

Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Humanitarian assistance to the victims of recurrent drought unfolding in a context of deep chronic food insecurity and economic collapse

Location of operation: ERITREA

Amount of decision: EUR 4,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/ERI/BUD/2005/01000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population:

1.1. - Rationale:

Five years of successive failing or insufficient rainy seasons in Eritrea means that the country will continue to face humanitarian needs at critical levels. Several normal rainy seasons in a row would be required to stabilize the internal situation. The recurring drought spells over the past five years have further weakened the coping capacities of households, already strained by a continuous decline in cereal production over at least the past twelve years. The 2004 main cereal harvest, for example, was estimated at 85,000 mt, representing 15 % of the annual national cereal requirements, and was 47 % below the average of the last 12 years.

The scope of the needs arising from the present situation is wide and varied. From a humanitarian point of view, the immediate consequences of the drought - poor quality and scarcity of water – result in an increase in morbidity and deterioration of the nutritional status of vulnerable populations.

Livestock are also suffering from these successive climatic hazards, as grazing areas have become scarce due to the lack of sufficient rains allowing grass (fodder) rejuvenation. Livestock production has a crucial impact on the nutritional status of the population, and particularly the children, as milk provides a large part of the calorific intake in the agro-pastoralists communities. Livestock losses have been commonly reported over the past years, which means that assets are depleted and rural communities have less and less resilience to cope with harsh periods.

The unfavorable climatic conditions of the past years have been coupled with and greatly compounded by a steep economic decline and the effects of certain government policies, such as in the agricultural sector. Furthermore, the border issue with Ethiopia is still at a stalemate, and has become if anything even more tense since the end of 2004. The long lasting “no war, no peace” situation seems to have reached a critical level - some reports indicate that covert preparations for war are being made - economically and agriculturally productive males are subject to prolonged and compulsory military conscription, and fuel restrictions and shortages are commonplace.

The combination of these elements has resulted in a disastrous scenario in rural areas; a daunting malnutrition problem, with almost 40 % of the children and women reported to be malnourished ; a structural lack of water resources ; an agro-pastoralist sector in a permanent survival-level state with rare opportunities to enter the recovery phase required to allow the sector to turn the tide of the regular decrease of production ; and lack of manpower due to conscription.

ECHO intervention will be to address the immediate needs through its few partners present in the country in the water, nutrition, health, and livestock sectors.

1.2. - Identified needs:

Against a background of successive years of poor rains, the groundwater levels are permanently reducing. Water shortages have now become acute and widespread all year round. The quantity and quality of water are continuously degrading, thus increasing related morbidity rates.

The current level of rains, even though beneficial for the rejuvenation of pastures, is not sufficient to replenish the water table in the medium term. The lack of water for humans and livestock is becoming an acute annual problem in the country, notably in Anseba, North Red Sea and parts of Debub and Gash Barka regions. Water supply operations of various types are therefore necessary; water tankering from perennial points is required in some instances, whilst deepening and improving water points and rainwater catchments will provide relief and better quality water to the affected populations.

The most recent available general nutritional survey findings are from the national campaign conducted in December 2004. In Anseba region, for example, global acute malnutrition rates had already reached 16.1 %, this in communities where food stocks are exhausted and where the next harvests are due in the last quarter of the year. The standard benchmark for an emergency intervention is 10 – 15 % GAM. These figures are very worrying, and reflect the poor 2004 harvests (Oct-Dec), which are apparently already exhausted. The population is now mainly relying on food aid, on which the level of dependency of the country is dramatic. According to the latest survey by CONCERN, the rate of dependency in the Anseba region fluctuates between 93.8 % and 100 % of households receiving food aid. Furthermore, these malnutrition levels need to be seen in a context of deep chronic general food insecurity, where in some places, up to 52.8 % of the adult female population is severely or moderately malnourished.

The current food pipeline situation is grim; according to ERREC (Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Commissions) and WFP, the food stock will last only until July 2005. WFP currently provides a daily ration of only 1,400 kcal to 756,000 persons instead of an intended 1,240,000 people.

The depletion of livestock herds is a common trend in the country with no real favourable period for them to recover and reproduce. Short rain spells provide few opportunities for rejuvenation of grazing and browsing areas which are themselves rapidly depleted due to the increased concentration of herds. In view of the fact that milk production has a significant impact on the nutritional status of the population, particularly children, support to livestock has proven to be effective in tackling malnutrition.

Finally, and as mentioned above, tensions with Ethiopia over the border issue appear to have increased recently. Though there is as yet no indication that a new conflict situation will arise, protection issues and close monitoring are becoming even more important. Any renewed outbreak of conflict would more than likely be accompanied by increased humanitarian needs, including in terms of protection.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned:

The target populations are rural populations living in Anseba, Debub, Gash-Barka and North and South Red Sea zones. Protection issues must, of course, be examined on a wider scale.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints:

Needs identification: Since the end of 2003, the nutritional surveillance system (Ministry of Health, INGOs, UN agencies) in place in the country is slowly providing regular and valuable nutritional data. In the current context, this firstly has provided baseline data, and secondly could bring to the humanitarian community up-dated indicators with regard to the overall nutritional situation, possibly triggering timely emergency interventions. Indeed, the identification of needs and responses will be better adapted taking into account the analysis of these surveys.

Response capacity: As in previous years, only a limited number of aid agencies with experience and capacity are operating in the country. This is compounded by tight limits on the numbers of expatriates per agency, residence permits, travel constraints, constant conscription of trained local personnel to national service, and shortages of fuel that are reducing de facto the capacities at every level.

Effectiveness. The effects of the drought in depleting assets compounds ongoing chronic problems, leaving more people in greater poverty and thus more vulnerable to requiring humanitarian assistance. Unless such needs are successfully addressed in addition to any humanitarian assistance, the demands for humanitarian assistance can be expected to increase, while the effectiveness of any short-term humanitarian response will be reduced.

Furthermore, the Government is still prioritizing security issues, particularly in light of the continuing tension with Ethiopia over the implementation of the border settlement. This could exacerbate the current administrative and operational constraints.

2- Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. – Objectives:

Principal objective :

To assist populations suffering acute humanitarian needs as a consequence of climatic conditions and livelihood collapse

Specific objective :

- To address decline in health and livelihoods through monitoring of and response to acute, moderate and severe malnutrition and protection issues, and through improvement in the quality and quantity of water supply, for affected populations (and their livestock).

2.2. - Components:

Nutrition: supplementary and therapeutic feeding programmes should address the acute needs identified, based on the findings of the latest national nutritional survey and taking into account the chronic component of the situation.

Health problems are at the same time a cause and a consequence of the malnutrition situation and thus cannot be seen in isolation. An essential and minimal medical coverage is needed to address in a complementary manner the pervasive malnutrition in the country. Support and reinforcement of existing health structures will have a great role in the achievement of the objectives.

The poor condition of the **livestock** requires appropriate answers. The primary objective here will be to restore livestock health to a level enabling milk production – as an essential contribution to children's diet - through targeted feeding to core livestock and veterinary interventions to avoid devastating epidemics.

In the **water** sector, a range of responses is proposed according to need. In most cases, existing water points will be repaired or improved to increase yields and quality through deepening wells, or improving pumping equipment. In some cases, new water points will be implemented where higher and sustainable water yields can be guaranteed. In extreme cases, water trucking may be necessary. In addition, health education should complement any water intervention, to address problem of water being polluted after the water source.

Protection issues are many-faceted, particularly in a militarized environment such as Eritrea, and will be tackled in the most appropriate manner as and when they occur.

The appraisal of project proposals, and co-ordination and monitoring of the implementation of humanitarian operations financed by the Commission, will be done by the ECHO Regional Support Office.

3 - Duration foreseen for actions within the framework of the proposed decision:

The duration for the implementation of this decision will be 12 months.

Humanitarian operations funded by this decision must be implemented within this period.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 01 July 2005.

Start Date : 01 July 2005

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the decision.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedures established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

4 –Previous interventions/decisions of the Commission within the context of the crisis concerned herewith

List of previous ECHO operations in ERITREA				
Decision number	Decision type	2003 EUR	2004 EUR	2005 EUR
ECHO/ERI/210/2003/01000	Non Emergency	1,300,000		
ECHO/ERI/BUD/2004/01000	Non Emergency		1,000,000	
ECHO/ERI/EDF/2005/01000	Non Emergency			620,000
	Subtotal	1,300,000	1,000,000	620,000
	Total 2003+2004+ 2005			2,920,000

Dated : 12/05/2005
Source : HOPE

5 - Other donors and donor co-ordination mechanisms

Donors in ERITREA the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria	0	ECHO	1,620,000		
Belgium	300,000	Other services			
Denmark	538,358	AIDCO	16,000,000		
Finland	1,100,000	DEV	7,485,426		
France	500,000				
Germany	1,279,973				
Greece	0				
Ireland	250,000				
Italy	0				
Luxembourg	0				
Netherlands	2,544,810				
Portugal	0				
Spain	0				
Sweden	87,600				
United Kingdom	0				
Subtotal	6,600,741	Subtotal	25,105,426	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	31,706,167		

Dated : 12/05/2005

(*) Source : ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. <https://hac.cec.eu.int>

Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

Coordination takes place under the auspices of the Eritrean government, specifically with the involvement of the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission (ERREC). Coordination mechanisms are run on a sector basis involving government agencies, UN agencies and NGOs, assisted by OCHA/UNDP.

6 –Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 4,000,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>To assist populations suffering acute humanitarian needs as a consequence of climatic conditions and livelihood collapse</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Possible geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners¹
Specific objective 1: To address decline in health and livelihoods through monitoring of and response to acute, moderate and severe malnutrition and protection issues, and through improvement in the quality and quantity of water supply, for affected populations (and their livestock).	4,000,000	Anseba, Debub, Gash Barka, North and South Red Sea zones. National	Nutrition ; Health ; water and sanitation ; livestock support. Protection	- CARE - UK - CONCERN WORLDWIDE - CROIX-ROUGE - CICR- ICRC - CH - IRC - UK - OXFAM - UK - UN - UNICEF - BEL
TOTAL	4,000,000			

¹ CARE INTERNATIONAL UK , COMITE INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE (CICR), CONCERN WORLDWIDE, (IRL), International Rescue Committee UK, OXFAM (GB), UNICEF

7 –Evaluation

Under article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid operations financed by the Community in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent operations." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/index_en.htm.

8 –Budget Impact article 23 02 01

Budget impact article 23 02 01	
	CE (EUR)
Initial available appropriations for 2005	476.500.000
Supplementary budgets	
Reinforcement from Emergency aid reserve	100.000.000
Transfers Commission	-3.500.000
Total available appropriations	573.000.000
Total executed to date (as at 13/05/2005)	416.745.370
Available remaining	156.254.630
Total amount of the Decision	4.000.000

COMMISSION DECISION

of

**on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Union in
ERITREA**

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid², and in particular Article 15(2) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) The consequences of the border conflict with Ethiopia and successive droughts in recent years have eroded the assets and traditional coping mechanisms of the most vulnerable, which has exacerbated already chronic needs.
- (2) Already very vulnerable populations are now faced with a new and particularly severe drought, whilst tensions are again increasing around the border issue ;
- (3) Up to 100,000 people are now estimated to face emergency levels of acute malnutrition and water shortage, whilst the coping mechanisms of many thousands more are severely depleted ;
- (4) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 4,000,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to up to 500.000 particularly vulnerable rural dwellers, particularly women-headed households.
- (5) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid operations should be financed by the Community for a period of 12 months
- (6) In accordance with Article 17 (3) of Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 the Humanitarian Aid Committee gave a favourable opinion on 28 June 2005.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS :

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 4,000,000 for humanitarian assistance to the victims of recurrent drought unfolding in a context of deep chronic food insecurity and economic collapse by using line 23 02 01 of the 2005 general budget of the European Union.

² OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6

2. In accordance with Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:
 - To address decline in health and livelihoods through monitoring of and response to acute, moderate and severe malnutrition and protection issues, and through improvement in the quality and quantity of water supply, for affected populations (and their livestock).

The total amount of this decision is allocated to this objective.

Article 2

1. The duration for the implementation of this decision shall be for a maximum period of 12 months, starting on 01 July 2005.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 01 July 2005.
3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the implementation of this Decision

Article 3

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission

Principal objective : To assist populations suffering acute humanitarian needs as a consequence of climatic conditions and livelihood collapse	
Specific objectives	Amount per specific objective (EUR)
To address decline in health and livelihoods through monitoring of and response to acute, moderate and severe malnutrition and protection issues, and through improvement in the quality and quantity of water supply, for affected populations (and their livestock).	4,000,000
TOTAL	4,000,000

Grants for the implementation of humanitarian aid within the meaning of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid are awarded in accordance with the Financial Regulation, in particular Art.110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Art.168 thereof.³

Rate of financing: In accordance with Art.169 of the Financial Regulation, grants for the implementation of this Decision may finance 100% of the costs of an action.

Humanitarian aid operations funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) (in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation) and by United Nations agencies based on the Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA). The standards and criteria established in Echo's standard Framework Partnership Agreement to which NGO's and International organisations have to adhere and the procedures and criteria needed to become a partner may be found at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/partners/index_en.htm

³ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, , OJ L248, 16/09/2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 pf 31/12/2002.