BURKINA FASO - Drought and Food Shortages

Date: 1983-1985; declared November 27, 1984

Location: Countrywide, but areas east, north, and northwest of Ouagadougou were the most affected

No. Dead: Not available

No. Affected: Approximately 2.5 million persons were at risk from famine conditions. The displaced population was estimated at 222,000.

Damage: Due to drought conditions, gross cereal production in the 1984/85 season was 185,000 MT short of the national consumption requirement. Nationwide, 500,000 head of livestock were severely weakened.

The Disaster

Drought and food shortage conditions continued to plague Burkina in 1984 and 1985 following a year of inadequate rainfall considered to be the worst since 1920. Most affected was the central plateau, which contains close to 50% of the population and has suffered three consecutive poor harvests. Millet and sorghum, the staple foods of the rural population, were particularly damaged. In some areas of the Sahel and Yatenga provinces there was no harvest despite repeated sowings.

In December of 1984 an FAO multi-donor mission to Burkina found that six of eleven provinces studied were experiencing serious cereal shortfalls. Total cereal stores were significantly below a self-sufficiency cereal need, defined as 75% of the minimum nutritional level necessary for normal body health (180 kg cereal per capita). Of the six provinces, Yatenga and Sahel were the most affected areas, with the 1984 harvest providing only 22% and 30% respectively of the inhabitants' cereal needs.

As critical as the food shortage in Burkina was the water supply situation. The country's 1983 and 1984 rainfall shortages continued into 1985 resulting in critical water supply shortages for consumption, sanitation, and agriculture. The lack of adequate water for cleaning and
drinking encouraged the transmission of infectious diseases. Moreover, because of the poor rainfall, many people normally resident in the areas north and east of Ouagadougou began to migrate toward urban areas in search of better food and living conditions. This resulted in excessive demands on diminishing water resources in urban centers.

Following the 1983 drought, herds which normally grazed on Sahelian pastures in the rainy season remained in the south until the end of 1984. This raised serious water and pasture problems in the southern zone which were aggravated by the arrival of herds from neighboring countries, especially Mali. Over 500,000 head of livestock were severely affected by the drought and continued to suffer from the effects of the food and water shortages until June of 1985. Herds began to recover with the onset of rains; however, movement to the north was slow due to the animals' weakened condition.

Action Taken by the Government of Burkina Faso (GOB)

In 1983, the GOB established a donor working group to address the operations of the National Cereals Office (OFNACER), food assistance, and donor coordination. In 1984 the GOB created the Presidential Office for NGO Oversight to provide direct coordination of PVO activities. Several PVOs worked with this office in planning and formalizing PVO disaster assistance.

On October 11, 1984 the President of the National Commission for the Fight Against the Drought convened a meeting with representatives of international organizations, PVOs, and diplomatic missions. She announced that famine conditions threatened parts of Burkina and presented the GOB plan of action to respond to the urgent problems of food, housing, and infrastructure repair. Each organization was asked to indicate the assistance they could provide.

Generally poor health conditions caused by the drought worsened the impact of endemic diseases such as measles, yellow fever, and meningitis. In response, the GOB initiated a program of expanded vaccination called Operation Vaccination Commando. Two million children were immunized during the nationwide program conducted in November and December of 1984.

An emergency food distribution program was initiated by the GOB in seven of the twelve provinces in an effort to move food out to target areas before the rainy season. The program was launched with loaned trucks from UNICEF and WFP, and from within the GOB. Reception centers were established outside Ouagadougou to provide shelter to migrants from the more severely affected rural areas. In February and March of 1985, the GOB began rationing already scarce supplies of water.
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Assistance Provided by the United States Government

As early as 1983, USAID/Burkina joined the GOB in expressing concern that food shortages would develop before the 1984 harvest. Following the GOB's official request for assistance, Ambassador Leonardo Neher declared on November 27, 1984 that disaster conditions existed in Burkina. Recognizing that the situation had surpassed the GOB's ability to respond, he authorized the use of the Ambassador's emergency fund of $25,000 for grants to Africare ($7,000) and UNICEF ($18,000). The funds were used for emergency food transport in the Yatenga province.

As a result of the lack of overall donor coordination on the disaster situation in 1984, USAID/Burkina convened an informal group of contractors, sponsors, and other interested parties to discuss disaster relief efforts and coordination. These meetings were later formalized as a weekly discussion group under the sponsorship of WFP and the Drought Commission. Concurrent to these weekly meetings, USAID/Burkina and the FAO collaborated on improving the GOB's assessment of growing conditions and crop production. This effort resulted in the FAO-sponsored multi-donor food situation assessment in late 1984.

USAID/Burkina designed an Emergency Relief Program that addressed the following issues: food assistance, nutritional surveillance, and relief and rehabilitation projects in dam construction, wells, and roads. OFDA provided $165,000 to pay for staff and other support for this program. The first priority of the USG relief strategy was to provide Burkina with food assistance through both the sale and free distribution of P.L. 480 Title II food grains. 19,000 MT of Title II red sorghum was provided to Burkina as part of a government-to-government feeding program. Of this total, 4,000 MT was to be distributed free of charge through cereal banks sponsored by PVOs. The remaining 15,000 MT was to be distributed through the OFNACER commercial network to increase the market supply of food. The proceeds of food sales were used to pay local transport costs of emergency commodities and to help finance various food distribution programs. The grain was provided in three shipments via Lome, Togo with the freight cost at $3,697,900 and the commodities valued at $2,509,100. In addition, 4,000 MT of Title II SFCM was provided for distribution by the African-American Labor Center (commodity cost $900,300, freight cost $980,000).
The USG food assistance program also included the donation of 20,211 MT of P.L. 480 Title II food through CRS. These commodities (8,792 MT of cornmeal, 1,649 MT of vegoil, and 9,770 MT of SFCM) were distributed through the CRS emergency feeding program which operates in seven drought-affected provinces. The food benefited over 505,000 recipients through programs in maternal/child health, food-for-work, school feeding, and general relief. The commodities were valued at $5,598,700 and transport costs were $4,111,200.

USAID provided an additional 3,160 of Title II food (1,400 MT of rice, 1,400 MT SFCM, and 360 MT vegoil) to the LRCS emergency feeding program in the area of Ouagadougou. The value of these commodities was $1,099,900 and freight cost was $1,111,600. The USG also donated 505 MT of Section 416 NFDM for distribution by WFP (commodity cost $328,300, freight cost $143,900).

To quickly increase the net supply of food available to drought victims, USAID arranged a barter transfer of 5,000 MT of maize from Ghana to Burkina. Of that total, 3,000 MT was allocated to the Baptist Mission program, 1,000 MT to LRCS, and 1,000 MT to GOB programs. Under this contract, 9,202 MT of Title II rice was exchanged for 15,000 MT of white maize (10,000 MT was transshipped to Mali and 5,000 to Burkina).

The USG provided other assistance in addition to food aid to combat the disaster. In support of LRCS's 35 wet-feeding programs, OFDA funded the purchase of 10 grain mills from Lome, Togo at a cost of $27,000. The mills were used to process whole grain/kernels at the rate of 270 kg per hour into a food that can be used in wet-feedings. Seven mills were placed in Yatenga province and three in Soum.

With an emergency grant of $74,598 from OFDA, Africare initiated a small scale food-for-work project in Bam and Yatenga provinces.

A major facet of the USG Emergency Relief Program addressed the precarious water situation in the country. The GOB, faced with critical water shortages, requested that OFDA send a two-person WASH team to assess water and sanitation problems arising from concentrations of at-risk populations in and around Ouagadougou and to evaluate a GOB proposal for a dam near Ziga village. The WASH team, consisting of a hydrologist and a sanitary engineer, visited Burkina Faso for three weeks in March of 1985. A WASH water engineer was also sent for one week to assess dam and spillway requirements. The cost of these assignments ($56,612) was funded from an Africa regional obligation and is not included in the Burkina Faso total.
Based on the recommendations made by the water engineer, two additional WASH consultants were sent to Burkina Faso to conduct a dam and reservoir evaluation and feasibility study. A water engineer made several short visits beginning in July of 1985, and a dam construction engineer worked in Burkina Faso for nine months beginning in October of 1985. OFDA allocated $125,000 for these assignments.

During drought conditions Ouagadougou's water supply system invariably reaches dangerously low levels. To help prevent such occurrences, OFDA granted $1,500,000 to the GOB for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Ouagadougou Dam No. 2 and its principal spillway. This dam is the key element in OFDA's water emergency program since it will store water that can then be pumped into the central reservoir in times of drought, thereby reducing the overall surface area exposed to evaporation. Three water pumps and pipes ($46,213) plus spare parts ($2,523) were purchased by OFDA and transported to Burkina Faso via air ($35,121).

In addition, OFDA allocated $200,000 for on-site technical advice on USG emergency water assistance. Also provided were 12 water tanks airlifted from the Leghorn, Italy stockpile (airlift cost $3,915) to support the LRCS emergency feeding centers in the Yatenga and other drought-affected areas. OFDA provided $300,000 to drill and/or repair 40-50 water wells at locations undergoing the most serious water shortages.

The rainy season in Burkina Faso occurs from June through October. During this period in 1985, flooding and rain damaged roads and prevented the movement of emergency food to the rural areas. In particular, the Kaya-Dori road that links the Sahel region with the paved East-West highway was badly damaged, making further supplies of food aid to the region uncertain. In response to this problem, USAID donated $400,000 for a two-month World Bank/GOB rural road project to provide emergency repairs to severely damaged sections of the road and improve passability during heavy rains.

Another element of USG relief to Burkina Faso provided medical assistance in drought-stricken areas. In response to a request from the GOB Ministry of Health, OFDA sent medical supplies to combat a major cholera outbreak in the northern part of the country. USG donations included cholera medicines supplied by UNICEF worth $15,684 and heptamyl valued at $11,960 purchased by the U.S. Mission in Bonn.

Other medicines valued at $38,514 were purchased from private firms and IV sets worth $3,167 were supplied by DOD. (All figures include transport).
In addition, USAID's Bureau for Food for Peace and Voluntary Assistance financed a team of medical epidemiologists from the Centers for Disease Control to conduct a nutritional survey of Burkina Faso. AID contributed $7,315 for this project, UNICEF financed and arranged the logistics for the field work, and the GOB furnished additional supplies and personnel. Two drought-affected provinces, Soum and GnaGna, were surveyed to obtain baseline data on current nutritional status of children aged six months to six years. In 20 randomly selected villages, height, weight, and arm circumference were measured, clinical examinations for edema and avitaminosis A and C were performed, and a standardized questionnaire to evaluate measles vaccination status, recent illness, and food consumption was administered to the mothers of children in the sample. The data was used to identify interventions for USAID-funded feeding programs.

The U.S. Mission reported that a lack of expertise in the health field was hampering their ability to monitor and develop emergency health programs. They requested OFDA's assistance. In response to this request and a recommendation made by the CDC team, OFDA sent an emergency program health advisor for 120 days to undertake cholera and nutrition surveillance.

Summary of OFDA Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ambassador's authority used for grants to UNICEF ($18,000) and Africare ($7,000) for emergency food transport</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff and support for Emergency Relief Program</td>
<td>$165,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>(supplemental funds)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant to Africare for a food-for-work program</td>
<td>$74,598</td>
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<tr>
<td>WASH water engineer and dam construction engineer</td>
<td>$125,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>(supplemental funds)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant to GOB for dam/spillway repairs</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>(supplemental funds)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of water pumps and pipes</td>
<td>$46,213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air freight of water pumps and pipes</td>
<td>$35,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract for initial supply of spare parts for pumps and motors</td>
<td>$2,523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airlift of 12 water tanks from Leghorn, Italy stockpile</td>
<td>$3,915</td>
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Drilling/repair of 40-50 water wells (supplemental funds) .......... $300,000
Technical assistance for well, dam, and other small water projects (supplemental funds) ........................................ $200,000
Grant to LRCS for the purchase of 10 grain mills ...................... $27,000
Grant for emergency road repairs (supplemental funds) .............. $400,000
Medical supplies and transport (supplemental funds) .................. $69,325
Temporary assignment of emergency health program advisor (supplemental funds) .................................................. $30,780

Summary of FFP Assistance

P.L. 480 Title II commodities and ocean freight ....................... $20,480,900
CDC nutritional assessment team ........................................ $7,315

TOTAL OFDA funds .................................................. $214,370
TOTAL OFDA-administered Supplemental funds ...................... $2,790,105
TOTAL FFP funds .................................................. $20,480,900
TOTAL USG assistance ............................................. $23,485,375

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

African-American Labor Center - handled 4,000 MT of Title II SFCM provided by the USG.

Africare - under the CRS Emergency Program, managed USG-donated P.L. 480 Title II stocks in a food-for-work program, provided two food coordinators, installed rural water supply systems, and with a grant from OFDA for $7,600, provided transport for emergency food.

Baptist Mission - distributed Title II food and provided nine expatriate personnel and ten end-use checkers to monitor food distribution.

CRS - distributed P.L. 480 Title II food through its emergency and regular feeding programs in seven provinces, and implemented food-for-work programs in conjunction with Africare.

SCF/U.S. - supervised the distribution of USG donated Title II food.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

FAO - donated motor pumps valued at $120,700, insecticides valued at $30,000, and purchased other agricultural inputs valued at $27,000.
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Fonds European du Developpement (FED) - donated medical supplies valued at $86,000, seeds valued at $123,000, transport valued at $46,000, and gave $341,000 for road repairs.

LRCS - distributed USG-donated Title II stocks and other donor food through its emergency feeding program in Ouahigouya, and provided a ten-person management team for this operation plus a local staff of nutrition assistants and office personnel.

OPEC - donated 13 trucks valued at $390,000.

UNDP - gave $25,000 for repairs and maintenance of 20 wells, and donated farming equipment valued at $300,000.

UNICEF - with a grant from OFDA for $18,000 provided transport for emergency food; distributed Title II food donated by the USG through its food-for-work program in Yatenga province; coordinated emergency health activities; donated medical supplies valued at $416,000, three water tanker trucks valued at $120,000, transport valued at $8,400, and a warehouse valued at $13,000; gave $36,000 for assistance to displaced persons; funded the Operation Vaccination Commando; and contributed clothes, 6,000 blankets, 100 tents, 200 tarpaulins, and 1,000 polyethylene ropes, value not reported.

WFP - gave $120,000 for internal food transport, $250,000 for the purchase and maintenance of six trucks, and donated eleven silos for food storage and four radio receivers, value not reported.

Governments

Canada - gave seeds valued at $114,000.


Italy - donated six trucks valued at $180,000.

Korea, Dem. People's Rep. - donated $10,000 for the transport of cereals.

Luxembourg - gave $100,000 for the rehabilitation of railway cars to carry food supplies from Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

Netherlands - contributed $16,000 for a dried meat operation.

Spain - contributed $80,000 for training programs in rural communities.
Voluntary Agencies and other Private Groups

AFVP (French PVO) - administered various programs concerning community water supplies, irrigation, animal watering, erosion control, and soil replacement, and provided 40 technicians.

Christian African Missionary Alliance - under the Baptist distribution program, handled Title II food donated by the USG.

ECHO/Joint Mission Hospital Equipment Board/U.K. - donated medical supplies and transport valued at $58,300.

Express Sahel - conducted an emergency food distribution program in rural areas under the direction of the GOB Drought Commission.

Maryknoll Fathers - gave $85,000 in cash.

SFC/UK - carried out a nutrition survey and feeding program in the gold mining area of Sebba near Dori, and installed large diameter dugwells in the same area.

Six S - under the CRS Emergency Program, managed Title II stocks donated by the USG.

TOTAL $3,127,400