



Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: **Humanitarian aid for the people of Mongolia affected by winter disasters (dzuds)**

Location of operation: **MONGOLIA**

Amount of Decision: **EUR 900,000**

Decision reference number: **ECHO/MNG/BUD/2005/01000**

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale :

Mongolia continues to have large groups of vulnerable people whose lives are deeply affected by recurrent natural disasters. The country is located in a region prone to large scale natural disasters, of which the most damaging is the “dzud”, an accumulation of drought and heavy snowfalls. But in the case of Mongolia, there is a correlation of natural components (summer drought and winter severe weather) and man-made components (lack of sustainable pasture management, of adequate numbers of pasture water points and wells, of adequate supplies of stock piled animal food, including hay and fodder and shortage of winter shelters for animals) which reinforce each other. Summer droughts prevent a large number of herders from collecting hay in enough quantity for the winter which, in turn, starts earlier than normal, forcing herders to use their scarce stocks of hay and fodder as soon as September. Herders therefore quickly run out of hay and fodder while emergency stocks prepared by the Mongolian Government are usually depleted as soon as mid-January.

The occurrence of such disasters has recently increased due to climate changes and has had a very serious impact on the livelihoods of the herder communities. Mongolia has experienced four years of consecutive dzuds (2000-2003), whereas previously such disasters used to occur on average every fifty years. This has had a severe impact on the traditional coping mechanisms of the population. In 2000, some 3,4 million animals have been decimated (10% of the total), 4,7 million in 2001 (15,7% of the total) and 2,9 million in 2002 (11% of the total). According to the Mongolian Red Cross, more than ten thousand families have lost all their belongings. There are at the moment a large number of herders with insufficient

livestock to sustain their livelihood and remain food-secured. Dzuds have resulted in an increasing rural-urban migration, especially towards the swelling suburbs of the capital Ulaan Bataar, where unemployment causes further severe destitution and results in basic humanitarian needs.

After four years of dzuds, the winter months of 2003-2004 have turned out to be less severe, causing a comparatively smaller loss in the number of livestock (in any case, losses occur every year).

The climatic conditions in 2005 are considered as average – summer not being very favourable for pasture and wheat vegetation. Droughts have affected several aimags (provinces) in the south, in the area of the Gobi desert. However, some 60% of national total pasture land are said to be in good condition.

There are now an estimated 225,000 herders and some 29,7 million animals, which is considered to be a reasonable figure in comparison to the mid-1990's when there were too many herders after the privatisation of cattle. However, about 80% of the herder households have only up to 200 heads of livestock, living under the minimum poverty standards and many of them are insufficiently prepared to deal with a potential new disaster.

Instead of only addressing the humanitarian needs of these people after a possible crisis, it would be more effective to break the cycle of disaster and vulnerability through programmes aimed at helping them to better prepare for such disasters. This decision intends therefore to continue and build on projects developed last year and to focus on a better preparation of herders and the diversification of their agricultural production.

However, due to the recurrence of these climatic hazards and the structural deficiencies of the Mongolian system, only a long-term development strategy focusing on risk-reduction could properly tackle the problem. This is why, unless a further disaster takes place, this might be the last DG ECHO decision for Mongolia, as development instruments are better placed to tackle the type of problems Mongolia is confronted with. ALA instrument has now taken over from TACIS to cover Mongolia and has started to focus on agricultural programmes and poverty reduction.

1.2. - Identified needs :

What is urgently needed for Mongolia is a disaster preparedness comprehensive and efficient policy, which would allow to reduce the impact of potential dzuds by better preparing herders. Until recently, lack of information and poor preparedness at all levels of society prevented any disaster risk reduction. In recent years, the government has started to provide support and advice to the people on how to protect themselves from the impacts of disasters. The Mongolian government, with the support of UNDP, has taken a number of measures to improve the country's disaster preparedness system. Regional and local authorities are seriously involved in the new disaster preparedness scheme and show a proper awareness. Authorities have slightly increased their capacity and preparedness to cope with future climate extremes and have undertaken a few preventive measures, including the reparation of some water points and wells, the procurement of additional fodder reserves and information mechanisms to inform herders on recommended pastures, routings and land allocations. However, these measures are still not sufficient.

The preparation of contingency stocks of hay for the winter is a concern. Even when stocks are prepared, the government lacks means to transport the hay to herders who, in return, have no means to pick up the hay from governmental warehouses. Herders are usually not in a position to pay for the hay received and they must return the value in kind in the next summer season.

Herders are now slightly better prepared than some years ago to survive dzuds, but much remains to be done in order to really make sure that the most vulnerable of them do not lose their livelihoods if a disaster takes place. Over-grazing, bad pasture management and non-maintained wells continue to pose a threat to the sustainability of herding. Furthermore, a large portion of the economy is still dependent on livestock and the agriculture sector, which in turn are highly susceptible to shocks induced by potential disasters.

The current quasi-total absence of opportunities for alternative livelihood means that dependence on the livestock and herding economy will continue, especially for the poorest herders. Therefore, there is a need to help herders diversify their livelihoods and move away from a sole dependency on cattle-breeding.

Apart from the preparation to future possible disasters, there is still also a need to assist those who have lost everything because of former disasters and have migrated to the slums of Ulaan Baatar, the “ger districts”. Most of them have no access to health care and education. They live in a dramatic state of poverty, lacking food, water, shelter, non-food items, heating, health care and education. Alcoholism, violence and prostitution are spreading, external support is very limited and many children are not even immunized and suffer from malnutrition.

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

The present decision will target approximately 20,000 people (counting on average 5 people per household).

- 225 rural households will be targeted in the Bayaan Ulgii province, the most Western province of the country, for agricultural and cash-for-work projects
- 1,650 households on the outskirts of Ulaan Baatar will be targeted for agricultural and cash-for-work projects
- 2,000 malnourished, 6-month to 5-year-old children will be targeted in the ger districts of Ulaan Baatar and 2,000 caretakers and 600 lactating women will receive nutritional and health education
- 1,200 herder families will be targeted in the Zavkhan Province with programmes of water system restoration and vegetable, hay and fodder production

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

Little progress is noticed in implementing the government’s longer-term strategies and there is little additional capacity to provide any significant support to the vulnerable. The National Disaster Management Agency, created in 2004 and responsible for all disaster preparedness and relief operations, does not unfortunately function properly because of an internal power struggle. Instead, the Ministry of Agriculture has taken the lead in disaster preparedness

efforts related to herders households and livestock and initiated specific sector coordination efforts.

Proper coordination and harmonization between the different development organisations implementing rural projects in all of the 25 aimags is lacking. Besides, there is, reportedly, a high level of corruption in the country. The Government's policy, in addition, has focused on attracting people to the cities instead of keeping the traditional system of extensive herding which has been in use for 2000 years in Mongolia. This has led to massive rural exodus towards the cities, in particular the capital, which is now said to host between 800,000 and 1 million people and is totally incapable of responding to the basic needs of the new population.

The uncertainty remains on the future direction which the Government will adopt with regard to disaster preparedness, and whether efforts undertaken so far, especially under the aegis of UNDP, will continue. For example, the "de facto" national policy seems still to be to increase the number of livestock in each herder household. While there is a critical mass desirable for a household's herd to be sustainable, the question of how much livestock is considered to be the maximum desired volume that Mongolia can cope with remains open.

Unfortunately, the government has no strategy to address the chaotic urban migration and the resulting urban poverty. In the short term, its strategy focuses mostly on maintaining the remaining livestock and fixing the rural population but little is planned to recognise and tackle urban poverty.

Another constraint is the small number of organisations active in disaster-preparedness programmes, as well as the geographic and climatic conditions which make monitoring very difficult.

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed: ¹

2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective: To improve the humanitarian situation of herder and ex-herder families affected by consecutive droughts/dzud cycles

Specific objectives:

To improve the nutritional status and the food security of vulnerable herder households across the country and of former herders who have migrated to Ulaan Baatar so as to reduce the impact of future disasters

2.2. - Components :

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 Article 110 thereof, and its Implementing Rules in particular Article 168 thereof (Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002, OJ L248 of 16 September 2002 and No 2342/2002 of 23 December 2002, OJ L 357 of 31 December 2002).Rate of financing: In accordance with Article 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

- **In Ulaan Baatar**

- Nutritional component :

Approximately 2,000 underweight, chronically or moderately acute malnourished children aged 6 to 59 months will be identified in the outskirts of Ulaan Baatar city, among the most vulnerable households of these unprivileged areas. Nutritional centres will also provide 2.000 caretakers and 600 lactating women with nutritional and health education sessions in order to improve the knowledge on child care practices and prevent malnutrition, and will detect and treat chronic malnutrition.

- Agricultural component:

That component of the programme is targeting vulnerable population groups living in the non-urbanised outskirts of Ulaan Baatar city. The development of family-scale kitchen gardening will allow them to improve the food security status of their household by producing autonomously alternative food resources and cash incomes.

- Cash for work component:

Approximately 100 households will benefit from the creation of temporary employment in the surroundings of Ulaan Baatar city, where hardly any employment is available. People will be given jobs (usually for one month) in the agricultural sector and will receive a cash payment in exchange. Contrary to the beneficiaries of the *agricultural component*, to qualify would require having no access to a plot of land to be cultivated or not meeting the selection criteria for the latter. The creation of temporary job opportunities through the cash for work activities and the subsequent cash incomes will allow the constitution of food stocks for the next winter period. In addition, cash incomes will give them some access to medical care or other necessary services.

- **In Bayaan Ulgii and Zavkhan**

The programmes will consist of the production of vegetables and animal feed through small cooperatives of herders and the improvement of livestock management in winter. Kitchen gardening will be developed, as well as the production of complementary animal feed. Contingency stocks will be constituted and winter shelters for livestock will be constructed or improved. Some crucial water systems will be repaired. Herders will be trained in stock and pasture management.

There will also be a cash-for-work component in the framework of the agricultural component of the programme, which will consist in the creation of temporary employments for individuals to which the agricultural development strategy cannot be applied.

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:

The duration for the implementation of this Decision shall be **15** months

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

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from **01 November 2005**, in order for ongoing projects on to continue without interruption.

Start Date : **01 November 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 humanitarian aid operations.

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 procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

6 - Amount of decision and distribution by specific objectives:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 900,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objectives

Principal objective: <i>To improve the humanitarian situation of herder and ex-herder families affected by consecutive droughts/dzud cycles</i>				
Specific objectives	Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)	Geographical area of operation	Activities	Potential partners²
Specific objective 1: To improve the nutritional status and the food security of vulnerable herder households across the country and of former herders who have migrated to Ulaan Baatar so as to reduce the impact of future disasters	900,000	Bayan Ulgii, Zavkhan, Ulaan Baatar	Agricultural projects, cash-for-work projects, nutritional support to children	- ACF - FRA - ADRA - DEU
TOTAL:	900,000			

² ACTION CONTRE LA FAIM, (FR), Adventistische Entwicklungs- und Katastrophenhilfe e.V.

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

	CE (in Euro)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2004	476.500.000
Supplementary Budgets	
Reinforcement from Emergency aid reserve	130.000.000
Transfers Commission	-5.000.000
Total Available Appropriations	601.500.000
Total executed to date (by 24/11/2005)	600.207.337
Available remaining	1.292.663
Total amount of the Decision	900,000

Payment schedule

	2005	2006	2007
EUR	300,000	420,000	180,000

COMMISSION DECISION
of
on the financing of humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Union in
MONGOLIA

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 aid³, and in particular Article 14 thereof,

Whereas:

1. Mongolia is located in a region prone to large scale natural disasters, of which the most damaging is the “dzud”, an accumulation of drought and heavy snowfalls.
2. Mongolia has experienced four years of consecutive dzuds, where previously such disasters used to occur on average every fifty years. This has had a severe impact on the traditional coping mechanisms of the population and their food security .
3. A large number of former herder families (who have lost the totality of their herd as a direct consequence of the 2000, 2001 and 2002 dzuds) have fallen into categories of “urban poors” and “urban very poors”, settled in the poorest districts of Ulaan Bataar.
4. A growing number of these “urban very poors”, the most destitute, depend on humanitarian assistance (soup kitchens) for their food security in wintertime. Food security of “urban poors” can be improved through kitchen gardening.
5. It is estimated that an amount of **EUR 900,000** from budget line **23 02 01** of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to provide humanitarian assistance to over **20,000 persons**, taking into account the available budget, other donors-contributions and other factors.

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 900,000** for humanitarian aid operations **Humanitarian aid for the people of Mongolia affected by winter disasters (dzuds)** by using line **23 02 01** of the **2005** general budget of the European Union.

2. In accordance with Article 2 (a) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:

To improve the nutritional status and the food security of vulnerable herder households and of former herders who have migrated to Ulaan Baatar so as to reduce the impact of future disasters.

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 15 months, starting on 01 November 2005.
2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 01 November 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 4

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

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission