



**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 #4, Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

July 24, 2003

This Fact Sheet updates USAID/OFDA Eritrea Fact Sheet #3 for fiscal year 2003, dated April 30, 2003.

Background

- In 2002, below-average *azmera* or 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 and 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

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

Total USAID/OFDA Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date) \$2,541,429

Total USG Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date)..... \$69,944,129

Current Situation

- The overall food security situation in Eritrea remains serious but stable. Recent nutritional surveys conducted by the GSE Ministry of Health (MOH) and Concern Worldwide, indicated 19.9 percent Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates in Zoba Anseba. Similar MOH studies in Zoba Southern and Northern Red Sea reported GAM rates of 14.3 percent in urban areas and 17.9 percent in rural areas. While absolute rates remain high, the studies reported an improvement in the nutritional situation since 2001.
- The U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates that five percent of the 84,000 malnourished children in Eritrea are currently receiving assistance through existing programs. USAID/Eritrea’s assessment of health and nutrition conditions in Anseba Region on May 29 noted an inadequate number of therapeutic feeding centers (TFCs) for the high levels of malnutrition in the region. In addition, the lack of operational supplementary feeding programs suggests that children discharged from TFCs do not receive the necessary follow-up care and are likely to return for further assistance.
- On June 10, Carolyn McAskie, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), visited Eritrea to review the overall humanitarian situation, raise awareness among the international community, and mobilize additional support for emergency relief operations.
- On June 18, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan announced the appointment of former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari as the U.N. Special Envoy for the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa. The U.N. Special Envoy traveled to Eritrea from July 6 to 8 to advocate for increased funding for food and other relief assistance and long-term development programs to support food self-sufficiency.
- USAID’s Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET) reports that this year’s *azmera* rains were patchy and below normal, which have affected land cultivation and the planting of long-cycle crops. Limited regeneration of pasture lands has delayed the return of livestock that migrated to the eastern escarpments from the surrounding highland.
- According to USAID/OFDA field assessments, water availability is extremely limited in many parts of the country due to the lowering of water tables and drying up of water points by protracted drought conditions. Improving access to water for human and livestock consumption remains a high priority.

- FEWS NET’s Eritrea Food Security Update reported on June 15 that ERREC food stocks are adequate through August. However, timely delivery of already pledged food assistance remains crucial.
- On July 9, UNHCR reported that more than 1,600 refugees returned to Eritrea from Sudan, bringing the total number of returnees from Sudan to 103,000 since May 2001. According to UN OCHA, more than 58,000 people are displaced throughout Eritrea due to the presence of landmines, unexploded ordnances, insecurity, or damaged infrastructure. UN OCHA reports that there are more than 3,000 Somali and Sudanese refugees in Eritrea.

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.
- In FY 2003 to date, USAID/OFDA has committed funds of more than \$2.5 million to support emergency water and sanitation, food security, and agricultural recovery activities in drought-affected areas. In response to increasing water shortages, USAID/OFDA has funded additional water and sanitation projects through Concern Worldwide and Mercy Corps.
- From May 5 to 13, 2003, USAID/OFDA deployed a monitoring mission to assess the drought-affected areas of Eritrea and review USAID/OFDA’s response thus far. This was the fifth USAID/OFDA assessment in the past nine months.
- From February 18 to 25, USAID/OFDA dispatched a technical assessment team including food security, health, and water and 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’s Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) emergency food assistance in Eritrea in FY 2003 totals approximately 144,680 MT valued at more than \$63.8 million, and represents 50 percent of the total requirements for drought relief this year. This food assistance includes wheat, blended cereal, beans, and vegetable oil. USAID/FFP provided 13,400 MT of emergency food assistance in FY 2002, valued at \$5.6 million. USAID/FFP plans to deploy a regional expert to assess the situation and provide recommendations for FY 2004 food assistance requirements.
- 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>
FY 2003 (to date)				
USAID/OFDA ¹				\$2,541,429
	CARE	Food Security	Gash Barka, Debub	\$697,000
	Concern Worldwide	Water/Sanitation	Debub	\$186,498
	CRS	Livelihoods Recovery	Gash Barka, Debub	\$737,131
	Mercy Corps	Water/Sanitation	Anseba, Northern Red Sea	\$184,800
	UNICEF	Water/Sanitation	Debub	\$736,000
USAID/FFP				\$63,852,700
	WFP	68,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$ 29,487,400
	Mercy Corps	24,770 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$ 10,116,300
	CRS/IEOP	51,900 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$ 24,249,000
State/PRM				\$3,550,000
	UNHCR	Refugee Assistance	Countrywide	\$3,550,000
Total USAID Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date)				\$66,394,129
Total USG Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2003 (to date).....				\$69,944,129

¹ USAID/OFDA funding indicates committed and/or obligated amounts as of July 24, 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/eastafrica/index.html>. Information on other organizations responding may be available at 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 -> “Disaster Assistance” -> “How Can I Help?”
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org or 703-276-1914
 - InterAction: 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