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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: 06 April 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: 22 January 2016	Expected timeframe: 6 months
Appeal budget: CHF 669,160	
Total number of people affected: 180,000	Number of people to be assisted: 9,000 individuals (1,800HH)
Host National Society presence: Lesotho Red Cross Society, 9 staff members and 30 volunteers actively engaged 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 Country Cluster Support Team-SACCST), Monaco Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, Swedish Red Cross and British 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.	

This **Operations Update** highlights the change of strategy following a market survey undertaken in March 2016 just before the implementation of the cash transfer program. The cash granted per household has been reduced from CHF68 to CHF35 to take into account the market stability and current prices, and the number of beneficiaries increased accordingly from 4,500 people to 9,000 people as the needs are high. This resulted in a minimal budget change (less than 1%) from CHF 664,073 to CHF 669,160.

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.
- [Operations Update no. 1](#) was issued on 8 February 2016.
- [Operations Update no.2](#) was issued on 26 February 2016.
- The current Operations Update no.3, issued on 6 April 2016, follows a change of strategy (<1% budget change) explained herein.

IFRC, on behalf of Lesotho Red Cross express sincere thanks to various donors to support this Emergency Appeal to enable Lesotho RC meet the needs of vulnerable people in affected communities.

[<click here for the revised Emergency Appeal budget, or here for contact details>](#)

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%).

District	Maize	Sorghum	Wheat
Botha-Bothe	▼ -10%	▼ -57%	▼ -51%
Leribe	▲ 4%	▼ -81%	▲ 179%
Berea	▼ -53%	▼ -84%	▼
Maseru	▲ 30%	▼ -64%	▼ -82%
Mafeteng	▼ -72%	▼ -92%	▲
Mohale's Hoek	▼ -75%	▼ -80%	▼ -88%
Quthing	▼ -67%	▼ -75%	▲ 81%
Qacha's Nek	▼ -92%	▼ -89%	▼ -93%
Mokhotlong	▼ -43%	▼ -58%	▼ -55%
Thaba-Tseka	▼ -77%	▼ -90%	▼ -80%
Lesotho	▼ -45%	▼ -81%	▼ -67%

Table 1: Percentage Change in Cereal production per district: Source LVAC 2015

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 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.

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

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 UN-OCHA 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 cereal 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 households 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).

Between 12-19 March, the IFRC together with LRCS conducted market survey where the team had a series of meetings with local dealers and retailers that the food price has increased slightly in the last few months and local retailers commit to retaining the price so that our selected beneficiaries could be able to access to food without inflation. In the meantime, the LRCS had consultative meetings with finance offices in all three districts and the officials said the market will be steady or even higher but under control. In addition, the first food procurement saw that food price was reasonable rather than projected price. Therefore, the LRCS proposed to reduce the unit price from CHF 68 to CHF 35 and double the beneficiaries from 4,500 people to 9,000 people as the needs are high. The same package will also be applied for livelihoods support option as the market price for seeds, fertilizer and tools is stable.

Immediate intervention: the LRCS will assist 9,000 people: (1,800 households) that are food insecure in Mafeteng, Thaba Tseka and Qacha's Nek Districts through:

- Two month food distribution of CHF 35 per household per month over two months of February and March
- A monthly cash transfer of CHF 35 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 Vodacom Lesotho. Free Sim cards will be provided and Vodacom will train staff and volunteers in the registration and transfer systems.

Medium-term intervention: within the planned beneficiary figure of 9,000 people (1,800 households), the National Society will support 1,800 households with the following medium-term interventions:

- Support to agricultural production through the provision of agricultural inputs (hybrid seeds of maize, beans and fertilizer and production tools 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 yet another statistics over and above the ones stipulated on appeals launched, it will further path away forward to the targeting exercise for the most vulnerable livelihoods zones , the statistics will be reinforced, or rather extended to larger magnitude. 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 was released from the DREF to start the operation while CHF 584,517 has been received from British Red Cross, Monaco Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross, and Swedish Red Cross through the appeal to meet the needs outlined in the Emergency Plan of Action. The following achievements have been made by LRCS:

- The LRCS through the assistance of divisional secretaries has assessed and identify the most vulnerable areas in three districts of Qachas' Nek, (Sehlabatheba); Thaba-Tseka (St Theresa, Koma koma and Ha Laka) and Mafeteng (Sephapho, Terateng, Tsoloane, Tsakholo);
- A tender committee has been established and chaired by the LRCS Program Director;
- Tender committee met and officially opened tenders on the 19 February 2016. The opening was officiated by the member of board, while tender committee was comprised of Member of the board, Programmes Director, HR and Admin Manager, Logistics officer and Disaster Management Coordinator;
- Minutes of the tender process were drafted and yet to be finalised upon the identification of suitable suppliers;
- Stakeholders' meeting at the national level was held to introduce the operation in the aforementioned district, DMA, WFP, World Vision, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security as well Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation. These stakeholders were met at all levels ranging from, national, district and field level;
- The LRCS divisional committee, District Administrators and District Disaster Management Teams were met to establish assessment teams. This was done in Mafeteng and Qachas'nek where beneficiary targeting, selection, verification and registration;
- Food Management Unit (FMU) was also conducted to secure space in their warehouses in three targeted districts;
- First Food delivery from selected suppliers and distribution has reached 1,800 households in three targeted districts while the second food distribution will be taken place this week and next week;
- A Cash Transfer Programme (CTP) Training was organized by LRCS in Maseru between 19-22 March targeting 24 staff and volunteers from three targeted districts with the aim to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills from selection and registration of beneficiaries, market survey, CTP options and monitoring and evaluation;
- A tender meeting on mobile network was convened on 22 March where two main mobile networks were present. As a result, Vodacom became the most comparative one and won the bidding with zero fee toward the service;



Food distribution in Thaba Tseka. Photo: LRCS

- A press conference was held in Maseru with participation of representatives of IFRC SACCST, British Red Cross and media agencies in Lesotho to further disseminate and advocate on the operations.

The IFRC's Southern Africa Country Cluster Support Team (SACCST) has been providing technical support and has sent IFRC DM Delegate and Cash Transfer Operation Manager from Malawi to do market survey and conduct CTP training. In addition, a Communications delegate from the Norwegian Red Cross visited Lesotho during the first week of March where she could profile and write up some stories from the field. In regards with logistics support, the Africa Regional Office's Logistics Coordinator has been remotely providing technical support to the LRCS team in food items procurement process.

Food security, Nutrition and Livelihoods		
Outcome 1: Immediate food needs of 9,000 beneficiaries (1,800 households) are met over a period of six months		
Output	Activities planned	Progress
1,800 households (9,000 beneficiaries) receive food and cash in order to purchase food	Information for local authorities awareness session	100%
	Beneficiary, targeting identification and registration.	100%
	Food procurement (maize, bean, sorghum, cooking oil)	100%
	Food distribution for 1,800 households	50%
	Establishment of CTP and payment mechanisms processes	50%
	Validation of beneficiary list and establishment of an accountability mechanism (beneficiary communication, feedback systems, etc.)	100%
	Training and Capacity Building in Transfer Cash Programming among the staff and volunteers	100%
	Training on beneficiary identification, registration, rapid assessment and field data collection and analysis	100%
	Selection and signing contract with Service Providers	50%
	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	On-going
Outcome 2: Livelihoods of 1,800 households are reinforced to build community resilience in targeted regions		
Appropriate agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilisers and production tools) are distributed to 1,800 farmers (9,000 people) in rural areas	Assessment to identify most vulnerable households that have capacity to work and have available land for planting	50%
	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 1,800 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 SACCST and LRCS	100%
	Coordination and engagement with key stakeholders (DMA, MoAFS, Community leaders, NGOs, Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, UN Agencies).	On-going
	Joint monitoring of operations by LRCS & IFRC	20%
	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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For Performance and Accountability (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting):

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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**.

EMERGENCY APPEAL OPERATION

MDRLS004 Lesotho Food Insecurity-revised budget

Budget Group	Multilateral Response	Inter-Agency Shelter Coord.	Bilateral Response	Budget CHF
Shelter - Relief	0			0
Shelter - Transitional	0			0
Construction - Housing	0			0
Construction - Facilities	0			0
Construction - Materials	0			0
Clothing & Textiles	0			0
Food	120,600			120,600
Seeds & Plants	41,400			41,400
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	0			0
Medical & First Aid	0			0
Teaching Materials	0			0
Utensils & Tools	41,400			41,400
Other Supplies & Services	0			0
Emergency Response Units	0			0
Cash Disbursements	252,000			252,000
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	455,400	0	0	455,400
Land & Buildings	0			0
Vehicles Purchase	0			0
Computer & Telecom Equipment	1,800			1,800
Office/Household Furniture & Equipment	0			0
Medical Equipment	0			0
Other Machinery & Equipment	0			0
Total LAND, VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	1,800	0	0	1,800
Storage, Warehousing	0			0
Distribution & Monitoring	0			0
Transport & Vehicle Costs	10,750			10,750
Logistics Services	0			0
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	10,750	0	0	10,750
International Staff	36,000			36,000
National Staff	2,400			2,400
National Society Staff	41,015			41,015
Volunteers	7,185			7,185
Total PERSONNEL	86,600	0	0	86,600
Consultants	0			0
Professional Fees	0			0
Total CONSULTANTS & PROFESSIONAL FEES	0	0	0	0
Workshops & Training	29,600			29,600
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	29,600	0	0	29,600
Travel	16,500			16,500
Information & Public Relations	6,000			6,000
Office Costs	2,000			2,000
Communications	2,000			2,000
Financial Charges	7,657			7,657
Other General Expenses	0			0
Shared Support Services	10,012			10,012
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	44,169	0	0	44,169
Programme and Supplementary Services Recovery	40,841	0	0	40,841
Total INDIRECT COSTS	40,841	0	0	40,841
TOTAL BUDGET	669,160	0	0	669,160
Available Resources				
Multilateral Contributions				0
Bilateral Contributions				0
TOTAL AVAILABLE RESOURCES	0	0	0	0
NET EMERGENCY APPEAL NEEDS	669,160	0	0	669,160