



# DISASTER CASE REPORT

Agency for  
International  
Development

Washington D.C.  
20523

## MADAGASCAR – Drought FY 1988

**Date**

April - September  
1988

**Location**

Area west of Fort  
Dauphin in the  
extreme south of  
the country

**No. Dead**

None reported

**No. Affected**

23,300 families  
(approximately  
116,500 people)

**The Disaster**

The chronically dry region in the extreme south of Madagascar experienced a severe drought in mid-1988 after the complete failure of rains during the normal rainy season (October to April). Farmers planted sweet potatoes after sporadic rains in the Ambovombe-Androka area in April and May, but the hot sun and dry winds of the following weeks negated the effect of the rains and further reduced the prospects for a seasonal harvest. Whatever food was available in the local market was beyond the means of most residents, whose purchasing power had declined during the previous year's drought when they had been forced to sell their possessions, including livestock. A total of 23,300 families was judged to be in need of food assistance.

**Action Taken by Malagasy**

**Non-Governmental Organizations**

The government of Madagascar did not officially request international assistance, and the only reported relief efforts were carried out by non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Catholic missions in the south were a continuing source of information on drought conditions. The local NGO Caritas worked closely with Catholic Relief Services (CRS)/Madagascar to raise funds to help pay the costs of providing rations to residents of the stricken area. As of June 23, CRS and Caritas had raised \$12,000 locally, including funds remaining from the 1986 drought emergency.

The Lutheran Church and the Malagasy Red Cross, as well as Caritas, attended donor meetings. CRS and Caritas coordinated with the Lutheran Church in the distribution of emergency food supplies.

**Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government**

U.S. Mission staff attended frequent donor meetings in April, May, and June to monitor the situation in the far south. USAID/Antananarivo sent a U.S.-trained contractor to the area in mid-April to investigate conditions. In view of the worsening effects of the lack of rain in the region, U.S. Ambassador Patricia Gates Lynch determined on June 23 that the disaster was of sufficient magnitude to warrant U.S. government assistance. The Ambassador's disaster assistance authority of \$25,000 was granted to CRS for the purchase of corn and cassava outside the region and the transport of those provisions and P.L. 480 Title II stocks to the affected area. USAID approved the release of some 158 MT of commodities from CRS stocks: 120 MT of rice, 30 MT of non-fat dry milk, and 8 MT of soyoil. The food was shipped from the CRS warehouse in Tamatave and carried overland by truck. Catholic-Lutheran committees carried out distribution at the village level.

**TOTAL** **\$25,000**

**Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies**

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) - administered a grant from the U.S. government (see above) and donated an additional \$25,000 to purchase and transport food to the south. With USAID's approval, CRS released 158 MT of P.L. 480 Title II stocks from its regular program for emergency feeding. CRS also located sources of surplus corn and cassava and estimated purchase and transport costs for interested donors.

**TOTAL** **\$25,000**

**Assistance Provided by the International Community**

*Representatives of several international organizations, including U.N. Development Program, the EC's European Development Fund (FED), World Food Program, Swiss Aid, U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, and UNICEF, attended donor meetings. Information is unavailable on the assistance provided by these organizations.*

Medicins sans frontieres/France - conducted a nutritional survey of the far south.