers		37,479
Telecom. equipment		123,230
Office furniture & equipment		9,000
Household furniture & equipment		4,000
Generators & lightning		13,704
Medical equipment		3,440
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>		
Programme management		1,521,037
Technical support		455,319
Professional services		504,945
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS</u>		1,501,640
<u>PERSONNEL</u>		
Expatriate staff		553,948
National staff		351,020
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES</u>		
Travel & related expenses		46,400
Information expenses		157,692
Administrative & general expenses		247,968
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS		5,565,074
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES		22,557,278
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)		
NET REQUEST		22,557,278