

MADAGASCAR: POST-FLOOD FOOD SECURITY AND CHOLERA PREVENTION

appeal no: 13/98

3 April 1998

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 258,000
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 20,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 3 MONTHS***

Summary

Torrential rain caused severe flooding in north-eastern and south-central Madagascar during February, destroying irrigation systems and rice crops. Houses and roads were damaged, causing thousands of people to seek refuge in public buildings.

The rice harvest has been lost and flood victims are relying on dwindling stocks of staple foodstuffs, and on selling their livestock to meet basic needs. Some 20,000 people in five provincial centres will not have enough food to tide them over till the next harvest, expected at the end of June. Additionally, the flooding has created ideal conditions for the spread of waterborne diseases.

On behalf of the National Society, the International Federation is seeking CHF 258,000 to assist 20,000 people in the most seriously affected districts of Antananarivo, Majunga, Tamatave, Tulear and Fianarantsoa. This operation sets out to assist flood victims with food and agricultural commodities until the June harvest and also to prepare the Malagasy population for an outbreak of cholera through a Malagasy Red Cross health education programme.

The Disaster

February's heavy rains brought flooding to many of Madagascar's low-lying regions, with Antananarivo, Majunga, Fianarantsoa, Tamatave and Tulear worst hit. These wetland, coastal or riverine districts are populated by rice-growers who produce the bulk of the country's staple food.

When the disaster struck the poorest families were unable to purchase fencing or sand bags to protect their paddies. In many areas, 100% of the crop was lost. In Vohipeno, Fianarantsoa district, the water level rose so quickly and to such an extent that residents had to move to a nearby hill while the village was completely submerged. One person died during the evacuation.

Although the rain has stopped and level of water has subsided, standing water has created ideal conditions for outbreaks of malaria, cholera and respiratory tract infections. Cholera has never been recorded in Madagascar, but the nearby Comoros islands are currently enduring an outbreak. Regular travel between

the Comoros and Madagascar could promote the spread of the disease to Madagascar's coastal areas, necessitating a preparedness programme.

Finally, record numbers of locusts — up to ten times as many as last year — are affecting the southern part of Madagascar. There is great concern that the locusts, which probably originated in Mozambique, could engulf the entire country.

The Response so far

Government Action •

In the immediate aftermath of the flood district officers helped to resettle displaced residents in temporary shelters. Some localised spraying was done to combat the initial locust infestation, but no significant decrease in the insect population has resulted.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action in the Emergency Phase •

MRCS immediately notified the Federation's Regional Delegation for Eastern Africa in Nairobi, requesting an assessment. The Regional Relief Health Delegate conducted joint field trips with MRCS and the National Health Commission and drew up an immediate plan of action. At the same time, MRCS branch co-ordinators drew up lists of beneficiaries, prioritising those who had lost their crops.

Using limited emergency preparedness stocks the National Society distributed clothes, rice, sugar, and candles in Antananarivo, Tamatave and Fianarantsoa districts. Two outpatient clinics were established in Vohipeno village, staffed by medical students and MRCS volunteers.

Other Agencies' Action •

WFP is monitoring the locust infestation in the south.

The Needs to be Met

The following specific results of the flood have been noted, by district:

In **Antananarivo** slums and the nearby village of Ambato Boeni more than 7,000 people are affected and completely dependent on food distributed by MRCS. The majority of these victims are living in public buildings.

In **Fianarantsoa**, all paved roads have been swept away and several villages are completely cut off. The 11,000 residents of Vohipeno village lost almost all their rice crop, 25% of their livestock and 2,500 houses.

In **Tulear**, 210 people were displaced and the rice crop totally destroyed.

In **Tamatave**, 380 houses were destroyed and all household possessions lost. Over 2,500 people are affected.

In **Majunga** district, the village of Marovay lost its rice crop and 2,300 people are receiving Red Cross assistance.

Red Cross/Crescent Objectives

- { To provide basic food to improve the nutritional status of the vulnerable up to the next rice harvest;
- { to provide rice seed to vulnerable families to promote self-reliance;

- { to provide the National Society with tents to shelter the remaining displaced until they are able to repair damages to their homes. These tents would become a permanent asset of the MRCS, to be utilised in subsequent operations;
- { to improve the disaster response capacity of the National Society;
- { to train Red Cross volunteers in appropriate response mechanisms to a potential cholera outbreak. This disease has never been observed in Madagascar, thus awareness and preparedness of local communities is virtually non-existent.

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

April - June 1998

Distributions will be conducted throughout the five affected districts. The 20,000 families in most critical need will receive 3.5 kg of rice and 1.4 kg of beans in April. These same beneficiaries will receive rice seeds to ensure a successful harvest in July.

Training in cholera prevention and containment will be carried out in Antananarivo, Majunga and Tamatave districts over the three month period, enabling medical assistance to be provided in the event of an outbreak. A health education campaign aimed at children will also be undertaken, using songs, drama and posters. This idea was successfully piloted in the recent post-flood operations in Kenya.

In collaboration with WFP, the Federation and MRCS will monitor the locust situation in the south and will make contingency plans in the event of a nation-wide infestation.

Capacity of the National Society •

There are well-qualified volunteers in each of the local branches who are already using limited resources to respond to victims' needs. The programme following Cyclone Gretelle, which lashed Madagascar in 1997, has greatly contributed to the operational capacity of the Society. HF and VHF radio networks are in place and functioning in major provincial centres. Through this network, information on relief distributions and locust movement will be collected and disseminated.

Present Capacity of the Federation in the Region •

The International Federation will provide on-going logistical and operational support through its Regional Delegation in Nairobi. Regional Relief Health and Water/Sanitation delegates will establish the cholera training programme and be on call for deployment in the event of an outbreak. Technical input on appropriate distribution mechanisms, beneficiary targeting, monitoring and evaluation will be provided by the Regional Relief Delegate. A Federation vehicle, already on the island, will be repaired and used in the operation.

Evaluation •

Joint monitoring and evaluation will be conducted by MRCS/Federation. The evaluation will assist MRCS to reach a clearer view of their response capacity and future preparedness.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details. For more information, donors are invited to call Josse Gillijns, Desk Officer on ++ 4122 7304224. Email: gillijns@ifrc.org

Conclusion

This three-month operation intends to re-establish self-sufficiency in five affected districts by filling the food and agriculture gap caused by the floods. Prevention of cholera through training of local communities will have a long-term benefit.

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Under Secretary General,
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

George Weber
Secretary General

BUDGET SUMMARYAPPEAL No. 13/98
IN CHF

ANNEX 1

NEEDS IN CASH

Supplies

Rice (70 MT)	42,000
Beans (28 MT)	27,000
Rice seeds (29MT)	19,000
Medical supplies	15,000
Tents	30,000
Distribution equipment	4,000
Health education material	15,000

Transport, storage & vehicle costs

Car maintenance and fuel	9,000
Local transport	20,000
International transport	9,000

Personnel (1 delegate / 3 months) 30,000

Personnel (local staff) 11,000

Travel & communications 6,000

Information 4,000

Administrative, office & general expenses 5,000

Secretariat operational support 12,000

TOTAL APPEAL CASH**258,000**

LESS CASH ON HAND

0.00**NET REQUEST CASH****258,000**