My heart is heavy, and the hearts of our ADRA staff members in Mali are heavy. Here's why...

A number of villages had been approved for ADRA's assistance in either refurbishing existing wells or creating new ones. Before any work could be done, the rainy season came. Months later, when things were drying up, our team returned to the village of Nossombougou. This village had a 40-year-old ground well with no covering or walls around it. The small opening was less than 2 feet wide, and the well was almost 50 feet deep.

The week before ADRA arrived to begin work on a new secure well, a small 9-year-old girl, while performing her daily chore of fetching water for her family, slipped and fell into the well. There was no one near to hear her cries or save her. As her mother, Konto, mourns the sudden loss of her child, our staff mourns that we were not able to provide the new well in time to save the life of this young girl.

"Our old well was far away, and my daughter and I took turns making the trip throughout the day for water," says Konto, with tears running down her cheeks. "She
has been doing this by herself for years. Perhaps the ground was too slippery or something distracted her. I will never know. Now I have lost three of my six children. While I am grieving, still I am thankful that ADRA will be giving our village a new well. Now no other mother will have to feel this pain."

**Will you give today to enable us to help more families?**

The country of Mali is full of old wells still in use that long ago would have been deemed unsafe in other parts of the world. Many are holes in the ground that have no marking, rims, or coverings. When the rains come, the filth and waste simply run into the open well with the flowing rainwater on the ground. The water is contaminated, and the edge of the well becomes even more dangerous. Children are the first to get sick and die from water-related diseases. In fact, dirty water kills nearly 5,000 children each day.

In eastern Mali, we are building earthen water reservoirs. Finding natural depressions in the land near a village, we mobilize the villagers to dig the area deeper and wider and create hard, earth-packed walls that do not crumble into the water when the reservoir is full. During the rainy season, these large areas, often 3 feet deep and 100 to 200 feet long and across, fill with water and then hold the water.

As the ground dries up where field crops and kitchen gardens are planted, these water reservoirs provide villagers with water to use on their crops to keep them growing. When the reservoir itself becomes dry, the bottom soil, which is still damp from holding water for so long, is planted as well. This simple act extends the growing season in an area that is known for having four hungry months each year.

**Through your partnership with ADRA, you are making the world a safer**
place for the young girls and women of all ages who must search for water each day. You are bringing new water systems that ensure that families have food to eat. Will you invest with us in children, women, and men throughout the world?