



Canadian Red Cross
Croix-Rouge canadienne

Red Cross ... Anywhere. Anytime.

Food Crisis in the Sahel Region of Africa: helping the most vulnerable

August 16, 2005

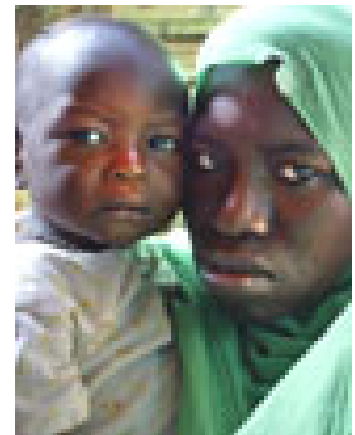
The need

Almost 8 million people are currently threatened by severe food shortages in the Western Sahel region of Africa—including Niger, Mali, Mauritania and Burkina Faso. The famine, brought on by two years of low rainfalls and drought in the region, coupled with the worst locust infestation in 20 years, has led to widespread malnutrition.

In Niger, the UN has found that 3.6 million of the country's 12 million people are directly affected by the food crisis. Malnutrition is impacting 30 to 40% of the population in some areas.

It isn't only Niger that is facing famine. Millions of people in the neighbouring countries of Mali, Burkina Faso and Mauritania are threatened by the food crisis need help urgently.

Action must be taken quickly to prevent widespread starvation. In addition to food distribution, seeds must be distributed and planted during the coming weeks as the next harvest is due in three months.



It is estimated that 800,000 children in Niger alone are going hungry.

How the Red Cross is helping

On July 22, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies launched an appeal for \$17.4 million (CAD) to assist the relief operation in the Sahel region of Africa. With these funds, the Red Cross has a plan to assist over half a million of the most vulnerable people affected—including children, the elderly, disabled people and single parent families.

During the next month the Red Cross will distribute 138 metric tonnes of Unimix, a highly nutritional food product. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement was among the first to respond to this crisis, and has been coordinating with the World Food Programme, the United Nation's Children's Fund and non-governmental organizations specializing in the treatment and feeding of acutely malnourished children. Various national Red Cross



and Red Crescent Societies have deployed relief workers, including nutritionists, doctors, logisticians and telecommunications experts, as well as all-terrain vehicles and drivers.

Beneficiaries will receive food, seed, livestock feed and have access to mobile feeding centres, medical assistance and community-based awareness programs. The operation aims to make communities more resilient in the future by ensuring that people affected are able to stay in their villages where they can best cope and remain less reliant on outside assistance. The program also has a strong emphasis on building livelihoods for the local population.

Corporate and public support enables the Red Cross to meet the urgent relief needs quickly and effectively.

How you can help

Canadian Red Cross is urging caring Canadians to give as generously as possible. Donations to the Canadian Red Cross Africa: Western Sahel Food Crisis will be used to provide relief and recovery for the most vulnerable people affected by the devastation. The needs will be great for a long time to come.

Since the Red Cross has been able to effectively mobilize locally and internationally, you can be certain that a donation to the Canadian Red Cross will get to those in need quickly.

Donations of food, clothing and other items are well-intentioned. However, the tremendous processing and transportation costs involved in shipping these items makes them impractical. **Consequently, donated goods will not be accepted.** Financial donations remain the best way to get the most appropriate assistance to the affected regions with speed and efficiency.

Make your donation to Africa: Sahel Food Crisis:

- online at www.redcross.ca
- toll-free at 1-800-418-1111
- in person at any Red Cross office
- by mailing a cheque or money order (no cash in the mail, please) to Canadian Red Cross, 170 Metcalfe Street, Suite 300, Ottawa, Ontario, K2P 2P2. Earmark your donation “Africa: Sahel Food Crisis.”

Donors to the Canadian Red Cross will receive a charitable tax receipt.

Want to help in other ways? Contact your local Red Cross office to learn about:

- Organizing an event to raise funds in your community.
- Setting up an employee giving campaign at your workplace.

Please give generously to those whose lives have been devastated.

Help can't wait.