BOTSWANA - Drought

Date: 1983-1984

Location: Countrywide, especially in the east

No. Dead: Not reported

No. Affected: Entire population, approximately 1,037,300

Damage: Increase in malnutrition; loss of crops and livestock

The Disaster

Botswana has suffered three consecutive years of drought, and 1984 was predicted to be the worst in the country's recent history. In the eastern region, where most crop production and cattle raising occurs, rainfall was from 25% to 60% below normal in 1983 and early 1984. January was exceptionally dry with only 33 mm compared to the usual 100 mm of rainfall. The shortage caused village boreholes and many rivers to dry up and crops planted earlier to wither and die.

The three years of drought have significantly reduced the number of farm households which plant and harvest crops. The 1984 harvest of the two principal crops, sorghum and maize, contributed less than 5% of the country's cereal needs. Botswana normally imports from 50% to 70% of its staple grain but it was estimated that the country would need to import at least 95% in 1984. The cattle industry also suffered from the drought, as livestock deaths and malnutrition increased. About a third of the 2.85 million livestock were seriously affected, including cattle used as draft animals for planting and ploughing.

A government survey identified 31% of the children as nutritionally at risk and approximately 2,000 children severely malnourished.

Action Taken by the Government of Botswana (GOB)

The president of Botswana officially declared the country in an emergency drought situation on February 27, and a month later the GOB made a general appeal for international assistance. In its appeal, the GOB requested help with its drought relief program and specified assistance requiring approximately $45 million.

Various government agencies were actively involved in the relief efforts. An Inter-Ministerial Drought Committee (IDC), activated in 1982, coordinated emergency feeding programs through its Food and Nutrition Committee. The GOB's drought relief program also included an enlarged public works and cash-for-work program established to provide income for rural people as compensation for losses resulting from the drought. It employed approximately 25,000 persons, and an additional 7,000 women worked in a "hand stamping" program using mortars and pestles to pound WFP and GOB-purchased sorghum into flour.

To restore the agricultural sector to its previous level of performance, the GOB distributed free seeds, granted subsidies to encourage increased cultivation, and constructed urgently needed village water supply systems.

Local cash donations were given by Yasier Motors, Marapula School, and the Lutheran Church Kanye ($2,520).

Assistance Provided by the United States Government

On April 18, 1984, in response to the GOB's appeal for assistance, the U.S. Ambassador used his disaster assistance authority to obligate $25,000 for priority projects within the GOB's drought relief program.

In May, the USG approved a bilateral grant of 3,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II vegetable oil for distribution through Botswana's Food Relief Program. As the drought continued and more food arrived, storage and transportation needs increased. To help defray the associated costs, the USG approved a donation of 6,000 MT of Title II whole corn to be monetized, with the proceeds to be used for construction of new depots and for transport needs. Of the above amounts, 2,000 MT of vegoil and 3,000 MT of corn were delivered in FY 84. The cost of the commodities was $2,428,800; additional costs for ocean freight and inland transport to rail depots amounted to $825,000. The remaining 4,000 MT was committed for FY 85 and is valued at $1,416,700 with ocean freight costs at $600,000.

The U.S. Peace Corps provided six volunteers for a labor-based relief project.

Total OFDA assistance.....$25,000

Total Food for Peace assistance (FY 84).....$3,253,800

Total USG assistance (FY 84).....$3,278,800

Total Food for Peace assistance (FY 85).....$2,016,700

TOTAL $5,295,500

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

None reported.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

EEC - pledge of 4,000 MT of maize and 480 MT of dry skim milk for 1985.

FAO - $229,100 for seed purchase and storage, stock feed supply, and a food management advisor for the GOB's Food Resources Department (FRD).

The UNDP provided $963,000 for food storage, seed production and fodder seeds, a food logistics officer for the FRD, emergency village water supplies, and plastic covers for stockfeed.

UNICEF - $25,400 for a nutritional surveillance project and $30,500 for cooking equipment for schools and clinics

WFP - $10,200 for training food storage personnel and a pledge of 14,120 MT of sorghum, 880 MT of cornmeal, 24,245 of instant corn-soya milk, 4,660 MT of beans, 4,330 MT of vegoil, and 860 MT of dry skim milk for 1985.

Governments

Australia - grant of $170,502 for humanitarian assistance to drought victims.

Canada - pledge of 5,000 MT of beans and 100 MT of dry skim milk for 1985.

Germany, Fed. Rep. - $576,000 for seeds for the Molapo Development Project, $430,000 for additional seed purchase, and a pledge of 2,680 MT of wheat flour for 1985.

Sweden - $900,000 for water equipment.

United Kingdom - $117,000 for seed purchase and transport; twelve trailers for mobile clinics and twenty diesel engines for boreholes, value not reported.

Voluntary Agencies and Other Groups

Barclays/Standard/Bank of Credit and Commerce - $13,200 for general relief.

China, Peoples Rep., Red Cross - $8,000 for general relief.

Lutheran World Federation - $260,600 for food storage facilities.

TOTAL	$3,733,502