



United Nations
MOLDOVA

FEEDING THE HOPE

The United Nations' and International Community's
Response to Reducing the Consequences of Drought
in the Republic of Moldova





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Chisinau 2008

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United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)



Additional information about UN actions undertaken to mitigate drought consequences in the Republic of Moldova is available at: <http://un.md/drought>

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Foreword

The drought in 2007 once more pointed out that the Republic of Moldova is on the brink of substantial climate changes, inducing a major negative impact not only on the agro-food sector, but also on other related branches of the national economy, emphasizing their vulnerability towards natural perturbations.

As a consequence, the total volume of the agro-food sector production, estimated for 2007, registered a drop of 23% compared to the 2006 level, including the crop production with a drop of 33% and the livestock - with a drop of 25%, affecting thus the productivity of the agricultural crops by 60%.

Nevertheless, due to prompt policies and mechanisms applied by the Government including calls to the international community (which succeeding in obtaining quick reactions from the international community and mobilized an important external assistance accounting for about 25 million USD), supplements of 200 million lei to the Fund for Agricultural Producers' Support, decrease of tax burden for agricultural activities, as well as due to the continuous support from the civil society affiliated to agrarian sector, the country succeeded to substantially diminish the drought's negative impact on the population's wellbeing and food security, to preserve the seed fund, as well as the livestock's genetic and fodder funds, and to mitigate other devastating effects.

At the same time, the situation that emerged determined the Government of the Republic of Moldova to intensely undertake actions to amend and update agrarian policies in the state's agrarian policy so as to diminish agriculture's vulnerability when faced by risk factors; to ensure population's food security; to extend the competitiveness of the agro-food sector by re-technologizing and increasing the level of investment and innovation in the sector, as well as by revitalizing and adjusting the sector to the market economy conditions and mechanisms. For the purpose of achieving these objectives, the sector legislative-normative framework was substantially enhanced by passing a number of important laws and strategic policy documents.

In the case of a modern and sustainable agriculture, the efforts and investments undertaken do not get lost inefficiently in the soil or evaporate with the drought, and are not eroded or threaten by floods. That is why, the enhancement of the agro-food segment, representing a strong factor for balancing the harmonized economic development, constitutes one of the central priorities of the state which would be the target of a number of efforts in the near future.

ANATOLIE GORODENCO
*Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry
of the Republic of Moldova*

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Introduction

The United Nations response to last summer's drought in Moldova was a powerful demonstration of what can be achieved if people, authorities, UN agencies, and international community work together. Thus the relief and technical assistance we have provided to Moldova contributed to reducing the losses, saving livelihoods and equally important to securing the future wherein people are less affected by natural hazards.

It has been, first of all, a lesson of cooperation for people and for their future. We have also learned together from this dramatic experience of drought that emergency situations require an immediate and decisive response. Given that Moldova is a country prone to natural disasters, the lessons learned will help cope successfully with future crisis situations. At the same time, Moldova can serve as an example of the coordination mechanism of the assistance which it has created and used.

Speaking of lessons learned and achievements, we would like to remind first of all that 400, 000 socially vulnerable people have received aid while 22 communities have undertaken community development activities to recover from the effects of the drought. Equally valuable are other benefits which emerged from this

emergency situation: the mobilization of communities, the spirit of cooperation, and the participation of citizens, authorities, donors in the development process and early warning measures at community level.

We further plan to look at the drought from a climate change perspective and pay closer attention to additional environmental issues such as rational use of natural resources, waste management, and fighting pollution in big rivers.

At the same time, we are looking for efficient and transparent solutions for providing assistance to people from both sides of the Nistru River who were affected by the floods this July. After a joint drought response, including first-time interventions in Transnistria to overcome dramatic crop losses and animal destocking last year, we are facing another situation where technical and emergency assistance is vital for the Republic of Moldova. And in these dramatic circumstances the United Nations reaffirms its support as suggested by our slogan that we use throughout our activities in Moldova: "Together for a Better Life".

KAARINA IMMONEN
*Resident Coordinator of the United Nations
in Moldova*

Drought in Moldova – an Emergency Re-launching the Cooperation Spirit



The drought of the summer of 2007 in Moldova was one of the most severe challenges encountered by the country in the last decades. Yields from over 80% of arable land were compromised in a country where agriculture contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product. The losses were estimated to account in 2007 for about EUR 300,000 just for the yields of cereals. Thus, the drought affected a number of people from Moldova – especially the vulnerable ones: farmers, women, and children. At the same time, the emergency situation induced by the drought re-launched the spirit of cooperation among citizens, authorities, development organizations and international community, so as to contribute to the country's progress and people's wellbeing.

In 2007, the extreme weather conditions led to an unusual situation and to a deep crisis in the Republic of Moldova's agro-food sector. The drought of last summer has underscored once more that agriculture is the most vulnerable and risky sector of the nation's economy. Agricultural crops' yields and productivity in 2007 were the lowest from the last decade, inducing thus a major crisis.

As a result of the high temperatures, the volume of losses in the agrarian sector was increasing daily during the whole summer of 2007, resulting in lost production and incapacity to harvest the cultivated crops: cereals, sunflower seeds, maize, sugar beet, fruits and vegetables.

The 2007 drought affected most of all the poorest people, bringing them to the brink of despair. The drought had also a major impact on small farmers' financial situation, causing severe losses of fodder and livestock, and inducing a tense situation for their minimal living funds. During August and September of 2007, in between 10 and 30% of livestock was sold or slaughtered due to the huge drop of fodder reserves for the winter. As a result, huge prejudice was induced for consumers' and producers' supply chains, leading thus to a sharp price rise (up to 50%) and affecting the budgetary revenues for 2007-2008.

“The drought from the summer of 2007 was the severest of the last 60 years. Almost every farmer registered losses, some of them lost their entire harvest. The lack of fodder forced farmers to sell or slaughter intensively the livestock. So as to survive, the farmers having less yields had to leave for work abroad or to take loans” – this was one of the acknowledgements stated within the “Food Security of Rural Households” Survey carried out by the World Food Programme (WFP), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Moldova.

Through quick and decisive action, we worked together not only to save lives, but also to secure their future

The Chairman of the United Nations Development Group, Kemal Dervis, stated in New York, that the entire international community “plays a vital role in supporting countries like Moldova so that they don’t lose years of development progress through an act of nature”.

“Through quick and decisive action, we worked together not only to save lives, but also to secure their future”, declared the United Nations official.



“Relief and Technical Assistance Response to the Drought in Moldova”

The emergency assistance launched by the United Nations Agencies in September 2007 constitutes a coordinated response to the request for assistance made by the Moldovan Government to the international community during July of the same year, has turned in a short period of time into a large programme with a number of partners' involvement. Their efforts were targeted towards mitigating the drought consequences and developing further on the agro-food sector.

The UN responded through the “Relief and Technical Assistance Response to the Drought in Moldova” Project and showed that losses may turn into values.

The UN Project components targeted the fulfilment of some actions for helping out the most vulnerable people:

- 1. Distribution of seeds, fertilizers and fuel for autumn sowing.**
- 2. Assistance with fodder.**
- 3. Distribution of maize seeds.**
- 4. Offer of food packages.**
- 5. Fulfilment of some intensive community works.**
- 6. International technical expertise. Monitoring and Evaluation.**

“Relief and Technical Assistance Response to the Drought in Moldova” UN Project Results

- **19,589 farm households** or about 80,300 persons from 494 mayoralties and communities from 18 rayons of the country benefited from packages with winter wheat seeds, fertilizers and fuel.
- **20,210 households** or 82,500 persons benefited from livestock fodder, out of which 4,224 households or 13,939 persons are from the five rayons of the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova.
- **82,223 households** (about 345,300 persons from 31 rayons of Moldova) **received maize seeds for spring agricultural works.**
- **14,200 pregnant women and nursing mothers** (including 3,000 from the Transnistrian region of the country) **received food packages.**
- **1,817 persons**, including 188 from the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, **benefited from financial means for carrying out some intensive community works.**

Due to the activities undertaken by the given project for about 10 million USD, there were created values accounting for 80 million USD.

530,000 persons benefited from assistance within the framework of the given UN project.

Project duration:

September 2007 – August 2008.

Budget: 9,994,196 USD.

The UN “Relief and Technical Assistance Response to the Drought in Moldova” Project was carried out with the financial support offered by the European Commission through its Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Federal Ministry of Rural Development and Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management from Austria, Governments of the Netherlands, Norway, Italy and Finland, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The project was managed by the UNDP in partnership with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), other UN agencies and the Government of the Republic of Moldova as well as non-governmental organizations and local public authorities which were implementing partners of the project.



After the Drought: the Seeds Offered Germinate Hope; the Fuel Lights Up Confidence for a Better Life

19,589 agricultural producers from 494 country communities obtained donations of seeds, fertilizers and fuel as a response of the United Nations and international community for overcoming the drought consequences in Moldova.

Maria Neagu, a 57 year old woman from Tataresti village, Cahul rayon, is one

18 rayons were selected for distributing the assistance coming from the United Nations in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry. In these 18 rayons the cereal losses were more than 35% and these were the rayons that did not get any other humanitarian aid.

The assistance beneficiaries were selected in partnership with local public administration according to the following criteria:

Households that:

- had two or more children under 15 years old and at least one pensioner under their care
- worked their own land plot with a total area under two hectares
- could crop winter wheat and had access to agricultural equipment
- did not benefit during that year from any other assistance from donor organizations

The package for farming half a hectare of land contained:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| • Winter wheat seeds | 100 kg |
| • Fertilizers (ammonium nitrate) | 60 kg |
| • Fuel for farming | 8 litres |

of those 19,589 persons. Being in a desperate situation – due to lack of money, a harvest and perspective, Maria Neagu says that the assistance received by her family as well as the family of her daughter from the United Nations is like a sip of water for a thirsty person; especially taking into account the fact that the price for seeds went up for several times in the autumn, the same with the price for fertilizers. She sowed two hectares of land with winter wheat and she really hopes to get a rich harvest.

Thus, the seeds, fertilizers and fuel offered as an emergency assistance germinated hope in people's hearts; lighted up the trust for a better life in the near future.

And hope is seeded not only in the heart of people receiving the assistance, but also in the heart of those who offer it: "We really hope that our donation will help the farmers to overcome the drought crisis. It is important for our assistance to be used efficiently and for it to contribute to re-launch the agricultural sector in rural localities of Moldova", stated Christian Steiner, Charge d'Affaires, Head of the Technical Cooperation and Coordination Office under the Austrian Embassy in Chisinau.

Petru Svitchii, a 52 years old inhabitant of Tataresti village, tries to contribute with his personal efforts to re-launch the agriculture. His heart is full of joy when he looks at his field planted with wheat. It is like a green thick carpet that promises rather rich harvest for the next year. Together with the other 42 farm households from the village, he has benefited from what seeds, fertilizers and fuel from behalf of the United Nations. Petru Svitchii says that help came just on the dot, as

he badly needed qualitative wheat seeds that cost a fortune. He really hopes to crop his own wheat seeds during the following three years. “The fertilizers increase the genetic potential of the planting materials, but unfortunately we cannot afford ourselves to buy the necessary quantity, thus the donation was really a huge help to us”, continues Petru Svitchii. He did not lose his hope for better, unlike the other villagers who went up with despair.

All in all, approximately 205,02 tons of seed material, 1230 tones of fertilizers (ammonium nitrate) and almost 163,950 liters of fuel were distributed to farmers in 18 rayons of the country.

“We are glad that our contribution succeeded to help farmers from Moldova in planting winter wheat and overcome the disastrous effects of the drought. The multiple number of meetings we had with the farmers from the country convinced us that our assistance got to destination and it is very welcomed”, said Bo Westman, Head of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) in Chisinau.



Livestock Fodder Gives Courage to People

7,031 tons of fodder and forage were distributed to 15,989 households from 12 rayons from the central and southern regions of the Republic of Moldova within the framework of the UN Project “Relief and Technical Assistance Response to the Drought in Moldova”. Another 1,960 tones of fodder and forage were offered to 4,224 households from the left side of the River Nistru.

“We are more than pleased with the assistance received, because we had no other way out to buy fodder”, says Aculina Tinta, from Colibabovca village, Leova rayon, who is 30 years old and benefited, together with the other four members of the household, from the assistance offered by the international community.

“Now, I think, we’ll have more forces to struggle against the poverty”, says her husband, Vasile, confessing that he thinks first of all how to feed his children. Sometimes a glass of milk and a piece of bread is the only food they have for breakfast and dinner. Vasile Tinta’s family has about one and a half hectare of land, from which they harvested only three sacks of maize because of the drought.

Iuliana and Ion Carabadjac from Ceadir, Leova. Another family, the same story in which the livestock fodder gave courage to people. Although for them the temptation to leave abroad was big, they preferred to stay home as a family and bring up together those three children they had and to help their elderly parents, and all this, after the severe drought from the last summer, when every day was a new struggle with poverty. “If not for the cow, I really don’t know how we would

The beneficiaries were selected in cooperation with local and regional authorities, targeting the households that had a dairy cow and met the following criteria:

- had no land and family members were unemployed
- households with pregnant women or nursing mothers
- had three or more children
- had persons with disabilities (including because of a disease or old age)
- only one adult was employed
- benefited from state provided support (pensions, compensations)

Except from the following households:

- involved in small and medium agricultural activities (meat, milk production, etc.)
- had agricultural equipment (tractor, car, etc.)
- had a green house or a lake for fish breeding
- had commercial units (shops, restaurants, petrol stations, etc.)
- had more than half of hectare with orchard or vineyard
- were cultivating an area of at least half a hectare for growing potatoes or other vegetables
- had more than 10 bee families

The lists with beneficiaries’ names and the criteria for distributing the livestock fodder were posted on the information boards of the mayoralties, and the whole process was monitored and evaluated by a non-governmental organization.

have coped". The beginning of 2008 brought the joy of some help into the village.

Together with other almost one hundred of inhabitants from Ceadir that had dairy cows, the Tinta and Carabadjac families benefited from livestock fodder.

"The help came right on the dot, when the majority of farmers had used up all their reserves and had no other way out but for selling out their cattle for meat. Our Joiana has never ever tasted combined fodder and I think that now the day came when it will eat to its heart content and will give us more milk", says the woman with optimism in her voice. "The combined fodder will be enough for 80 days, and afterwards it will be possible already for the cattle to go grazing on fields", continues Iuliana.

**Cesare De Montis, Ambassador,
Head of the European Commission
Delegation to Moldova:**

"We have granted this donation to the most vulnerable farmers from the Republic of Moldova who have a dairy cow so as to help them to overcome the consequences of the drought that has affected them severely during the last summer. Distributing fodder to about 20 thousand farming households from the country, we wanted to help them to keep the cattle that provide their only source of food security. This is an important sign of our continuous commitment to help Moldova, and more specifically Moldovan population, targeting the poorest and those who are most in need".



Maize Seeds of Today – Wellbeing of Tomorrow

82,223 vulnerable families from the country affected by the 2007 summer drought benefited from maize seeds within the framework of the UN Project “Relief and Technical Assistance Response to Drought in Moldova”. Assistance was distributed in 31 rayons, of which five were in the Transnistrian region of the country.

A donation like a cup of water after a stifling marathon

During one day the fields from Puhoi locality, Ialoveni Rayon, were “flooded” by a torrent of people. 221 farmers’ households from the village received one sack of maize seeds each from United Nations – help granted for overcoming the consequences of the drought from the previous year, and all of them rushed to plant them in the same day as the land was still preserving the humidity after the spring rains...

Some were working with the hoe; others were running after the machine operator so as to plant them with the tractor. They are very thankful for the received donation, appreciating it as a cup of water after a stifling marathon...

Last summer, the farmers from Puhoi, just as the many others from the whole country “baked themselves” like in an oven when working hard on the fields. Sometimes the temperature under the sun was reaching the level of 70 grades by Celsius during the hot summer days with no rain and wind for long weeks. Peasants’ faces were turning black from both: sun and distress. To crown it all, as if the losses provoked by the drought were not enough, Puhoi locality was “bitten” by a strong hailstorm that fully destroyed the hoar-frost of harvest still left after the drought.

Every family received 10 kilograms of seeds, a sufficient quantity to plant half of hectare of agricultural land. The beneficiaries were selected in partnership with local public authorities, in compliance with the following criteria:

The households:

- have no more than 2 hectares of arable land
- be the owner of the land
- have at least 0.5 hectare available for maize cultivation
- have land prepared for cultivation and are able to care for the maize crops
- have not received any former drought assistance (from UN or other sources).

In addition, at least one or more of the following criteria have to be fulfilled:

- have two or more children under 17 years
- have one or persons who need assistance (pensioner, disabled, social case).

Households which fulfil one of the following excluding factors were dismissed; the below criteria could be added to narrow down the numbers: households with a member with permanent employment (private or state); households with a member working abroad, specially those in western countries.

The lists with beneficiaries’ names and the criteria for distributing maize were posted on the information boards of the mayoralties, and the whole process was monitored and evaluated by a non-governmental organization.

“This fall we are sorry for ourselves. We’ve invested money, labour and hope, but all we harvested from 1,30 ha were just 10 small sacks of corn cobs and some armfuls of corn sticks. It is very serious problem as we have no other income source but for our land”, says Svetlana Timotin, 35 years old. “No one will insure the risk of some natural calamities, no one helps us with agricultural equipment and we, with our own forces, cannot buy even a bicycle so as to get quicker to our fields that are 7 km away from home. Nevertheless we continue to work our land as we have no other solution for the time being”, continues the woman. And together with her husband,

Andrei Timotin, 43 years old, they really hope that “next autumn we’ll be able to have a rich harvest, especially from the high-quality maize seeds received as a support”.

For Tatiana and Ion Iurcu from Puhoi, their five kids and the grandmother who lives with them, the UN donation was more than a “help out”. “If we would not have received this assistance, I think that a part from our field would have remained fallow ground”, says Tatiana.

Nicolae Baltaga, Local Consultant from the National Agency for Rural Development (ACSA), the nongovernmental organization that monitored the distribution of maize seeds, says that the majority of those 5600 inhabitants from Puhoi village are in need of such assistance, but donation was distributed only to the most vulnerable families. He says that this assistance has planted in peasants’ soul the hope that they will overcome the difficulties caused by the severe drought from the last year.

Distribution of maize seeds and fertilizers within the five rayons from the Transnistria region of the Republic of Moldova

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) supplied 21 tones of maize seeds to 788 farmers from the Transnistrian region of Moldova for cultivating a total area of 1050 hectares. The UN Project “Relief and Technical Assistance Response to Drought in Moldova” offered approximately 240 tones of fertilizers for the eastern region for sowing maize on 1200 hectares.



From Drought to Rural Development

Labour intensive works within communities that were severely affected by drought represented another dimension of United Nations' response to drought consequences in Moldova. 1,817 people from 22 localities from rayons affected by drought obtained monetary assistance to carry out activities for community benefit within different objects from these communities under the umbrella of "Relief and Technical Assistance Response to Drought in Moldova" UN Project.



Villagers from Trifauti did everything not just for now, but for the future

Brick by brick, very carefully and with great skill, two fireplaces were built in Trifauti village, Soroca rayon: one in the kindergarten and the other one in the gymnasium premises. The masters built them for their children and grandchildren – for them to have a life with more warmth. They did it carefully, first of all for the children's sake, so as to build a future here, within the framework of a community development project, which carried out much more activities than its title could fit in: "Labour Intensive Works for repairing social purpose objects".

The initiatives carried out within 22 villages covered about 47,000 inhabitants. These projects resulted in remarkable outputs that are considered to be very important for beneficiary communities.

Thus the following was achieved:

- the poorest ones were financially supported
- central water supply networks were built for a length of 5,770 metres
- sewerage network was capitally repaired on a total length of 2,135 metres
- 12 public wells and ponds were rehabilitated
- local roads were built on a distance of 18.6 kilometres
- 14 bridges over rivulets were built/renovated
- villages were cleaned and unauthorized dumps were liquidated on a total area of 65 ha
- works were undertaken for developing the territory and turning green an area of about 10 ha
- about 13,200 trees were planted
- thermal energy and electricity distribution networks were repaired on a total length of 1,430 metres
- works were undertaken for repairing 23 public objects: 16 schools and kindergartens, 6 community halls and one mayor's office.

The things missing from project's title poured in from the people from Trifauti in the works they carried out – participation, enthusiasm, promptness and quality, not just to meet today's needs but to last for a while. In order to open new opportunities, they first changed some doors: five in gymnasium premises and eight in the community hall.

Now even the children's nap in the middle of the day in the kindergarten is sweeter and warmer. Children have a fireplace, the furniture is repaired, the windows have new panes of glass and the fence looks like a real fence. Gymnasium pupils also have the chance to be joyful: ceilings were faced, interior walls were finished and doors and windows were painted in six classrooms. Pupils will no longer sit in classroom with coats and caps. At the same time, the community hall suffered a total transformation. Villagers repaired the windows and the roof and tuned on the electricity so as to actually have light.

But the changes that occurred in Trifauti can also be seen in the daylight. The village monument was re-arranged and two wells were rebuilt within the framework of the "Relief and Technical Assistance Response for Drought in Moldova" UN Project. Just like in other project-localities, Trifauti village has now less monuments of indifference and much more examples of people that like to be involved, local authorities that get to be accountable and non-governmental organizations which really organize activities without government support for community benefit.

"Almost half of project cost was contributed by the community as different material inputs: stone, bricks, sand, paints, tools and devises. But most important was Trifauti villagers' involvement alongside with village council and mayoralty", says the village mayor, Ivan Focsa.

Alexandru Ursul, Manager of the Community Development component under the Integrated

Local Development Programme / UNDP Moldova, perceives these things very deeply and states that: "The mobilization of those 22 communities, including Trifauti village, was valuable and beneficial for everyone. The success of these initiatives was due, first of all, to the involvement of important local resources supported by the external ones. Without the community unity, people's energy and foreign partners' contribution, things would have not moved forward. But now, these villages can inspire, through their example, other communities as well."

Just like in Trifauti village from Soroca Rayon, labour intensive works were carried out in the following localities: Capaclia from Cantemir Rayon; Casunca from Floresti Rayon; Climautii de Jos from Soldanesti Rayon; Cocieri from Dubasari Rayon; Constantinovca from Edinet Rayon; Corlateni from Riscani Rayon; Cotovscoe village from ATU Gagauzia; Crasnoe village from Grigoriopol; Dubova village from Dubasari; Frunza from, Slobozia Rayon; Hiliuti from Riscani Rayon; Kuzmin from Camenca Rayon; Porumbesti from Cantemir Rayon; Rascaieti from Stefan Voda Rayon; Salcia from Soldanesti Rayon; Samurza village and Cealic commune from Taraclia; Scorteni from Telenesti Rayon; Slobozia village from Stefan Voda; Speia village from Grigoriopol; Trifauti from Soroca Rayon; Varancau village from Soroca; and Vihvatinti village from Ribnita.

Within the framework of the community development projects, 6 million lei were mobilized, including 2 million lei coming as local administrations' contribution expressed in construction materials, planting material and other. Approximately 2,000 citizens have directly participated in fulfilling labour intensive works and more than 42,000 inhabitants from these villages are benefiting from the results of the community initiatives.

Foodstuff for Hope: Assistance Comes Also in Food Packages

14,200 pregnant women and mothers with new-born babies (under 6 months) living in the regions extremely affected by drought, benefited from food packages offered by the United Nations within the framework of the “Relief and Technical Assistance Response to Drought in Moldova” Project.

Packages containing oil, rice, sugar, flour, and beans, have been distributed in the 19 rayons most affected by the drought through reproductive health centres to pregnant women and nursing mothers with under-six-months babies. The distribution was carried out based on an integrated plan for transparent distribution, developed by the Ministry of Health with UNFPA support.

Lilia Acatrinei is one of the women who benefited from the UN assistance. She is 36 years old and lives in Plopi-Stiubei, Causeni rayon and at the donation moment she was in the seventh month of pregnancy. “I’m extremely pleased with the help offered by this international organization, because otherwise I would have to spend the entire one or two month family income on staple food. On the brink of winter, when we also need firewood, any sum of money is of great worth”, says the woman, thinking also about the other three children she has and the one to be born.

At the clinic from the rayon centre Causeni, several other pregnant women and women holding their babies in their arms are waiting for humanitarian aid. For Alina Moisei, aged 17, the perspectives are as daunting just like the situation for the majority of women that are raising their children on their own. She is five months pregnant and is living together with her younger brothers in their

parents’ house in Causeni. Their father left his family about four years ago and nobody has heard anything of him since, while their mother left for Ukraine in search of a job. She sends them money on a regular basis, but it is still too little for the three people who stayed home. Alina took several hair dressing classes hoping to become a hair stylist, but because of her pregnancy, she didn’t manage to get a job. The news that she will have a child brought a great joy to her life and she hasn’t thought for a minute to give up the baby. Alina says that the package with food products will be an occasion for celebration for her family, because her younger brothers will be able to buy sweets with the money saved for food products. “They are crazy about sweets, but they can never afford them”, she says.

According to Eugen Palli, chief specialist of the woman and child assistance ward within the rayon hospital Causeni, the packages with food products offered by the UNFPA were distributed to 220 pregnant women and nursing mothers from the Causeni rayon, who are in a difficult financial situation. He mentioned that this aid was extremely welcome, considering the fact that these women have special nutritional needs and are greatly affected by the drought that hit the country this summer.

On the occasion of the first donation from this assistance set, Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator in Moldova stated that:

“an important role for mitigating the drought consequences in Moldova is played by the joint efforts of all the donors, local authorities and non-governmental sector from the country.”

Communication about Drought in Moldova: to Tell the World So As Obtain Support and Actions

“The world food crisis is also determined by climate change”, these were the introduction words for the feature report broadcasted by CNN (the largest TV network focused on news and information) on June 7, 2008 about the drought in the Republic of Moldova. CNN offered at that time to the whole world a deep analysis of the way UN’s and donors’ assistance was used for mitigating drought consequences in Moldova.



This was one of those two CNN subjects about drought in Moldova, and the communication and visibility achieved through a crisis situation strategy became one of the solid components of the UN Project “Relief and Technical Assistance Response to Drought in Moldova”.

United Nations’ and international community’s response to drought consequences in Moldova benefited from active support from communications, mass-media and public relations, that underscored the credibility and cohesion of this humanitarian effort for people’s and country’s benefit. According to articles and subjects published by domestic and foreign media, United Nations’ and donors’ intervention was one of the most important actions and set up an efficient partnership.

The project’s communication strategy and plan of actions included among other activities in line with humanitarian aid standards, fact finding missions for media, permanent communication with donors, set up of a specialized page dedicated to drought on UN official web site in Moldova: <http://www.un.md/drought/>, dissemination of all available information to the large public, etc. Besides all these, there was produced a documentary which even via its title expresses the success of UN interventions in Moldova: “The Story of a Successful Project”.

One of the publications developed under the project framework “From Drought towards Prosperity through Community Development. United Nations’ and International Community’s Contribution to Reducing the Consequences of the Drought in Moldova” is available at the following address: <http://www.un.md/drought/>

Drought from 2007: Achievements, Good Practices and Perspectives for Moldova



The joint response of the United Nations' and international community to reducing the consequences of the drought in the Republic of Moldova offered an example of good practices in humanitarian aid field and proved that United Nations' efforts, whenever acting as a united system, are more efficient than the separate actions undertaken by several UN Agencies. In other words "together we can achieve much more than doing something alone". This is one of the main lessons learned out of the drought in 2007 - mentioned by beneficiaries and assistance coordinators, and confirmed with rationales and reasons by experts who have monitored closely the joint efforts of the United Nations and the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

The Resident Coordinator of United Nations Office in Moldova set up a partnership frame model in compliance with UN reform agenda and the commitment to harmonize donors' assistance.



UN Photo/Devra Berkowitz

The presence of UN Resident Coordinator, Kaarina Immonen, in New York, in February 2008, at two events held within the Headquarters – a meeting with diplomatic missions representatives at UN and a conferences with mass-media dedicated to drought in Moldova – has convinced a number of world countries to learn from the recent experience of the Relief and Technical Assistance Response to Drought Project in Moldova.

“For instance, the representatives of Austria, Turkey, FAO and UNFPA expressed a vivid interest regarding the mechanisms used for assistance coordination, and the debates, as a whole, were carried out in a very positive dynamics”, stated Kaarina Immonen.

The joint response and the common partnership represent one of the key achievements, contributing to project’s consolidation, and to programme’s funding, efficiency and effectiveness. There is a number of evidence proving donors’ satisfaction: their extremely active participation in coordination meetings, the way to organize information exchange, as well as the productive debates regarding the evolution of the programme and mutual agreement on next steps.

Another essential element serving as basis for successful interventions refers to the exact and concrete assessment of the baseline situation and the good organization of operations: “one of the most comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system ever used for humanitarian aid actions was developed through joint efforts. Three situation analysis and five performance and monitoring studies were carried out during those 10 months of project development”, states the independent final evaluation report from August 2008.

At the same time, the success of the humanitarian initiative in Moldova showed once again that in case of no prompt and adequate assistance, the economic burden over people’s and communities’ shoulders could have severely endangered the present and future of the country.



Good Practices Registered at Different Stages of United Nations' Relief and Technical Assistance Response to Drought in Moldova

Programme Evaluation and Formulation

- Pro-active advocacy of the Government of Moldova for making the world aware about the severe drought in the country and the need for foreign assistance.
- Carrying out a rapid evaluation of the situation, followed by a joint report of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regarding drought impact on yields and food resources.
- A solid formulation of the project, which included explicitly such dimensions as technical assistance, consolidation of capacities, monitoring and evaluation, and planning future activities.
- A joint approach based on the complementary character of the expertise and mandates, enhanced and maintained by an information exchange in real-time regime and adjusted to the contributions expressed within well-coordinated and administrated meetings.

Implementation

- Setting up some successful partnerships with some of the most credible non-governmental organizations from the country.
- Flexibility and usage of the governmental procurement system for procuring seeds, fuel, fodders and fertilizers.
- Setting up a separate unit for project implementation, within the premises of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry. This fact contributed to focusing the emergency response, consolidating the partnership with the Ministry and avoiding the use of emergency resources for other UN on-going projects.

The strategy based on an extended partnership allowed United Nations maintaining partnerships with the biggest and the most important non-governmental organizations from the country.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Extremely careful humanitarian aid monitoring program.

Including an independent evaluation in the project, ensuring for no one who took part in development and monitoring to be involved in evaluation.

These good practices, achieved at different stages of the United Nations' Relief and Technical Assistance Response to Drought in Moldova were identified and presented within the project's final external evaluation carried out in 2008.

Moldova after the Drought, Looking Forward

The lessons learned by the Government of Moldova, the country's citizens and development partners from the dramatic experience of the drought from 2007 will help the Republic of Moldova in future to cope better with challenges.

The possibility of diminishing the country's vulnerability faced with another drought in the future may be obtained by extending and consolidating the irrigation systems in agriculture as well as improving the economic status of vulnerable groups which would increase their living standards based on agricultural activities.

While the first intervention needs substantial national investments, fulfilled through the state's contribution with the assistance of international development banks, the second stage may be promoted by country's development partners – United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The partners may generate knowledge, good practices, resources and skills for transforming the agricultural sector into a modern and sustainable sector through projects and financial investments in infrastructure.



Valuable Inputs and Contributions

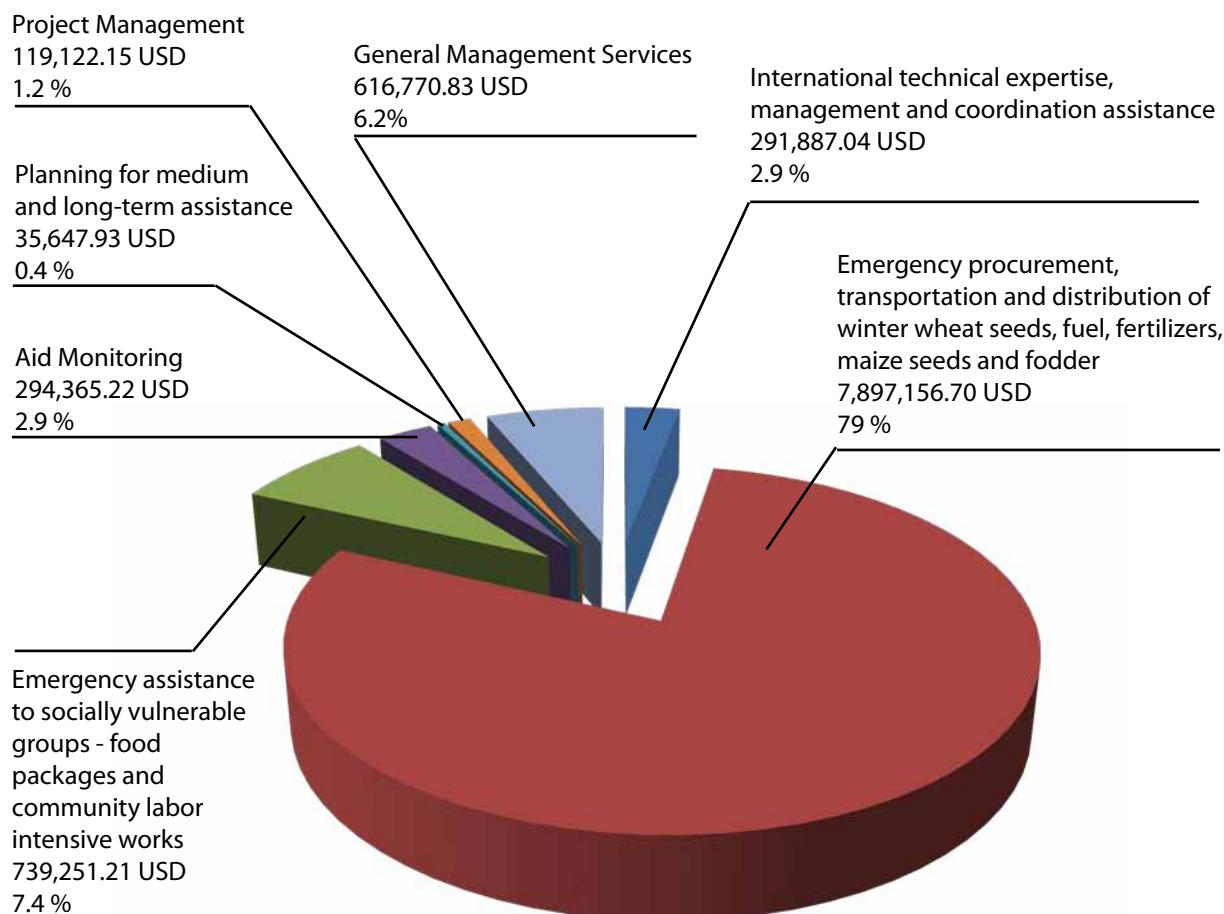
The donors' community's active involvement and significant contribution determined the success and impact of the activities carried out by the Government of the Republic of Moldova as response to the

consequences of the drought from summer 2007. In May 2008, the total budget of the "Relief and Technical Assistance Response to Drought in Moldova" UN Project was estimated to account for 9,994,196 USD.

Donors' Contribution within UN Project "Relief and Technical Assistance Response to the Drought in Moldova"

European Commission through its Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO)	5,436,50 USD
Swedish International Development Agency (Sida)	1,569,849 USD
Government of Netherlands	1,234,549 USD
Government of Norway	546,448 USD
Austrian Development Agency (ADA)	144,092.22 USD
Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	315,456.41 USD
Government of Italy	280,000 USD
Government of Finland	100,000 USD
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	366,852 USD

Main Areas of Donors' Assistance



“The entire international community plays a vital role in supporting countries like Moldova so that they don’t lose years of development progress through an act of nature.

Through quick and decisive action, we worked together not only to save lives, but also to secure their future.”

Kemal Dervis

Chairman of the United Nations Development Group



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