

VIETNAM: FLOODS AND STORM

Appeal no:23/2000
13 September 2000

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 388,764
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 60,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 3 MONTHS***

Summary

On Sunday, 10 September, Tropical Storm “Wukong” wreaked havoc in the province of Ha Tinh, in northern/central Vietnam. Meanwhile, in the Mekong Delta, in the far southern corner of the country, already flooded communities are bracing themselves for the impact of flood waters streaming along the Mekong from Laos and Cambodia. The Red Cross of Vietnam, with the support of the Federation, aims to assist those worst-affected by the flood and storm damage through provision of relief supplies and construction material to rebuild homes.

The Disaster

Tropical Storm “Wukong” hit the north/central Province of Ha Tinh around midday on Sunday, 10 September with winds gusting to gale force twelve, an accompanying storm surge and devastating whirlwinds. The storm passed quickly, leaving behind a trail of destruction - with three people dead, several still unaccounted for, 29 seriously injured, 1,490 houses leveled, 19,533 with their roofs blown off, hundreds of classrooms either demolished or severely damaged, and 16,000 hectares of rice paddy inundated with salt water, destroying the harvest which was due in a matter of weeks. Ten districts were hit, three particularly badly. The storm knocked out power lines, and power had still to be reconnected by the evening of 11 September, even in the provincial capital of Ha Tinh.

Meanwhile, in the southern provinces of An Giang, Dong Thap and Long An, three thousand families who had previously been evacuated to dykes when their lower lying homes were flooded over six weeks ago, are bracing themselves for a renewed threat of higher flood levels. They are menaced by the head of water approaching from the worst floods in forty years, currently affecting the Mekong catchment provinces in Cambodia. The affected families have already lost their rice harvest, and the damage to their homes can only be assessed once the flood waters recede. Families are in urgent need of supplies

of fresh water, fuel for cooking, shelter material and medicines. An estimated 30,000 children have been unable to begin the school year, which was due to start at the beginning of this month. Should renewed flooding occur in the coming days, these families will be particularly vulnerable as the earthen dykes upon which they are currently housed risk collapse when they become saturated by the rising flood waters. They are also likely to be joined by many thousands of others as the protective dykes which have withstood the floods so far are likely to collapse with a further surge of flood waters.

The Response so far

Government Action

Thanks to the advance warning from the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC), the provinces of the northern and central coast of Vietnam were prepared for the tropical storm. Ships, including the numerous small fishing boats which operate along the coast, had been recalled to safe harbours, thanks to the long range storm tracking by the UNDP sponsored Disaster Management Unit (DMU) within the CCFSC. The DMU website and intranet service provided up to date reports, satellite photographs and storm tracking (the site can be found on www.undp.org.vn/dmu). Local community warning systems, including the branches of the VNRC, spread the word to the most remote areas, thus farmers were able to save their livestock, and householders were able to protect as much of their property as possible.

It is expected that the government will prioritise the reinstatement of power, transport and vital infrastructure, and the Red Cross will be requested to provide assistance in humanitarian response.

In the southern provinces, despite the 1978 record flood levels having been broken, major damage to life and property has been averted. A number of factors helped in this - some of the rice crop has been saved by early harvesting, thousands of military personnel were deployed to assist with this harvest, and to shore up dykes. Even more significant is the recent development in infrastructure in this region of Vietnam, which has assisted greatly in mitigating the worst effects of the floods.

Government action has been swift and effective in support of the families displaced by the floods - extending help to transport those families to safer ground and assisting with harvesting.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Vietnam Red Cross (VNRC) was well prepared for the disaster in the province of Ha Tinh. Its extensive network of volunteers and community groups working along the coastline in activities such as the Mangrove afforestation programme were quick to act in warning and preparation for the disaster. The mangrove programme, supported by the Japanese Red Cross, itself a disaster mitigation initiative, has also proven its worth - where it has been implemented, sea dykes have withstood the surges more effectively than those areas where none were planted and in many unprotected areas, sea dykes collapsed leading to worse damage.

VNRC responded through the release of USD30,000 for assistance for Ha Tinh, and smaller amounts were made available for Nghe An and Quang Binh provinces which were less affected by "Wukong".

An assessment team composed of representatives of the VNRC provincial chapter and the Federation Delegation, has visited two of the three worst affected districts to verify damage reports and to assess needs. The Assistant Secretary General of VNRC joined the team on 12 September, together with staff from the Disaster Preparedness and Relief Department of VNRC Headquarters.

A distribution of plastic sheeting and emergency food supplies will take place in the coming days. Further relief assistance will then follow in a more systematic way when a complete beneficiary list has been produced.

The VNRC “Second Office” in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), led by the VNRC Vice President, has been active throughout the period of the floods in the past weeks. Initial assessments, carried out with the Federation’s HCMC office, highlighted the need for emergency shelter material, emergency food and also rescue equipment. This material has been procured from locally raised funds and distributed to the affected provinces.

Local fund raising has also been initiated by the VNRC through its network of local chapters - with the northern chapters asked to support the Ha Tinh, and the southern chapters asked to support the Mekong Delta provinces.

Co-ordination w

The UN Disaster Management Team (UNDP, WFP, UNICEF, FAO, WHO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNFPA, UNDCP and the Federation) will convene in the coming days to ensure co-ordination of efforts in response to these disasters.

The Intended Operation

Assessment of Needs •

Joint VNRC/Federation teams working in the two disaster zones have visited the most affected districts and verified the damage assessments carried out by local Red Cross chapters and the government.

On the basis of this assessment, three broad categories of beneficiaries have been determined:

- those people whose homes have been destroyed;
- those people whose homes have suffered damage and who have lost food reserves and/or household items;
- those people who have no food reserves.

A more detailed assessment will take place in the coming days in the Mekong Delta to assess the situation as it unfolds. It is expected that the water levels will peak at this time, enabling the team to make a more accurate prediction of the needs.

The Federation team in Vietnam is in constant communication with colleagues in Laos and Cambodia, and is coordinating with the Federation’s Regional Delegation in Bangkok, to ensure a balanced approach within the region, and to share knowledge of water flows and disaster levels.

Immediate Needs •

- { The provision of emergency shelter materials in both Ha Tinh (1,000) and the Mekong Delta (3,000).
- { Provision of emergency food relief to 5,000 households in Ha Tinh, and 3,000 families in the Mekong Delta.
- { The provision of non-food relief (2 blankets, 1 mosquito net, and 1 cooking set per household) to 1,000 families in Ha Tinh. 3,000 mosquito nets will be provided to families in the Mekong Delta. No other household items are required for the displaced families in the Mekong Delta. However, should the floods affect more families, the situation may change.
- { The provision of construction materials to re-build houses for 200 of the most needy families who lack resources in the province of Ha Tinh.

Anticipated Later Needs •

Later needs will focus on continued food supply, primarily of rice, and the provision of household items, as well as housing construction materials. Re-stocking of relief supplies will also be necessary.

Red Cross Objectives •

- { To provide emergency relief assistance (shelter, food and household items) to 60,000 people in the Ha Tinh Province and the Mekong Delta.
- { To provide construction materials to 200 families to enable them to rebuild their homes.
- { To continue to monitor the flood levels in the Mekong Delta.

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

Emergency Phase: *September 2000* •

- { The emergency phase to meet the immediate needs will be carried out during the month of September, with the provision of shelter materials, emergency food relief, non-food relief and construction materials.

Phase Two: *September - October 2000* •

- { The second phase aims to provide household items and food assistance, in accordance with the results of the detailed assessment and will be finalised by the end of October.

Capacity of the National Society •

The VNRC has its headquarters in Hanoi and a second office in Ho Chi Minh. It is well-represented in almost every commune in the affected provinces, with branch offices in communities, representation on government committees, and an extensive network of volunteers. The National Society has gained considerable experience from previous disaster operations (eg Typhoon Linda in 1997, drought and floods in 1998 and the historic floods of 1999). While it has significantly strengthened its NHQ disaster management team, it does, however, require technical assistance in financial and narrative reporting.

Present Capacity of the Federation in Vietnam •

The International Federation has a country delegation based in Hanoi, supported by offices in Ho Chi Minh City, Hue and Danang. The Hanoi delegation staff includes a Head of Delegation, disaster preparedness, finance and social services delegates, and a full team of Vietnamese staff. The country delegation is supported by the regional delegation in Bangkok.

Evaluation •

Monitoring of the operation will be carried out by the VNRC and the Federation, and standard Federation reporting will be provided.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Tropical Storm “Wukong” has left a trail of destruction in the province of Ha Tinh and three thousand families in the southern provinces who had been obliged to evacuate their homes because of flooding, are threatened by surges of flood water cursing along the Mekong delta. The Red Cross of Vietnam and the Federation aims to come to the aid of those who are least able to cope, and by means of a thorough beneficiary survey, will determine those most in need of assistance with food, household items and materials to reconstruct homes.

Jean Ayoub
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Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

Didier J. Cherpitel
Secretary General

This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>

		ANNEX 1
<u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u>	Appeal no. 23/2000	
TYPE	VALUE	
RELIEF NEEDS	IN CHF	
<u>Shelter & constructions</u>		
Plastic sheeting	20,000	
<u>Clothing & textiles</u>		
Mosquito nets	9,000	
<u>Food & seeds</u>		
Rice	127,000	
<u>Utensils & tools</u>		
Household kits	17,000	
Construction kits	108,000	
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS		281,000
<u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u>		
Transport, storage & vehicle costs	12,000	
Office/ communication equipment	5,000	
Training	5,000	
Monitoring and Evaluation	5,000	
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>		
Programme management (automatic calculation)	26,214	
Technical support (automatic calculation)	7,847	
Professional services (automatic calculation)	8,702	
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS</u>		
<u>PERSONNEL</u>		
Expatriate staff	15,000	
National staff	6,000	
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES</u>		
Travel & related expenses	5,000	
Information expenses	2,000	
Administrative & general expenses	10,000	
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS		107,764
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES		388,764
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)		
NET REQUEST		388,764