

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA: HURRICANE JOSE

**appeal no: 31/99
3 November 1999**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 363,000
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 2,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR TWO
MONTHS***

Summary

José, a category 2 hurricane, moved over the Northern Leeward Islands on 19 - 21 October with intense winds of 160 km, causing widespread wind and flood damage in Antigua and Barbuda. The impact in St. Kitts and Nevis, was less severe as the winds passed to the north of these islands.

Antigua and Barbuda was affected by Hurricane Jose at approximately 16:00 hrs on October 20 with intense rainfall, strong winds, and battering waves, causing flooding of the major roads. Initial assessments indicate 2,000 persons were severely affected and evacuated their homes, 516 of whom were housed in emergency shelters. The remainder of those affected found accommodation with relatives and friends.

In St. Kitts and Nevis, flooding was the principal hazard as several main roads were washed out and rain induced landslides occurred across the island. In Montserrat, the Red Cross volunteers spent the night in shelters with the evacuees.

The Disaster

Prior to the hurricane reaching the islands, the government of Antigua and Barbuda issued a hurricane warning, the National Society started preparing its volunteers and staff to help with the evacuation of persons living in high risk areas. The twin island state was badly hit by hurricane winds with several villages feeling the full impact. Three of these (Crab's Hill, Five Islands and Cobbs Cross) were declared "disaster areas" by the government.

After the storm passed the island, the Red Cross workers conducted needs and damage assessments in the most affected areas. In the village of Crab's Hill, 64 of the 81 houses were seriously damaged or destroyed.

Across the island the storm left one person dead, 18 hospitalised and over 500 homeless. 815 houses suffered roof loss ranging from partially damaged to completely destroyed. The telephone and electricity service was also disrupted, with approximately 50% of the telephones out of service and 90% of the islands without electricity.

The Response so far

Government Action w

On October 19 National Government issued a hurricane warning and allowed workers to go home. After the storm, the government arranged teams to clear all the major roads as well as to co-ordinate all national response agencies. The National Disaster Office distributed some tarpaulin and water bottles to persons living in shelters.

After the damage assessment made on October 24 the government of Antigua and Barbuda declared three villages as Disaster Areas: Crab's Hill, Five Islands and Cobbs Cross.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w

Immediately after Hurricane Jose passed the island, Red Cross volunteers started distributing tarpaulins and food supplies to those in need. Currently, 35 Red Cross volunteers are conducting relief distribution and damage assessment. To date the National Society has distributed 1,450 tarpaulins, 150 blankets, 210 food packets, and 25 hurricane lamps to shelters.

Co-ordination w

The Government National Office of Disaster Services is co-ordinating the national relief response. Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross activities will be co-ordinated by the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator working from the National Society Headquarters. Additional support is being provided by the Santo Domingo Regional Delegation, which is liaising with the American Red Cross.

The Intended Operation

Assessment of Needs •

The preliminary damage and needs assessment carried out by the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross Society and the Government confirmed earlier damage estimates. The greatest needs are for zinc sheeting, plywood, and food supplies for the 2,000 persons who had to evacuate their homes.

Red Cross Objectives •

- { To work with the St. Vincent de Paul society to implement a one month feeding program for 2,000 persons in the impacted areas.
- { To assist 50 low income families to repair damaged roofs.

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

The International Federation will continue to support the Antigua and Barbuda Red Cross Society in responding to the needs of the affected population. The National Society has established an Emergency Operation Centre at its headquarters in St. Johns from where it is distributing relief supplies.

The Society will continue its relief activities for one month working in the villages of Crab's Hill, Five Islands, and Cobbs Cross. Food and building materials will be purchased locally, prepared in villages by volunteers and distributed to shelters using Red Cross vehicles.

Under the agreement with the St. Vincent de Paul branch, the National Society will provide basic meat supplies while the St. Vincent de Paul will provide rice and beans to the 2,000 beneficiaries.

Capacity of the National Society •

Based on past experience, the National Society has both the manpower and expertise to conduct this operation, with the involvement and support of thirty five volunteers.

Present Capacity of the Federation in the Caribbean region •

Working through the Regional Delegation in Santo Domingo, the Federation is capable of providing long term support to the National Society in the form of temporary delegates from the region and the Regional Delegation. Volunteers and staff trained under the regional disaster preparedness programme are able to provide support in emergency operations management, damage and needs assessment, logistics, relief distribution, and other associated areas. Regionally, over twenty persons from twelve National Societies have been trained in these areas, and many have offered their services.

Evaluation •

Monitoring visits will be conducted by the Regional Delegation to ensure that programmed activities are proceeding according to plan.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

While damage to utilities was quickly repaired Hurricane Jose inflicted severe damage in only three village in Antigua and Barbuda, (Crab's Hill, Five Island and Cobbs Cross).

The National Society quickly responded to needs with the distribution of relief items. Donors are asked to respond rapidly with cash contributions to enable the National Society to continue its feeding programme, and to assist the 50 low income families in carrying out repairs to their homes.

Margareta Wahlström
Under Secretary General,
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

George Weber
Secretary General