

BOTSWANA - Drought

Date: April 8, 1982 (FY 82)
June 13, 1983 (FY 83)

Location: Entire country; areas most severely affected included Northeast District, some areas of Central District, Ngamiland, Chobe, western Kweneng, and southern Kgalagadi

No. Dead: Not reported

No. Affected: 409,770 or 40 percent of total population

Damage: Crops losses and reduced grazing land caused food shortages and increased incidences of malnutrition among humans and livestock

The Disaster

Two years of below normal rainfall resulted in drought conditions throughout Botswana. The hardest hit districts were Kgalagadi with 85% below normal rainfall, Chobe and Northeast at 70% below normal, and Ngamiland, Central, and Southeast at 50%. The drought caused widespread crop losses, reduced available pastureland, and dried up livestock watering holes. Grain crop production was reduced not only because of the lack of rain, but also because farmers, expecting a drought, had planted less than 50% of their normal crop. Botswana's cereal consumption gap is normally met through commercial imports from neighboring countries; however, the size of the gap combined with a severe foreign exchange shortage prevented an adequate supply.

Action Taken by the Government of Botswana (GOB)

As reports of the deteriorating situation in the countryside began to reach the capital in early 1982, President Masire sent a six-person team to assess the effects of the drought. Based on the team's report, the President on April 2 declared a national emergency and appealed to the international community for assistance.

Many government ministries were mobilized to assist in the GOB relief effort with coordination provided by the Interministerial Drought Committee. Supplementary food rations were distributed from clinics, health posts, primary schools, and village authorities in the areas of greatest need. Seeds for the next season's planting were made available at subsidized prices through outlets of the Agricultural Marketing Board, cooperatives, and extension services. To reduce the number of cattle which could not be marketed, botulism vaccine and vitamin A were supplied at no charge to pastoralists. In addition, the supply of supplementary livestock feed for sale was increased and cattle were moved to areas where reserve water supplies existed. Priority was given to the repair, maintenance, and improvement of existing water points, and borehole drilling and equipping was accelerated on the planned trek route. The GOB also sponsored labor-based relief projects and provided direct assistance in cash and in kind.

The GOB relief program remained in effect throughout the year in response to the continuing drought conditions. On April 20, 1983, President Masire announced that Botswana was experiencing its second straight year of drought and again appealed to the international community for assistance.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

In response to the GOB appeal for assistance, the U.S. Ambassador to Botswana determined on April 8, 1982 that a disaster situation existed and authorized \$25,000 to be made available from the International Disaster Assistance Account (IDA). This amount was provided to the GOB for local relief.....\$25,000

The USAID Mission, through the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in Washington, arranged for the lease/purchase of a borehole drill rig and related equipment. A total of \$420,000 was provided to cover partial costs of renting a drill rig for six months (\$240,000), outright purchase of drill rods, tools and oil/form (\$100,000), and purchase of one test pump and one mud pump (\$80,000).....\$420,000

Total FY 1982 IDA Assistance.....\$445,000

A bilateral grant of P.L. 480 Title II food was provided for distribution through an ongoing GOB institutional feeding program. The USG assumed all costs for the commodities (1,000 MT of non-fat dried milk and 1,000 MT of vegoil valued at \$891,000), ocean freight, and inland transport via rail from port of entry to the Botswana border. Transport costs totaled \$750,000. The GOB was responsible for implementing the program once the food was received at the border.....\$1,641,000

Total FY 1982 USG Assistance.....\$2,086,000

Because of the continuing drought situation, the U.S. Ambassador determined on June 13, 1983 that additional USG assistance to Botswana was warranted. On June 23, the Ambassador presented Vice President Peter S. Mmusi with a \$25,000 check to support priority projects within the GOB drought relief program.....\$25,000

Total FY 1983 IDA Assistance.....\$25,000

Total FY 1982 and FY 1983 Assistance.....\$2,111,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

None reported.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

European Economic Community - provided 500 MT of dried milk powder valued at \$655,200 for a school food program involving 185,000 children.

U.N. Development Program - contributed \$120,000 for the purchase of food grains.

World Food Program - pledged \$150,000 to purchase maize meal in Zimbabwe; extended ongoing feeding and food transport programs; arranged inland transport for USG-donated commodities.

Governments

Canada - contributed an unspecified amount for the purchase of food grains.

Germany, Federal Republic of - provided trucks valued at \$2,094,017 to transport food; contributed funds to purchase 2-3,000 tons of grain from Zimbabwe.

Great Britain - loaned four vehicles from an ongoing in-country project to the emergency food distribution program; contributed \$704,000 for the purchase of food.

Sweden - donated \$1,724,137 to buy well drilling equipment and vehicles.

TOTAL \$5,447,354