

### SOUTH AFRICA - Drought

Date: Late 1982 through 1983 (FY 83)

Location: Entire country; areas most severely affected include Lebowa, Gazankulu, and Kwazulu

No. Dead: Not reported

No. Affected: Estimates number in the millions; however, no official figures are available

Damage: Severe losses to crops, primarily corn, sugarcane, and subsistence crops; reduced grazing lands resulted in serious food shortages and increased incidences of malnutrition in humans and livestock; loss of tens of thousands of cattle

#### The Disaster

Failure of spring rains two years in a row resulted in severe drought conditions throughout South Africa; most affected were Kwazulu, Gazankulu, and Lebowa. As the drought progressed, boreholes dried up and water levels in dams and rivers fell far below normal. Dam levels throughout South Africa dropped as low as 14% of normal capacity, forcing cutbacks in the supply of electricity and water for personal consumption as well as for irrigation, industry, mining, and commerce.

The incidence of kwashiorkor and other nutrition-related diseases rose dramatically in many areas due to drought-induced crop failures. The incidence of typhoid and cholera also increased as the lack of water resulted in a deterioration of sanitary conditions.

South Africa, normally an exporter of maize to neighboring southern African countries, was forced to import corn to offset lost commercial production. These imports did not, however, compensate for the shortfall in subsistence output, leaving as much as a third of the black homeland population without an adequate supply of food.

Action Taken by the South African Government (SAG), the Red Cross, and Operation Hunger

In March 1983, as it became apparent that South Africa was experiencing a second consecutive season of drought, the SAG announced an \$18.4 million drought relief plan for the non-independent black homelands and a large aid plan to relieve debt-ridden white farmers. Drought relief funds for the homelands, primarily rural black areas whose combined population totals about eight million people, were used to provide short-term employment, emergency food supplies for schools, and fresh drinking water for human consumption, and to subsidize cattle and sheep fodder. The debt-relief program for farmers enabled them to obtain new credit and to consolidate and repay debts over a longer period of time.

The South Africa Red Cross of the Natal region was active in administering feeding programs for affected persons, mostly in Kwazulu. In Natal the Red Cross supplied 12 1/2 tons of mealie meal per week to 1,000 families of seven people per family. Between March and December 1983, 540,000 people received assistance. The Red Cross also administered a major school feeding project for 70,000 rural children, which was largely financed by Operation Hunger. Nurses, doctors, church groups, social workers, and others assisted in needs assessments and supervised food distribution for the Red Cross.

Operation Hunger, under the auspices of the South African Institute for Race Relations, also conducted feeding programs throughout the country. By the fall of 1983 Operation Hunger was feeding between 500,000 - 600,000 people, over half of whom were in Lebowa and Ciskei.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government (USG)

On March 18, 1983 the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, Herman W. Nickel, determined that the nationwide drought situation warranted USG assistance and exercised his disaster assistance authority. The sum of \$25,000 was divided equally among three organizations carrying out local relief efforts: the South Africa Red Cross; Operation Hunger, working under the auspices of the South African Institute for Race Relations; and World Vision. The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) later authorized an additional \$30,000 to these organizations for their continuing drought relief efforts.....\$55,000

Total USG Assistance (FY 83) \$55,000

In November 1983, at the request of the U.S. Embassy in South Africa, OFDA obligated an additional \$200,000. The South Africa Red Cross and Operation Hunger each received \$75,000 to support their feeding programs. World Vision received \$50,000 for a long term water conservation program.....\$200,000

Total USG Assistance (FY 84) \$200,000

Grand Total \$255,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

World Vision - with grants totaling about \$68,330 from the USG, World Vision administered a feeding program for 6,000 children, constructed sixty 5,000-liter and five 15,000-liter water tanks, and initiated other long-term water conservation measures. (See also Assistance Provided by USG.)

Assistance Provided by the International Community

Germany, Federal Republic of - donated \$18,400 to Operation Hunger for drought relief and contributed \$18,400 to the South Africa Red Cross for drought relief in Kwazulu.

Premier Group - gave \$92,165 to Operation Hunger.

TOTAL	\$128,965
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