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ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
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**"DZUD" DISASTER
IN MONGOLIA**

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I. WHAT'S "DZUD" AND ITS REASONS.

Heavy snowfalls affected most of the part of Mongolia during winter season of 1999/2000. Snowfalls started earlier than usual, were heavy and repeated, and air temperature dropped to abnormally low levels such as - 46 Degrees Celsius. Along with the heavy snowfalls, summer season was dominated by droughts in 1999 which had greatly contributed to the scale and severity of the current disastrous situation or "Dzud" as the Mongolians refer this disaster.

In Mongolian language the term "Dzud" describes a natural disaster that occurs in winter and spring season and represents risks to human /local livestock herders/ and livestock /domesticated animal/ population. Dzud is a complex phenomena that is mainly caused by natural elements which reduce access to grazing, thus negatively impacting the food security of livestock and human populations. Dzud can be referred only to Mongolia due to its agriculture biased economy and sharp continental climatic Conditions.

Because of last year's drought, livestock were unable to build up necessary strength and take up calories to enable them to cope with the harsh climatic conditions. On one hand, local herders were unable to prepare descent amount of forage, hay and other types of nutrition for their livestock, on the other hand they were not snowfall aware and failed to get needed supplies in advance.

This kind of "Dzud" has not affected Mongolia during the last 30 years. According to damage related data as of 28 of April 2000, the number of dead livestock has now almost reached 2,6 million heads of livestock excluding losses of newborn animals. 80% of the livestock deaths are concentrated in 6 severely affected provinces. The extend of the problems varies from village to village within abovementioned provinces, in some areas, more than 30% of the livestock registered in December 1999 were recorded as dead by mid-March. This number is increasing during this spring period, which has always been the most difficult month⁵ for the livestock. The number of the families that has lost their total livestock has reached 1243 families and this figure is expected to increase further /Detailed livestock loss estimations are provided in the [Attachment A](#).

The main reasons of this year's "Dzud" are as follows:

- Drought in summer of 1999
- Deterioration and lack of pasture land
- Low level of "Dzud" awareness among local herders

Presently 13 provinces are now recorded as affected by "Dzud" The total population of those 13 provinces is 1,1 million people, that is 45% of the total population of Mongolia. Most of the families in these provinces have exhausted food and cash and have no more assets with the death of livestock to meet their basic needs. It is expected that current levels of malnutrition will be exacerbated very rapidly and that rates of morbidity and mortality among vulnerable groups is begin to increase. According to the surveys on medical service in affected provinces, local herders are not able to access urgent medical services and essential medical resources due to absence of any ambulance cars in 34 villages, and doctors or physicians in 19 villages. The rate of maternal and infant mortality is comparatively high in the affected provinces.

II. STATE STANDING EMERGENCY COMMISSION /GOVERNMENT/ RESPONSE

The State Standing Emergency Commission /SSEC/ is coordinating the overall emergency response efforts in the country. The Commission has been taking concrete measures to ensure immediate delivery of essential food and hay, oversee delivery of relief goods, and to promote rehabilitation activities.

Along with this the SSEC receives and analyzes "Dzud" related data and information on the relief activities. Provides the authority of Mongolia, members of the SSEC and relevant ministries with up-to-date and correct information on the emergency needs and response.

The SSEC has recently decided to allocate 54.6 million tugriks for financing a project on production of medicine and nutrition for livestock in order to support livestock population of the affected provinces.

Taking into consideration overall deterioration of health conditions of the looker herders in the affected provinces, the State Standing Emergency Commission and Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has completed needs assessment on medical service and essential medical resources of the "Dzud" stricken provinces. Currently the SSEC and the Ministry are taking joint measures to improve health system in these provinces through providing medicine assistance worth 440 000 tugriks to Zabhan and Khubsugul provinces, dispatching medical group in 4 villages of Uburkhangai province and distributing medicine of 2.1 million tugriks. Out of total 34 villages having no ambulance vehicles 8 villages are expected to receive medically equipped jeeps through a project, jointly implemented by the SSEC jointly with UNICEF.

The Government of Mongolia has decided to dedicate cash assistance extended from donor countries, international organisations, governmental and non-governmental organisations and individuals for restocking the 1243 families that have lost their total livestock.

III. INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In response to the Government's request for international relief assistance, the international organisations have immediately responded to Mongolia's appeal and presently, international assistance is playing a vital role in alleviating the consequences of "Dzud" disaster. Up to now, the UNDP provided 30,000\$, WHO 5,000\$, UNICEF 5,000\$ and UNFPA 5,000\$ respectively. OCHA has made available an emergency cash grant of 90,000\$ which includes contributions of 30,000\$ each from the Government of the United Kingdom and Norway.

The International Federation of the Red Cross released 60,976\$ from its Disaster relief Emergency Fund for the procurement of relief supplies. The IFRC has engaged a logistic expert to come to Mongolia for 3 months during the relief operations. The Government of USA provided 136,000\$ for wheat and 25,000\$ to the Mongolian Red Cross Society in March. The British and Norwegian Governments further provided the IFRC with 50,000\$ and 55,000\$ respectively. The Embassy of Japan in Mongolia allocated 91,000\$, Government of Vietnam 10,000\$, Government of Israel 5,000\$ and the Government of South Korea donated 20,000\$.

Other important donations include: Canada Fund-10,000\$, World Vision Mongolia-40,000\$, Adventist Development Relief Agency in Mongolia /ADRA/ - 90,000\$ Harrods group/UK/ -15,000\$, Save the children fund /UK/-40,000\$. More details on donations are given in the [Attachment B](#).

- [Attachment A](#)
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