



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

**ERITREA – Drought**

Fact Sheet #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

April 30, 2003

*This Fact Sheet updates USAID/OFDA Eritrea Fact Sheet #2 for fiscal year 2003, dated March 18, 2003.*

**Background**

- In 2002, below-average minor season rains (March through May) severely hindered land preparation for the main planting season (June through September). Additionally, main season rains, which are crucial to crop production in the drought-prone Anseba, Northern Red Sea, and Southern Red Sea zones, as well as the breadbasket zones of Gash Barka, Debub, and Maekel, were sporadic and insufficient. In response, the Government of the State of Eritrea's (GSE) Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC) issued an appeal in August 2002 to the humanitarian community for a timely response to the drought situation. The GSE identified a food production deficit of nearly 300,000 metric tons (MT) and significant humanitarian needs in the health and water/sanitation sectors.
- According to the 2003 U.N. Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Eritrea, launched in November 2002, an estimated 1.4 million out of a total of 3.3 million people are affected by drought conditions associated with major crop failure in agricultural areas and the substantial loss of livestock among pastoral communities. The U.N. has identified an additional 910,000 people comprised mainly of HIV infected individuals, demobilized soldiers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), and returned refugees that are also deemed vulnerable and are targeted for assistance under the Consolidated Appeal bringing the total number of vulnerable individuals in Eritrea to 2.3 million.

**Numbers at a Glance**

Drought Affected Population in 2003	1.4 million	Source: U.N. Consolidated Appeal
Total Food Aid Requirements for Drought Affected Population in 2003	290,000 MT	Source: U.N. Consolidated Appeal

Total USAID/OFDA Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date) .....	\$2,170,566
Total USAID/FFP Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date) .....	\$51,836,000
Total State/PRM Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date) .....	\$3,550,000
<b>Total USG Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date) .....</b>	<b>\$57,556,566</b>

**Current Situation**

- According to an April 25 World Food Program (WFP) report, the drought situation in Eritrea is continuing to have an adverse impact on the population. In the Northern Red Sea Zone, WFP suspended its wet feeding program because of lack of water. In the Anseba Zone, malnutrition rates have increased from 0.2 percent in February to 2.2 percent in March.
- In late April, the GSE Ministry of Agriculture, U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and several international NGOs reported that more than 80 percent of farmers in the country require emergency seed assistance. FAO estimates that more than 13,000 tons of seed will be needed for emergency distribution, with 4,900 tons already in the pipeline.
- In April, the U.N. Country Team for Eritrea, in conjunction with GSE/ERREC, is conducting a mid-term evaluation of the U.N. Consolidated Appeal for Eritrea to prioritize relief interventions and re-evaluate areas of the greatest need.
- On March 31, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) reported that food distributions have been reduced to 60 percent of the normal rations due to minimal food aid pledges by the international community. The UN OCHA report also indicated that widespread water shortages in the Anseba, Northern Red Sea, Southern Red Sea, Gash Barka, and Debub zones have reached a critical stage, with the average ground water table down to 10 meters and people having to walk an average of 4-5 kilometers for potable water sources.
- A Government of the State of Eritrea report, distributed on March 27, indicated that 2.3 million people are facing acute food and water shortages due to current drought conditions, HIV/AIDS, and the lingering effects of the 1998-2000 border conflict with Ethiopia. The GSE report indicated that livestock prices have fallen by 30 percent and local grain prices have increased by 100 percent since December 2002.

- In January 2003, the GSE formed the Drought Committee for Coordination and Follow-Up in order to respond to the unfolding humanitarian crisis.

**U.S. Government Response**

- On December 2, 2002, U.S. Ambassador to Eritrea Donald J. McConnell declared a disaster in Eritrea due to food security concerns throughout the country and the significant loss of main season crops in western Eritrea.
- USAID/OFDA has committed more than \$2.1 million in humanitarian assistance funding to implement a food security program through CARE a CRS livelihood recovery project, and a water project through the U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF).
- From February 18 to February 25, USAID/OFDA dispatched a technical assessment team including food security, health, and water/sanitation experts to Eritrea to assess the humanitarian situation and meet with key government officials. The USAID/OFDA team, along with USAID/Eritrea staff, traveled to the three worst affected regions in the country. This was the fourth USAID/OFDA assessment in the past six months.
- To date, USAID/FFP emergency food assistance in Eritrea in FY 2003 totals more than 118,000 metric tons (MTs) and is valued at more than \$51 million. This food assistance includes wheat, blended cereal, beans and vegetable oil. USAID/FFP provided more than 13,400 MT of emergency food assistance in FY 2002, valued at \$5.8 million.
- The Department of State’s Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (State/PRM) has provided more than \$3.5 million in FY 2003 through UNHCR for refugee assistance and environmental programs in Eritrea.

**U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO ERITREA**

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Regions</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<b>FY 2003 (to date)</b>				
USAID/OFDA <sup>1</sup> .....				\$2,170,566
	CARE	Food Security	Gash Barka, Debub	\$697,435
	CRS	Livelihoods Recovery	Gash Barka, Debub	\$737,131
	UNICEF	Water/Sanitation	Debub	\$736,000
USAID/FFP .....				\$51,836,000
	WFP	42,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$18,336,000
	Mercy Corps	24,900 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$9,500,000
	CRS/IEOP	52,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$24,000,000
State/PRM .....				\$3,550,000
	UNHCR	Refugee Assistance	Countrywide	\$3,550,000
<b>Total USAID Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date) .....</b>				<b>\$54,006,566</b>
<b>Total USG Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date).....</b>				<b>\$57,556,566</b>

<sup>1</sup> USAID/OFDA funding indicates committed and/or obligated amounts as of April 30, 2003.

**Public Donation Information**

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for their drought response efforts in Eritrea can be found at <http://www.interaction.org/eastafrika/index.html>. Information on other organizations responding may be available at [www.reliefweb.org](http://www.reliefweb.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information on making donations and volunteering services can be found at:
  - USAID: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov) -> “Disaster Assistance” -> “How Can I Help?”
  - The Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org) or 703-276-1914
  - InterAction: [www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org) -> “Guide to Appropriate Giving”

**USAID/OFDA fact sheets can be obtained from the USAID web site at [http://www.usaid.gov/hum\\_response/ofda/situation.html](http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/ofda/situation.html)**