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Emergency appeal operation update Lesotho: Food Insecurity

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency Appeal n° MDRLS004	Glide n° OT-2016-000005-LSO
Date of Issue: 8 February 2016	Expected end date: 31 July 2016
Operation manager (responsible for this EPoA): Hung Ha Nguyen, Disaster Preparedness Delegate, IFRC, Southern Africa	Point of contact (name and title): Prof. Teboho Kitleli, Secretary General of Lesotho Red Cross
Operation start date: 21 January 2016	Expected timeframe: 6 months
Appeal budget: CHF 664,073	
Total number of people affected: 180,000	Number of people to be assisted: 4,500 individuals (900 HH)
Host National Society presence: Lesotho Red Cross Society, 9 staff members and 30 volunteers actively engage in emergency response in three districts of Qacha's Nek, Thaba Tseka, and Mafeteng.	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation: IFRC Southern Africa Multi Cluster Office (SAMCO), Norwegian Red Cross, British Red Cross, and Japanese Red Cross	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Government of Lesotho (GoL) through the Disaster Management Authority is coordinating responses at country level. The UN-WFP plans to launch an appeal and will collaborate with government and other humanitarian partners.	

Appeal History:

- This [Emergency Appeal](#) was launched on 22 January 2016 for CHF **664,073 Swiss francs** to enable the IFRC to support the Lesotho Red Cross Society (LRCS) to respond to the food security needs of 4,500 drought affected beneficiaries for six months. The strategy entails the immediate provision of food assistance (carried out through cash transfer programming) and strengthening community livelihoods in three districts of Mafeteng, Thaba Tseka and Qacha's Nek to allow vulnerable households to meet their basic food needs.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF): CHF 84,369 was initially allocated from the Federation's DREF to support the national society to start up the operations by meeting immediate needs of affected people.
- IFRC, on behalf of Lesotho Red Cross is appealing to various donors to support this Emergency Appeal to enable Lesotho RC meet the needs of vulnerable people in affected communities.
- This update provides information regarding the first 15 days of the operation since the launch.

Summary: Lesotho last had normal rainfall between April and May 2015. This made it difficult for Basotho (the Lesotho people) to be engaged in winter ploughing due to scarce moisture. The first rains were expected between August, September, October and November, but it is reported that vegetation conditions experienced in November 2015 were at their lowest in 15 years. According to the December 2015 FEWSNET¹ report the strong El Niño event enhanced probabilities of below-normal rainfall and continued dry conditions in Southern Africa. Lesotho's onset of rains was delayed by 30-40 days affecting land preparation and other agricultural activities. Of the few people who managed to plant their fields, the crops are dying off due to this prolonged dry spell. These conditions have also negatively affected livestock conditions due to poor pastures and limited availability of water.

The prolonged dry spells and drought not only affected maize production, but other crops such as sorghum, beans, peas and wheat have also been affected, and harvests are down and low yields are therefore expected. The drought situation resulted in a 51% cereal deficit of the required 247,000 metric tonnes. Out of 10 districts the five hard to reach districts in Lesotho are the most affected including Qacha's Nek, Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka, Quthing and Mafeteng. Table 1 below illustrates the decline in cereal production in the most affected districts, however some districts reported an increase in output on some cereals compared to the previous production year (2013/14) i.e. Leribe (Maize 4% and Wheat 179%) and Quthing (Wheat 81%).

¹ <http://www.fews.net/southern-africa/lesotho>

An estimated 15-30 percent of Lesotho's population is in need of humanitarian assistance to help them cope with this acute drought situation. The Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (LVAC) report for 2015 indicates a deterioration in the food security situation with the number of people in need going from 447,760 in the previous season to 463,936 this season (an increase in prevalence from 26% to 33%). On-going safety nets interventions including school feeding, cash transfers and food assistance interventions by the GoL and NGOs have however covered a significant caseload of the food insecure population leaving 180,880 people (36,176 households) in need of immediate food assistance. These households will need food assistance over a period of three to eight months until at least June 2016.

Food prices have increased, with maize meal up from LSL 3.00 to LSL 6.90 per kg and are expected to continue increasing over the next 12 months as influenced by increasing demand, high import prices from South Africa as well as the inflationary effect of increases in fuel prices. The high import prices are also attributed to increasing demand of food commodities in South Africa due to food insecurity across the Southern Africa region. The UNOCHA Southern Africa Humanitarian Outlook of November 2015 attributes the increase in food prices to the dependency of Lesotho on South Africa's production (70% of cereals consumed in Lesotho) and currency value; as such the fall of the South African Rand (ZAR) against the United States Dollar coupled with a poor harvest experienced by South Africa. As a result of these factors it is projected that average maize meal prices will increase by 82% to 124%. Limited agricultural labour opportunities as well as projected poor terms in livestock sales as a result of the delayed start of the rainy season will also further affect household purchasing power and access to food commodities. Some households in Lesotho rely on remittances from South Africa, however these remittances continue to decline. According to FEWSNET the decline in remittances from South Africa is mainly due to retrenchments in the mining sector, the LVAC reports estimates that the remittances have reduced by 15%. Without humanitarian assistance households will likely experience Stressed (IPC Phase 2) and Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food security outcomes.

The significant increase in cereal prices and moderate improvement in overall incomes will decrease the amount of staple food that can be purchased by house-holds particularly the very poor and poor households who will face deficits from August and November respectively. The purchasing powers of incomes are expected to decline by 80-120% using the price of maize meal (LVAC 2015).

Immediate intervention: The LRCS will assist 4,500 people: (900 households) that are food insecure in Mafeteng, Thaba Tseka and Qacha's Nek Districts through:

- Two month food distribution of CHF 68 per household per month over two months of February and March
- A monthly cash transfer of CHF68 per household per month over four months. The transfer will be sufficient to meet the immediate food needs of a household of 5. The cash transfer value has been calculated based on the current prices of a standard food basket (50kg bag of maize, 7.5kg beans, 4.5 litres cooking oil).
- The operation will use mobile money transfers, working in partnership with the mobile phone service providers. Free Sim cards will be provided and selected supplier will train staff and volunteers in the registration and transfer systems.

Medium-term intervention: within the planned beneficiary figure of 4,500 people (900 households) the National Society will support 900 households with the following medium-term interventions:

- Support to agricultural production through the provision of agricultural inputs (hybrid seeds of maize, beans and fertilizer for winter cropping).
- Provision of agricultural training to 30 lead farmers with each lead farmer being responsible for cascading knowledge and skills to 10 follower farmers. Training of affected communities on farming techniques includes but is not limited to farming practices, which will minimise the impact of drought, such as seed selection, inter cropping, intensifying mulching, rotational cropping, soil and moisture conserving practices like keyhole and trench gardening.
- Climate Change and Adaptation through trainings on establishing and promoting the share of community indigenous knowledge, practices and also looking at the fuelling factors for the climate change related possible response mechanisms, mapping their resource, capacities and hazardous issues leading to climate change.

Coordination and partnerships

The Government of Lesotho leads the overall coordination of disaster response through its Disaster Management Authority (DMA) under the Office of the Prime Minister. The LRCS takes part in the coordination meetings held at DMA as part of monitoring and information sharing at national level. The District Disaster Management Team (DDMT) is the coordination platform for partner institutions (UN agencies, WFP, INGO's, NGOs) its mandate is to

build common strategies related to humanitarian response and policy issues. WFP plays a major role in the formulation of any response planning, and the funding of food distribution. This forum is well established and is chaired by the Office of the Prime Minister. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security also forms part of the DDMT.

There is an ongoing national rapid assessment spearheaded by the DMA in all ten districts. This is to revalidate the VAC data conducted way back in July 2015. The national rapid assessment will therefore reveal other statistics over and above the ones stipulated on appeals launched. It will further point forward to the targeting exercise for the most vulnerable livelihood zones. The relevant line Ministries of Agriculture and Food Security, Forestry, Water and Health etc. are participating. The LRCS's PMER Officer and the divisional secretaries are part of the assessment in the districts of Botha Bothe, Leribe, Berea and Maseru covering northern Lowlands, foothills and mountains while Thaba Tseka and Qachas' Nek covering southern Highlands and Senqu Valley.

Operational implementation

Overview

CHF 84,639 has been released from the DREF to start the operation while funding is being raised through the appeal to meet the needs outlined in the emergency plan of action. LRCS has done the following:

- Through the assistance of divisional secretaries assessments have been done and identified the most vulnerable areas in three districts of Qachas' Nek, (Sehlaba-Theba); Thaba-Tseka (St Theresa, Koma koma and Ha Laka) and Mafeteng (Sephapho, Terateng, Tsoloane, Tsakholo);
- A tender committee chaired by the LRCS Program Director has been established;
- A request sent to Southern Africa Multi Country Office Support Team (SAMCO) to deploy one qualified and experienced logistics officer within National Societies in southern Africa region, this initiative has been supported by Malawi RC at the moment by sending the procurement officer for a few weeks to assist LRCS with the procurement of food and selection of mobile network companies for the CTP process;
- The tender invitation for quotations was sent to local food suppliers ranging from millers, pre- packers, food suppliers, cash and carries;
- Comparative bid analysis will be done in the second week of February and it is anticipated that the first food distributions will take place between the third and fourth week.
- A coordination meeting with the disaster management authority and WFP was held with Lesotho Red Cross giving an update on the progress with the Emergency Appeal

The IFRC's SAMCO has been providing technical support and are in the process of sending Surge support to assist the LRCS in setting up the Cash Transfer system. The IFRC's Africa Region Communications team will support the LRCS team with communications and visibility.

Food security, Nutrition and Livelihoods		
Outcome 1: Immediate food needs of 4,500 beneficiaries (900 households) are met over a period of six months		
Output	Activities planned	Progress
900 households (4,500 beneficiaries) receive food and cash in order to purchase food	Information for local authorities awareness session	20%
	Beneficiary, targeting identification and registration.	10%
	Food procurement (maize, bean, sorghum, cooking oil)	10%
	Food distribution for 900 households	0%
	Establishment of CTP and payment mechanisms processes	0%
	Validation of beneficiary list and establishment of an accountability mechanism (beneficiary communication, feedback systems, etc.)	0%
	Training and Capacity Building in Transfer Cash Programming among the staff and volunteers	0%
	Training on beneficiary identification, registration, rapid assessment and field data collection and analysis	0%
	Selection and signing contract with Service Providers	0%
	Cash distribution for four months April, May, June and July 2016	0%

	Procurement of mobile hand sets	0%
	Mobile providers input into training of volunteers in mobile phone registration, provision of free Sim cards, reduced price handset provision to beneficiaries with no existing phone	0%
	Monitoring and evaluation of the activity	0%
Outcome 2: Livelihoods of 900 households are reinforced to build community resilience in targeted regions		
Appropriate agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilisers and production tools) are distributed to 900 farmers (4,500 people) in rural areas	Assessment to identify most vulnerable households that have capacity to work and have available land for planting	0%
	Conduct specific needs assessment via Ministry of Agriculture to identify most appropriate items to be distributed depending on the market availability and period	0%
	Assessment to establish capacity of local traders to provide proposed seeds and fertilizers	0%
	Organize procurement of seeds, fertilizers and production tools for 900 farmers	0%
	Training of lead farmers in agricultural production (they will be trained on farming techniques, water harvesting techniques like dam maintenance, catchment design and maintenance, water hygiene this will be cascaded down to entire community)	0%
	Conduct distribution of seeds, fertilizer and production tools	0%
	Monitoring and evaluation of the activity	0%
Water, Health and Hygiene Promotion		
Outcome 3: Immediate reduction in risk of waterborne and water related diseases in targeted districts.		
Health and hygiene promotion activities carried out to targeted population	Training of volunteers, water committees and teachers on hygiene promotion (proper hand washing, water treatment and health education)	0%
	Training of volunteers to monitor malnutrition indicators and conduct referrals and social mobilization exercises in targeted communities	0%
	Hazard mapping and analysis in villages and schools and identify potential water sources	0%
	Distribution of water treatment tablets	0%
	House to house visits for hand-washing; water treatment and health education	0%
	Monitoring and evaluation of the activity	0%
Quality programming / Areas common to all sectors (assessments, monitoring and evaluation)		
Outcome 4: The management of the operation is informed by a comprehensive assessment, monitoring and evaluation system		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial needs assessments are updated following consultation with beneficiaries and stakeholders 	Inception meeting with implementation team– IFRC SACO and LRCS	0%
	Coordination and engagement with key stakeholders (DMA, MoAFS, Community leaders, NGOs, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, UN Agencies).	0%
	Joint monitoring of operations by LRCS & IFRC	0%
	Evaluation of assistance impact in supported households (related to all food security activities)	0%
	Review and Lesson Learnt meeting	0%

Contact Information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives,
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace**.
