



DISASTER  
RELIEF

CASE REPORT  
Rwanda-Floods-Crop Losses  
October 1974

Agency for International Development  
Washington, DC 20523

**Foreign Disaster Case Reports are publications of the Office of the Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator, Agency for International Development. This office has responsibility for coordinating U.S. Government foreign disaster relief responses and for the further coordination of such activities with those of the U.S. private and international disaster relief communities.**

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## RWANDA

### Floods/Crop Losses—October 1974

Unseasonal rains in June and July 1974 caused losses of 56 percent of an expected 1974 production of staple food crops. Nine of the ten prefectures in Rwanda registered crop losses—as much as 26 percent of sorghum and 84 percent of peas. The resulting food deficit, affecting an estimated 1.9 million people, totaled more than 207,000 metric tons—a 44 percent overall reduction from normal harvests in 1973.

Value of Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government ..... \$1,360,300

#### ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA

By September the food shortage had become so acute that the Government of Rwanda (GOR) requested from the international community emergency food assistance and seeds.

Following the GOR's appeal, the Ambassadors of Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, and the United States, and the resident representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) formed an International Donor Committee on Emergency Assistance (IDCEA). Representatives of the European Development Fund, Catholic Relief Services, and League of Red Cross Societies joined the Committee which met regularly to discuss donor intentions in giving aid to Rwanda. The Committee recommended the establishment of a GOR Ministry-level emergency committee to work with the international donor group to assure that the relief program was carried out with a minimum of duplication and lost effort.

It was resolved by the IDCEA that Rwandan needs were food for emergency feeding and seed replenishment, particularly beans, peas, and corn to re-establish harvests. A national survey of crop losses previously conducted by the GOR was used as a guideline by donors to determine the kinds of food to be provided. Attempts were made by the GOR to purchase beans in neighboring countries, but were found to be unavailable in Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Kenya due to drought conditions in these countries.

By mid-October, the GOR Emergency Food

Relief Committee (EFRC) under the Chairmanship of the Foreign Office Director of International Cooperation, consisting of representatives from various GOR agencies, was organized. The Committee designated the UNDP to control all donated funds for relief assistance through a special account ("EMERGENCY FUND") established at the National Bank of Rwanda. The EFRC worked on problems related to the following:

*Transportation:* Transportation was a major problem during the relief operation as Rwanda, a land-locked country, has no railroads or inland waterways. The only means of getting needed food to the affected areas was to truck the donated food from Mombasa to Rwanda on a 1,080 mile road/highway. Under normal conditions, the trucks were only capable of completing two round trips per month because of distance and poor road conditions. The GOR was able to hold down freight costs by transporting nearly 9,000 tons of harvested coffee in stock to Mombasa and returning with the food shipments.

*Storage:* The GOR inventoried all available warehousing space to store the arriving food and arranged for additional storage in public buildings.

*Distribution:* Distribution was made through 144 communes under the supervision of mayors and communal advisors. The most severely affected areas were identified and tonnage requirements estimated.

On November 17 a two-man Rwandan delegation consisting of the Minister of Agriculture and the Foreign Office Director-General went to the World Food Conference in

Rome to inform delegates of the critical food shortage in Rwanda.

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT**

U.S. Ambassador Robert E. Fritts recognized the seriousness of the food shortage throughout Rwanda and concluded that a famine was inevitable unless foreign nations provided emergency shipments of foodstuffs to Rwanda. He declared that a growing disaster existed warranting U.S. Government assistance. On October 7, Ambassador Fritts exercised his disaster relief authority and presented a \$25,000 check to the Rwandan Foreign Minister to defray some of the expenses incurred by the GOR in purchasing seed or food commodities.

On October 31, Embassy officials informed President Juvenal Habyarimana that the U.S. Government (USG) would provide 5,000 metric tons of sorghum.

Ambassador Fritts outlined the magnitude and complexity of transporting the grain from the port city of Mombasa, Kenya, to Rwanda. Airlifting the grain was considered but determined impractical because of prohibitively high transportation costs.

Considered more practical and economical was the use of trucks to haul coffee for export from Rwanda to Mombasa and returning with the grain.

Anticipating the arrival of donated food from the international community, Ambassador Fritts encouraged the GOR to contact the Governments of Kenya and Uganda to facilitate rapid berthing for unloading food commodities off ships in Mombasa and to gain permission for the duty-free transit of the grain by trucks through Uganda.

Two A.I.D. Food for Peace officers from Washington, D.C. were sent to Rwanda on a temporary assignment to help the GOR and donors determine priority needs and identify problems related to the movement, storage, and distribution of food. An A.I.D. transportation officer was assigned to coordinate the

movement of U.S. donated sorghum from Mombasa to Kigali.

Even prior to these disastrous Rwandan crop losses, the U.S. Government was engaged in giving assistance on a limited basis in the distribution of PL 480 relief foods and a variety of self-help projects. The timely supplemental emergency aid provided by the USG was well received by the GOR.

*Summary of USG assistance:*

PL 480 Title II Food for Peace—	
5,000 metric tons of sorghum	
including freight costs . . . . .	\$1,335,300
A.I.D. Contingency Fund . . . . .	25,000
	<hr/>
TOTAL	\$1,360,300

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY U.S. VOLUNTARY AGENCIES**

*Catholic Relief Services (CRS)*

CRS, having an on-going nutrition and school-feeding program in Rwanda, was quickly able to establish 22 food distribution centers in the more affected areas. A cash grant of \$26,666 was made available to purchase and distribute 200 tons of sorghum locally. A second cash donation of \$5,758 was furnished to purchase other relief supplies. Additionally, CRS sent emergency food shipments from their own stocks to augment their feeding program. Total cash donations \$32,424

**ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

	<i>Value of Assistance</i>
<i>Governments</i>	
Belgium . . . . .	\$ 602,000
China (People's Republic of)	*
Canada	1,000,000
France	217,000
Germany (Federal Republic of)	59,100
Switzerland	273,800
United Kingdom	*
U.S.S.R.	*

*United Nations*

The United Nations Development Program Resident Representative served in the role

of Chairman of the International Donor Committee on Emergency Assistance, coordinating the efforts of all donors. Contributions from the UN System were as follows:

World Food Program

1,300 metric tons of sorghum and 450 metric tons of pulse	\$564,000	
1,100 metric tons of pulse	696,500	... \$1,260,500
Secretary-General's Fund	.....	\$ 300,000
		<u>\$1,560,500</u>

*The League of Red Cross Societies (LICROSS)*

LICROSS launched an appeal to a limited number of member Societies for assistance to the Rwanda disaster victims. This appeal was made because the League's relief stocks and funds were depleted. Eleven Societies responded by sending emergency relief supplies valued at more than ..... \$ 36,818

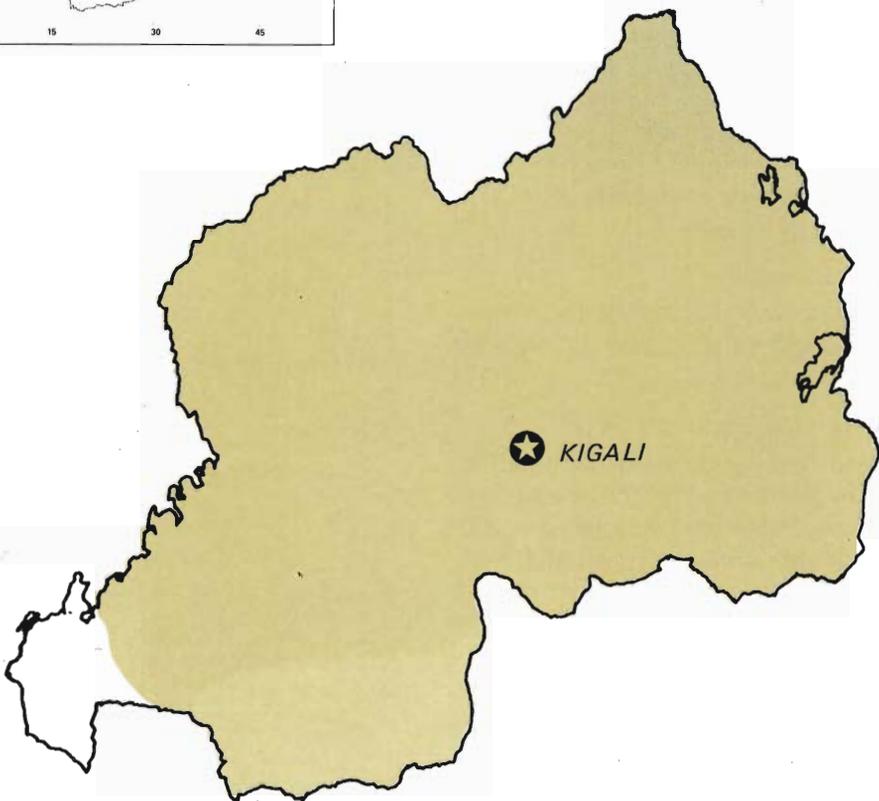
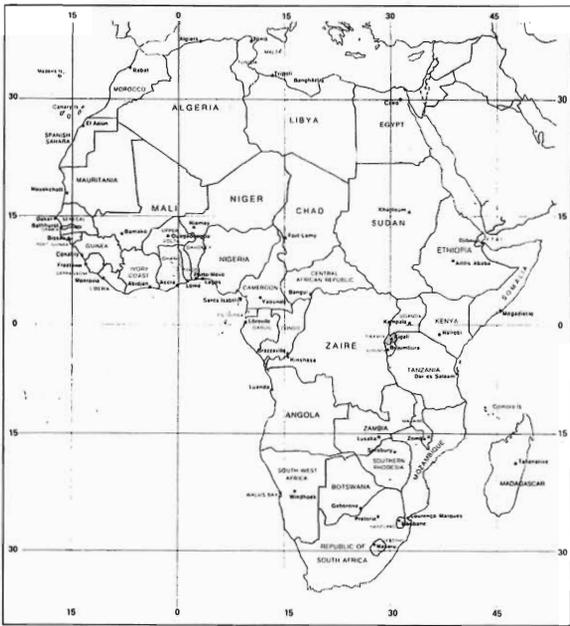
*Caritas Internationalis*

Response from Caritas Internationalis members in providing relief supplies to Rwanda was valued at ..... \$ 27,337

*European Development Fund (FED)*

FED shipped to Rwanda food commodities consisting of the following: 993 metric tons of wheat flour, 4,500 metric tons of wheat, and 1,000 metric tons of powdered milk. Value of the food, estimated by AID/Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator, was \$2,818,250

\* Value of assistance incomplete or not reported.



# RWANDA