



VIETNAM: FLOODS AND STORM

**Revised Appeal no:
23/2000
18 September 2000**

***THIS REVISED APPEAL SEEKS CHF 2,584,180
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 125,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 3 MONTHS***

Summary

Since the launch of the Appeal for the floods and storm in Vietnam on 13 September, an assessment team of the Red Cross of Vietnam (VNRC) and the International Federation has worked in the three worst affected provinces of the Mekong Delta, and reports a much deteriorated situation for the families affected by the floods. Since the team's return from the field, water levels are only 20 cm away from the 1961 peak, and rising at a rate of 5 to 10 cm per day. In addition, the damage caused by tropical storm "Wukong" which wreaked havoc in the province of Ha Tinh, in northern/central Vietnam has been assessed by a second VNRC/Federation team. 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 immediate and medium term relief supplies and material to enable them to cope over the coming months. In view of the scale of the needs, the revised appeal seeks to assist an additional 65,000 beneficiaries.

The Disaster

Mekong Floods

Since early July, the waters of the Mekong Delta have been rising steadily, and as of 15 September, flooding had killed 13 people and forced 25,000 families (estimated at 145,000 people) to flee their homes and take refuge on dykes. Most of the families on the dykes are landless people who have lost what little reserves they had and who have been without income for several months. The floods have also

extensively damaged the rice crop which was due to be harvested in August/September - 321,710 hectares of paddy has been inundated, 23,819 hectares completely destroyed, and much of the rice crop on remaining land will be unfit for human consumption. By the morning of 17 September, the national roads in the provinces and the streets and market places in the provincial capitals were flooded for the first time for many years.

The scale of the flooding is vast - as far as the eye can see in the worst affected districts of the Delta provinces of An Giang, Dong Thap and Long An, flood waters have transformed rice paddies, low lying roads and rural communities into desolate lakes, punctuated from time to time with a stilted house whose occupants live in the remaining centimetres of dry space, the odd treetop, a roof or a flooded school or pagoda. An estimated 120,000 homes have been severely flooded in the three provinces, and as the water levels continue to rise upstream in the Mekong in Cambodia, the potential numbers of those affected by the flood waters in these provinces could reach as many as 600,000 people.

Hundreds of families are cramped together on the only high ground in sight - namely earthen dykes and rural roads. These communities put together makeshift shelters with materials salvaged from flooded homes. They are exposed to the searing heat of the Mekong sun and are drenched in the late afternoon thunder storms. They are often unable to cook their dwindling stocks of food due to a shortage of cooking fuel and face the dangers associated with a high concentration of people in a small area who are obliged to use untreated flood waters for all their daily needs.

Furthermore, many of the dykes are saturated by the rising flood waters and are in danger of collapsing. Alternative high ground where families can take refuge may be as close as 2 km, or as far as 20 km, depending on the province. Thousands of primary school children have not been able to go to school since the beginning of the floods as transport is too dangerous, many schools are damaged and others have been closed by the local authorities.

The flood disaster which is gradually increasing in intensity, is a result of early, heavy monsoon rains which have fallen in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Significant flooding has also occurred in Laos and Cambodia to which the Red Cross is responding. Moreover, as river levels continue to rise in Cambodia, the evidence points to a continuation of the daily rise in the flood waters in these Vietnamese provinces of between 5 and 10 cm per day. Flood levels are already in excess of those recorded during the most recent disastrous floods of 1996, and the prospect of reaching the historic flood levels experienced in 1961, looms closer each day. For complete reports on water levels, please refer to www.undp.org.vn/dmu, the English language website of the Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control.

Given the experience gained over the years as regards flooding in Vietnam, the following conclusions may be reached:

- peak flooding normally occurs during the first week of October - therefore waters may continue to rise over several more weeks;
- in the past, water levels have receded slowly, so those taking refuge on the dykes today, face the prospect of not being able to return to their homes until mid November at the earliest;
- despite the development of infrastructure and private homes, should waters rise significantly, more families who are as yet able to remain in their homes, will probably be obliged to evacuate.

Ha Tinh Storm Damage

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. Ten districts were hit, with the districts of Thach Ha, Cam Xuyen and Ky Anh worst affected. Two people were killed and 13 injured, 75,000 hectares of rice crops destroyed. In addition, 810 houses were demolished and 4,000

others lost their roofs. The storm also damaged roads, electricity transmission lines in Ky Anh district and the sea dyke system in Thach Ha and Cam Xuyen districts.

The Response so far

Government Action w

Mekong Delta

In the southern provinces, major damage to life and property has been averted. A number of factors are responsible for this: some of the rice crop was saved by early harvesting, thousands of military personnel were deployed to assist with the harvest and to shore up dykes. The recent initiatives taken by the government of Vietnam to develop infrastructure and to provide loans to households to raise the foundations of their private homes, have been particularly significant and have mitigated the effects of the floods. Local government action has been swift and effective in support of displaced families who have been assisted with transport to safer ground and provision of initial food and health support.

More recently, the central government supplemented its previous contribution of USD 1.2 million with a further USD 2 million divided among the three worst affected provinces, following an assessment visit by the Deputy Prime Minister to the region. The Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control (CCFSC) compiles daily updates from the provinces and coordinates the monitoring of flood levels and the response of government departments to the crisis.

Ha Tinh

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.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w

The VNRC "Second Office" in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), led by the VNRC Vice President, has carried out initial assessments, together with the Federation's HCMC office. These have highlighted the need for emergency shelter material, emergency food and rescue equipment which was speedily procured and distributed to the affected provinces. Relief goods consisted of the following: 2,000 plastic sheets 8 m x 4m; 2,000 mosquito nets, 4,000 pieces of soap, 250 life jackets, 250 life belts for Red Cross workers; 40 Mt of rice.

A second assessment of the flood situation in the provinces of An Giang, Dong Thap and Long An was carried out by a joint VNRC/ Federation team between 11 and 14 September. Working with the provincial and district Red Cross branches, the team visited the worst affected communities, assisted with distributions of relief to families on the dykes and carried out an assessment of needs. VNRC has strong teams of personnel in the three affected provinces, and works in close coordination with the People's Committees of each province.

The Red Cross of Vietnam 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, and 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.

The Federation responded with an initial DREF grant of USD 30,000 to cover the initial needs in Ha Tinh. Smaller amounts were made available for Nghe An and Quang Binh provinces which were less affected by “Wukong”.

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

A VNRC/Federation donor information meeting was held in Hanoi on 15 September to share the results of the needs assessment. Embassies, UN agencies and locally based INGOs were represented. Text follows immediately underneath a Sub-Head.

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 the disasters.

UNICEF has responded with an initial pledge of USD 30,000 for emergency procurement. At the request of the Federation, an assessment of the water and sanitation situation will be carried out in the coming days. World Vision has carried out an assessment mission to An Giang and will coordinate closely with Red Cross efforts.

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. Urgent and medium term needs are as follows:

Immediate Needs •

Mekong Delta

- Families on dykes which are in a dangerous condition, or those remaining in their homes, may need immediate evacuation. It may therefore be necessary to hire boats, provide life buoys and other rescue materials.
- Families will also need emergency food supplies: instant noodles are most appropriate.

Other needs comprise:

- emergency shelter materials for 5,000 households on the dykes.
- food relief for 25,000 households (two months supply).
- mosquito nets for 25,000 families.
- soap for 25,000 families.

To date, waterborne diseases have not posed a problem, however, health needs will be reviewed once the assessment by UNICEF has been completed.

Ha Tinh

- food for 5,000 families (for two months).

- non-food relief (2 blankets, 1 mosquito net, and 1 cooking set per household) for 1,000 families whose goods were destroyed in the storm.

Anticipated Later Needs •

Mekong Delta

- local wooden boats and fishing nets to allow families to fish and supplement their food supplies, sell on the market and maintain their dignity.
- disaster preparedness education for the children on the dykes to prevent further loss of life, using the VNRC training material for school children.

Ha Tinh

- The provision of construction materials to re-build houses for 200 of the most needy families who lack resources.

Red Cross Objectives •

Mekong Delta

- To continue to monitor the situation in the flooded areas.
- To provide assistance to families so that they may evacuate flooded dykes or homes as waters rise.
- To provide 1,000 life belts for families in most dangerous sites, emergency food supplies (instant noodles to 1,000 families), shelter materials to 5,000 families, food assistance for two months, mosquito nets and soap to 25,000 families, boats and fishing nets to 2,000 families.
- To continue to monitor the health situation, support the health authorities and coordinate with NGOs and other agencies.

Ha Tinh

- To provide family kits to 1,000 families
- To provide food assistance to 5,000 families for two months
- To provide house frames to 200 households

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

Emergency Phase •

Mekong Delta / Ha Tinh

VNRC provincial chapters will continue to monitor the situation. Boat owners are being contacted and put on standby, should further evacuations be required. Life belts will be distributed to the most dangerous refuge points and distributed among families. Life belts will also be carried on the boats which are used for the movement of families.

Mosquito nets, soap and plastic sheeting will be distributed. In addition, emergency food supplies of instant noodles will be procured and held on stand-by should they be required. Beneficiary selection will be carried out during this phase for other distributions.

Phase Two •

Rice will be procured and distributed to the selected beneficiaries. Fishing boats and nets will also be procured and distributed. Furthermore, the health situation will be monitored continuously.

Ha Tinh

Family kits for 1,000 families will be distributed, together with food assistance for 5,000 families and house frames for 200 of the most vulnerable households.

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: Typhoon Linda in 1997, drought and floods in 1998, floods in 1999. While it has significantly strengthened its NHQ disaster management team, it requires 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 closely 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

The situation in the Mekong Delta is becoming steadily worse. The Red Cross of Vietnam is in a position to respond immediately to the urgent needs and to sustain assistance over the coming months. Meanwhile, in Ha Tinh province, Storm Wukong passed quickly, leaving a trail of devastation. Numerous families are in desperate need of assistance. The national, provincial and district network of the Red Cross of Vietnam, with the support of the Federation, is working to help the most vulnerable in the difficult months to come.

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

<u>BUDGET SUMMARY (revised)</u>		APPEAL No. 23/2000	
Vietnam floods and storms			
	ORIGINAL	REVISED	
TYPE	BUDGET	BUDGET	VARIANCE
RELIEF NEEDS		IN CHF	
Plastic sheeting	20,000	98,560	78,560
Construction kits: 200	108,000	190,080	82,080
Mosquito nets: 27,000	9,000	104,544	95,544
Rice: 2,800 mts	127,000	1,044,736	917,736
Instant noodles		8,800	8,800
Utensils & tools		54,560	54,560
Small boats and nets: 3,000		211,200	211,200
Other relief supplies	17,000	26,400	9,400
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS	281,000	1,738,880	1,457,880
<u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u>			
Large boats: 3		42,240	42,240
Other equipment	5,000	17,600	12,600
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>			
Programme management	26,214	174,251	148,037
Technical support	7,847	52,162	44,315
Professional services	8,702	57,847	49,145
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS</u>	12,000	193,600	181,600
<u>PERSONNEL</u>			
Expatriate staff	15,000	88,000	73,000
National staff	6,000	20,000	14,000
Personnel (support costs)	5,000	18,000	13,000
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES</u>			
Travel & related expenses	5,000	17,000	12,000
Information expenses	2,000	15,000	13,000
Administrative & general expenses	15,000	149,600	134,600
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS	107,764	845,300	737,536
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES	388,764	2,584,180	2,195,416
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)			
NET REQUEST	388,764	2,584,180	2,195,416