

FINAL REPORT



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CENTRAL AMERICA: DROUGHT AND FOOD INSECURITY

5 June 2003

This Final Report is intended for reporting on emergency appeals

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No. 31/01; Launched on: 19 September 2001 for 6 months for 3,507,865 to assist 57,000 beneficiaries. Revised appeal launched on 19 October 2001 for CHF 3,507,865 for 6 months to assist 59,136 beneficiaries. Operation extended on 23 May 2002 until 19 August 2002.

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 100,000

Period covered: 20 September 2001 - 31 October 2002 ; last Operations Update (no. 2) issued 23 May 2002.

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 66.7%

Related Appeals: 01.20/2002 Guatemala; 01.48/2003 Guatemala; 01.21/2002 Honduras; 01.19/2002 Central America; 01.50/2003 Central America

Summary

In 2001, Central America suffered a third consecutive year of acute shortage of rainfall, especially in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Lack of rain since June 2001 resulted in food deficits, as subsistence farmers' crops of maize and beans withered and died. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimated that 1.5 million people were affected by drought, of whom 695,000 faced critical food insecurity problems. Continued lack of rainfall in the region was compounded by a series of aggravating factors including the dramatic plunge in coffee prices. This led to the closure of coffee plantations forcing thousands out of work, particularly in Nicaragua, as well as depriving small holders and landless labourers of their sole source of income.

The response of the Federation, with funding provided by the Finnish Red Cross, the Icelandic Red Cross, a Japanese private donor, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Monaco Red Cross,

the Norwegian government/Red Cross and the Swedish government/Red Cross was complemented by the response of several PNS and bilateral contributions from: the American Red Cross, the British Red Cross, the German government, the Netherlands Red Cross, the Spanish Red Cross, the Swiss government and the World Food Programme, working towards the objectives outlined in the Federation appeal.

In **El Salvador**, an average of 80 per cent of the maize crop was lost in four departments in the east of the country: San Miguel, Morazán, La Unión and Usulután. The strong earthquakes of January and February 2001 resulted in a reduction in the areas planted and, in addition, the onset of the “red tide”, a harmful algae which contaminated seafood, resulted in loss of income for fishermen. The government initiated the “*Plan Sembrador*” to attend to the needs of 62 of the most severely affected municipalities.

In **Guatemala**, in early September 2001, 41 people (mainly children) died of malnutrition in the municipalities of Jocotán and Camotán, department of Chiquimula, north eastern Guatemala, as a result of crop failure and poverty. An assessment conducted by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health in Jocotán showed that 865 children were moderately malnourished and 258 were severely malnourished.

In **Honduras**, the government declared a state of emergency in the south, centre and west on 23 July 2001, where 149 municipalities were severely affected by drought, with 95 municipalities in the departments of Choluteca, Valle, El Paraíso and Francisco Morazán suffering more than 50 per cent grain loss.

In **Nicaragua**, drought particularly affected the north and north west regions, where farmers lost virtually all their maize and bean crop. The departments most affected by the drought and the food insecurity for the last three years, were the same ones affected by hurricane Mitch in 1998.

In **Panama**, the absence of rain generated agricultural and livestock losses, particularly in the Peninsula de Azuero. In **Costa Rica**, several provinces were affected by the influx of displaced persons from Nicaragua.



Effects of the drought on the crops in the region

Objectives, activities and results w

The first phase of the operation focused on relief assistance to those most affected for a three month period, consisting of food supplies for subsistence farmers and their families whose crops were devastated. A health component included monitoring of health conditions in severely affected communities and referral of cases of malnutrition for care. Several community workshops provided key health and hygiene messages to the target population. To break the cycle of failed crops, agricultural recovery was a fundamental component of the second phase of the operation. The National Societies distributed seeds and fertilizers to beneficiary farmers while, at the same time, providing information on their use and training on improving subsistence agricultural techniques, diversification and marketing of produce.

The target population benefited from the components of the operation, with the following numbers of beneficiaries, as below:

Country / Department / Province	Food	Seeds / Fertilizer s	Agricultural Rehabilitation / Income generation	Health	DPP	Total Beneficiarie s
GUATEMALA						24,000*
Jalapa / Chiquimula / Baja Verapaz	17,808	12,000	12,000	10,855	10,684	
EL SALVADOR						7,530*
Morazán / La Unión / San Miguel / San Vicente	6,000	7,530	1,200	-	1,206	
HONDURAS						24,000*
Valle / Choluteca / El Paraíso / Santa Bárbara	17,400	13,380	15,852	13,220	13,472	
NICARAGUA						10,440*
Tipitapa / Masaya / Ocotal / Madriz	9,720	660	3,000	660	5,270	
CENTRAL AMERICA						65,970

* The total figures reflect beneficiaries per component - many families benefited from more than one operational component.

In November 2001, the Guatemalan, Honduran and Nicaraguan Red Cross Societies, and in particular, the disaster response departments, were engaged not only in the Red Cross operation to assist the victims of the drought and food insecurity. In addition, given the passage of hurricanes Iris and Michelle, National Society staff and volunteers were fully involved in implementation of contingency plans, search and rescue operations, needs assessments, drawing up of plans of action and the provision of aid to the most vulnerable affected by flooding.

Between 29 and 31 October 2002, a final review of Red Cross drought and food insecurity programmes took place in San Salvador. The heads of relief departments of all Central American National Societies, Federation delegates, representatives of the American, German, Netherlands, Spanish and Swiss Red Cross Societies, together with representatives from OXFAM, UNICEF and

WFP discussed the lesson learned during the operation and future common strategies. The participants agreed that the appeal was appropriate and support from the Federation and the participating National Societies to the operating National Societies for the implementation of their plans of action had been forthcoming. However, certain objectives required analysis in view of needs at the time of the implementation of the operation. Several agreements and strategic alliances entered into balanced the appeal funding constraints and the operation provided an opportunity to link different National Society departments, such as relief, health and youth. Nevertheless, knowledge sharing proved difficult since there were a number of changes of staff and volunteer members during the operation.

Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items^w

PHASE 1

Objective 1: To mitigate the impact of food insecurity in the region caused by the lack of rain and other factors.

Activities Planned:

El Salvador: To distribute food rations to 1,000 families for three months in the departments of Morazán, La Unión, San Miguel and San Vicente.

Guatemala: To distribute food rations to 2,856 beneficiary families for three months in the worst affected departments of Jalapa, Baja Verapaz and Chiquimula.

Honduras: To distribute food rations to 2,500 beneficiary families for three months in the worst affected departments of Choluteca, Valle and El Paraíso.

Nicaragua: To distribute food rations to 2,000 families in the municipality of Tipitapa, Coloma, severely hit by the drought.

In El Salvador, an agreement was reached with WFP, whereby the National Society provided fertilizers in October 2001 for the November harvest, with food distributions taking place during the months of October 2001 and January 2002 which mitigated the effects of the poor harvest. In January 2002, the **Salvadorean Red Cross Society (SRC)** with the support of the American Red Cross (ARC) also provided 1,100 families with 6,48 MT of food in the department of Morazán.

In September 2001, the **Guatemalan Red Cross (GRC)**, with the support of the American Red Cross and resources provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA), distributed food rations to 896 families in the department of Chiquimula, prior to implementation of the plan of action pertaining to the drought and food insecurity operation. Between November 2001 and May 2002, within the plan of action, the Guatemalan Red Cross carried out two further food distributions. During the first, food rations consisted of maize, beans and oil and were donated by the WFP. In November 2001, food rations were provided in Rabinal, municipality of the department of Baja Verapaz, with the support of the Federation, benefiting 1,322 families from six communities. The number of beneficiaries was slightly higher than originally foreseen in the survey. However, the increased number of beneficiaries was covered using a surplus received in maize and as a result of a minor reduction of the ration of beans. Local authorities provided warehousing facilities, and the beneficiary communities were actively involved in the distribution of rations. Food distributions also took place in the department of Jalapa, with the support of the Spanish Red Cross, to 391 families in six communities. In December 2001, an additional distribution to 160 families was completed in Piedras Negras and La Ceiba. In December 2001, the Guatemalan Red Cross and the American Red Cross carried out a distribution to 777 families in the department of Chiquimula (fewer families than in the first distribution since food was distributed solely to those families which had been active in related projects following the food for work policy of the WFP/government). From January to March 2002, the Guatemalan Red Cross together with the Federation, the Spanish Red Cross and the American Red Cross, provided 2,965 families with 218.5 MT of maize, 21.5 MT of beans and 3,770 litres of oil in 21 communities in the departments of Chiquimula, Baja Verapaz and Jalapa. Maize and beans were again provided by WFP and oil was purchased by the Spanish Red Cross and the Federation for the three departments

affected. Additional third and fourth distributions took place between April and May 2002 in the department of Jalapa with the support of the Spanish Red Cross and a fifth was made in August. Within the objectives of the plan of action, 352.65 MT of maize, 48.49 MT of beans and rice, and 24.16 MT of oil were distributed to 2,968 families in two monthly food rations. Each family received 400grs of maize, 40grs of beans and 30 grs of oil per day.

The **Honduran Red Cross** carried out an initial food distribution in September 2001 to 1,972 families (11,832 people) in the departments of Valle, Choluteca and El Paraíso. A further three distributions in each department took place between October and mid December 2001. With the support of the Spanish Red Cross, 914 families in El Paraíso received 21.1 MT of food rations (16.36 MT of maize, 2.72 MT of beans, 0.9 MT of lard, 0.9 MT of sugar and 0.22 MT of salt); together with the German Red Cross, 2,000 families in Valle and Choluteca received 21.42 MT of food (14.63 MT of maize, 2.27 MT of beans, 1.8 MT of lard, 2.27 MT of sugar and 0.45 MT of salt). In addition, the Honduran Red Cross, with the support of the Swiss Red Cross, distributed 17.16 MT of food rations to 400 families in Choluteca. In late December, although not originally planned, the Honduran Red Cross carried out an additional food distribution to 500 families in the department of Santa Barbara in response to the deteriorating situation following the fall in coffee prices, distributing 10.71 MT of food including maize, beans, oil, sugar and salt.

In October 2001, the **Nicaraguan Red Cross** carried out a distribution of rice, beans, maize, sugar, salt and oil, together with a hygiene kit to 9,720 vulnerable people from 11 communities in Tipitapa and Coloma. Nicaraguan Red Cross activities were supported by the American and Spanish Red Cross Societies.

Health w

Objective 1: To contribute towards improving the health status of families affected by food insecurity.

Activities planned:

- *On the occasion of the initial monthly food distribution, to monitor the nutritional status of children under five through weight/height and arm radius measurements. This will help evaluate the effectiveness of food distribution over the three months and provide early warning of malnutrition.*
- *To provide referral to health authorities in cases of severe malnutrition.*
- *To compare results of the nutritional survey with those of a survey to be carried out at the close of the three months' food distribution cycle.*
- *During food distributions, to hold sessions organized by health promotion teams focusing on topics such as nutrition, clean water and hygiene.*

The health component developed by the **Guatemalan Red Cross** throughout the operation trained the communities in health key messages and nutrition through workshops and distribution of leaflets and posters in Spanish and Mayan languages. The programme also included training for Red Cross volunteers and communities in monitoring of malnutrition in children under five years of age and distribution of 42 weighting scales, 370 measuring tapes and 400 *shakir* measuring tapes to health centres in the departments of Chiquimula, Baja Verapaz and Jalapa.

Between November and December 2001, at the same time as the first food distributions were taking place, the Guatemalan Red Cross carried out training in nutrition in the departments of Chiquimula, Baja Verapaz and Jalapa. This proved particularly important since the food provided differed slightly from the local product to which the population is accustomed. Beneficiaries were trained in the preparation and appropriate handling of the food distributed, involving little cost and ensuring high nutritive value for the families. There was significant participation of women in this training. From

November 2001 until the early months of 2002, this was accompanied by dissemination of key health messages, providing communities with vital information particularly regarding hygiene, water and sanitation, nutrition, mother and child care and the environment. This training was reinforced by the distribution of 4,000 educational pamphlets and 1,000 posters printed in Spanish and Chortí, Kaqchikel and Achí (indigenous languages) which included this information. In February 2002, the Guatemalan Red Cross implemented a training of trainers' workshop in Guatemala City, with the support of Action Against Hunger (AAH), Spanish branch, for 33 Red Cross volunteers from the relief, youth and "damas" (ladies) volunteer groups and for four National Society branches. The workshop included nutritional assessment of children under five years of age using anthropometrical measurements: MUAC (middle-upper-arm-circumference) and weight and height techniques. In April 2002, a refresher workshop with the same topics was carried out again with support of AAH. The volunteers, with the support of the Federation health staff, replicated workshops in 21 communities, training 179 health promoters, 45 midwives, 3 doctors/district directors, 2 nurses, 4 nurse assistants and a rural technician.

As a result of these activities, an early warning system to detect severe cases of malnutrition was established at community level in coordination with local health authorities which committed to carry out community nutritional diagnosis, with monitoring every two months and to introduce activities with families in relation to health and nutrition.

The **Honduran Red Cross** implemented a training programme for volunteers from those branches involved in the drought operation in cooperation with UNICEF. This training was focused on the weight for height ratio in order to assist in the detection of cases of malnutrition. As of May, two nutritional surveys had been conducted in coordination with UNICEF in 22 communities of Choluteca (7) and El Paraíso (15). The surveys showed a decrease in malnutrition in children under two years of age, but an increase in children aged two or more, and concluded that there was an average rate of 6% of severe malnutrition in children in these communities. High risk populations were identified and by the end of the operation, a total of 50 communities of Valle, Choluteca and El Paraíso were monitored, with the participation of volunteers from branches who worked together with the Ministry of Health.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross**, supported by the Federation and the Netherlands Red Cross, implemented an integrated recovery programme for 660 vulnerable people in 19 communities of Madriz and Nueva Segovia departments, which included the improvement of community health through the use of medicinal plants. The target population took part in a health workshop implemented by the Nicaraguan Red Cross, with the support of Action Against Hunger.

The **Salvadorean Red Cross Society** did not include a specific health component in the first phase of the plan of action, but the technical staff and volunteers developed a monitoring system in the communities included in the agricultural component of second phase of the operation.

Disaster Preparedness w

Objective 1: To strengthen the capacity of the Red Cross branches in the region and to increase beneficiary participation.

Activities planned:

- *Prior to the initial food distribution, to hold a workshop for community leaders focusing on two topics: conducting a beneficiary survey in accordance with precise criteria and the drawing up of a community risk map. Each community leader would be required to submit both survey data and a draft community hazard map on the occasion of the initial distribution of food.*

More than 20 Red Cross branches and over 200 volunteers from Central American National Societies took part in different programmes related to disaster preparedness. Disaster preparedness and response delegates working with Federation delegations in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras provided support to the National society relief departments to maximize the available resources. The delegates, supported by the Federation regional drought coordinator, also worked with the National Societies in the design of specific contingency plans for the *El Niño Southern Oscillation*.

Approximately 20 volunteers from the **Guatemalan Red Cross**, some of them members of the national intervention teams (NITs), participated in relief activities and received training in logistics procedures. Another 33 volunteers participated in health training and detection of malnutrition in children. All these activities were coordinated by the National Society relief department, working closely with the health, youth, training and development departments, promoting an integral approach to the food security operation and contributing to strengthening of the capacity of the branches and the headquarters. Beneficiary surveys took place before and after the distributions in coordination with the World Food Programme (WFP) through different visits to the communities. Beneficiaries, both men and women, and local authorities played an essential role in the organization of the relief distributions, identification of most vulnerable families, identifying local transport and warehousing facilities, unloading of trucks and division and labelling of rations. The distribution of educational materials printed in indigenous languages, was an opportunity to create more confidence between the Red Cross branches and Mayan communities, reinforcing the activities with the most vulnerable groups of the population of Guatemala.

The **Honduran Red Cross** branches actively participated in this component of the appeal in the departments of Valle, Choluteca, El Paraíso and Santa Barbara. A total of 70 Red Cross volunteers implemented the disaster preparedness component in the areas where relief distributions and other activities took place. Vulnerable families were identified and included in the beneficiary surveys and in the drawing up of family emergency plans.

In October 2001, the **Nicaraguan Red Cross**, supported by the American Red Cross, implemented disaster preparedness activities for 5,270 people in Tipitapa and Coloma, including the drawing up of community risk maps on the occasion of the initial distribution of food and hygiene kits.

PHASE 2

Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items^w

Objective 1: To support agricultural recovery amongst subsistence farmers

Activities Planned:

- *In a second phase, to distribute seeds and fertilizers to 9,500 subsistence farmers to ensure second cycle planting and improve harvesting prospects. In Honduras and some regions of Guatemala, it has been possible to provide seeds for the September 2001 planting season. In other regions, seeds will be distributed to allow for planting in the first season of 2002, from March to May. Planting will be according to the appropriate season for sowing of crops in each country. During provision of seeds and fertilizers, agronomists will be engaged at country level to train in the use and care of seeds and fertilizers in such issues as crop diversification, water conservation and improvement of soil conditions.*

In El Salvador, the **Salvadorean Red Cross Society** supported by the American Red Cross, provided 1.71 MT of fertiliser for a total of 1,055 families in the department of Morazán; these beneficiaries were targeted by the World Food Programme for the provision of food. Agricultural recovery was

based on an integrated project which includes the diversification of crops by planting fruit trees in four communities of Morazán, assisting 200 families (approximately 1,200 people).

During February 2002, the National Society supported by the Federation, distributed 200 tool kits (including 1 shovel, 1 pickaxe and 2 sowing tools) in order to enable subsistence farmers to start working the land for sowing. The head of each family participated in workshops regarding agricultural techniques and diversification, micro irrigation systems and marketing of their products. The SRC team and the communities planted 7,000 fruit trees (35 per family). On 26 February, an agreement was signed with the Inter American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture (IICA), whereby the Institute provided technical assistance, certified plants and capacity building as regards the planting of the fruit trees. Two agronomists and an agricultural engineer hired by the Salvadorean Red Cross Society, supported by the Federation and the Spanish Red Cross, developed a mid term programme for one year.



In El Salvador, results of the support to farmers in Morazán

In September 2001, as stated above, the **Guatemalan Red Cross**, with the support of the American Red Cross, and with resources provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA), distributed seeds and fertilizers together with food rations to 896 families in the department of Chiquimula, prior to the implementation of the plan of action relating to this appeal. The National Society encountered problems in obtaining seeds at good quality/prices, as local suppliers established prices double the average rate, and also as a result of funding constraints. Approximately 2,000 farmers finally benefited from the provision of seeds.

In May 2002, the Guatemalan Red Cross distributed 7.6 MT of maize seeds and 25.54 MT of bean seeds with the support of the Spanish Red Cross. The Spanish Red Cross agronomist and a local agronomist hired for the operation ensured follow up. The seeds were purchased through MAGA and

distributed in eight communities in the department of Jalapa. The Federation purchased 19.35 MT of bean seeds from local producers which were distributed by the Guatemalan Red Cross with the support of the American Red Cross in Chiquimula and Baja Verapaz. Some bean seeds were purchased through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Chiquimula, which was implementing a food security programme promoting local/small scale producers, therefore reinforcing strategic alliances between the Guatemalan Red Cross and FAO, and contributing to the development of local production. In June 2002, the Federation purchased and distributed together with the Guatemalan Red Cross 93.69 MT of fertilizers to 1,041 families in Baja Verapaz and 59.94 MT of fertilizers to 666 families in Chiquimula. The distribution in Chiquimula was also supported by the American Red Cross. In the department of Chiquimula, the Guatemalan Red Cross signed a memorandum of understanding with the MAGA for the purchase of fertilizers granted by the government. Fertilizers were purchased at half price in relation to the market rate, and thanks to this reduction, the remaining resources were invested in training in agricultural techniques. With the support of the Spanish Red Cross, fertilizers, pesticides and other agricultural inputs were distributed to approximately 600 beneficiaries in the department of Jalapa.



Preparations for distributions of seeds and fertilizer in Rabinal and Chiquimula, Guatemala

In October 2001, the **Honduran Red Cross**, with the support of the Spanish Red Cross and the American Red Cross, distributed 20.74 MT of bean seeds, 6.81 MT of maize seeds and 137.62 MT of fertilizers to 1,514 families in the departments of Choluteca and El Paraíso. In El Paraíso, 464 farmers benefited from the immediate purchase of seeds which was made possible through the release of an allocation from the Federation's disaster response emergency fund (DREF) at the outset of the operation. The same number of farmers received fertilizers with the support of the Spanish Red Cross. The Honduran Red Cross carried out a second distribution of 23 MT of maize seeds for approximately 2,000 beneficiaries.

Although the plan in Honduras was to support 2,500 families with the distribution of seeds and fertilizers, at the end of the operation 3,764 farmers were included in this component - 1,764 more than planned, due to support of the American Red Cross, USAID and Agricultural School "Escuela Zamorano". During the distributions, technical assistance was provided, through demonstrations, meetings with local authorities and farmers regarding the use of seeds and fertilizers. In addition, an

agronomist was hired with the support of the American Red Cross as of October 2001. At the same time, technical assistance and follow-up was provided by Red Cross volunteers, with the support of local community development organizations. Assistance in the decision making related to the agricultural component was also provided through the advice of the Centre for Investigation of Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), regarding climate, soil conditions and type of seeds, in order to ensure that the activities undertaken had a positive impact. At the end of the operation, 3,500 farmers had received integrated agricultural technical assistance.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross**, supported by the Federation and the Netherlands Red Cross implemented an integrated recovery programme for 660 people in 19 communities of Madriz and Nueva Segovia departments. The programme, monitored by an agronomist based in Madriz department, included planting of fruit trees and the distribution of vegetable seeds, organic fertilisers, medicinal plants and chickens. This component included the implementation of several workshops related to diversification, pests and the optimization of water sources.

Objective 2: To improve the capacity of affected families to meet their basic needs

Activities Planned:

- *To distribute a cash donation of USD 25 per beneficiary family to assist in the purchase of essential items such as replacement of tools, medicines and food supplements such as sugar and salt. The contribution is to be made via the adult female member of the household, using the local bank system. It is also intended that this will contribute to revitalizing the local economy. Such a distribution worked well during the “Mitch” operation. Furthermore, the donations would be accompanied by awareness on how to use the cash.*

In April 2002, the **Salvadorean Red Cross Society** supported by the Federation conducted a reassessment of needs in Morazán department concluding that there was a need to dig a water reservoir next to the beneficiary farmers’ piece of land, with a base of plastic sheeting and a thatch roofing to avoid the evaporation of the water. After discussions with beneficiary families, the initially planned cash contribution was put towards micro irrigation systems to manage eventual shortage of water during “veranillos” (lack of rain in the middle of rainy season) and the possible *El Niño* phenomenon.

The **Guatemalan Red Cross** also decided to invest in training in agricultural techniques instead of giving a cash contribution to affected families. During July and August 2002, 65 farmers from Baja Verapaz and Chiquimula, representing their communities, participated in workshops organized by the MAGA and the **Guatemalan Red Cross** with the support of the Federation. The MAGA organized the contents, provided the materials and the trainers. Sessions included topics on nutritional value of maize and beans, types of seeds, soil conditions, pests, harvesting, post-harvest and warehousing. Farmers committed to share this knowledge in their communities. The Spanish Red Cross also provided training through the local agronomist for the communities in the department of Jalapa. Previously, the agronomist and several community leaders were trained as trainers in the ICTA in essential issues regarding the cycle of development of maize and beans.

The **Honduran Red Cross** decided to invest in irrigation micro-projects, distribution of family silos and training, rather than providing a cash contribution to affected families. The families benefited from different agricultural activities. At the end of the operation, 325 families received metal grain silos for stock storage purposes, 170 of them in 7 communities in El Paraíso, thanks to the support of the Netherlands Red Cross. Four micro-projects were implemented consisting in the construction of irrigation systems, benefiting 100 families. Another 210 families received two community kits with tools and agricultural equipment. With the support of the Swiss Red Cross, 2,400 fruit trees were planted in

communities of Choluteca. With regard to training, the Honduran Red Cross implemented 54 technical workshops for 1,951 farmers in the departments of El Paraíso, Valle and Choluteca. The workshops included issues such as the appropriate use of corn and bean crops, prevention of pests and the post-harvest season. A further 111 farmers attended workshops organized in cooperation with other organizations.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Fundamental Principles and priorities w

- The beneficiary selection criteria applied for food distributions focused on the most vulnerable groups, including single mothers/heads of family, the elderly with low incomes, families with more than 5 members living in places of high food insecurity and not receiving any assistance from other food aid programmes.
- Women were prioritized in the implementation of the operation, not only as beneficiaries, participants in health training or recipients of aid, but through consultations as to the organization of the distributions and ensuring their proposals were included in mid-term assessments.
- Indigenous populations actively participated as they formed a majority of those targeted in some communities (Guatemala). Pamphlets and posters were printed in the indigenous languages spoken in the certain target areas: Chortí, Kaqchikel and Achí. Beneficiaries were trained in the preparation of the food distributed, since this differed slightly from the local product to which the population was accustomed.
- In the agricultural recovery component of the appeal, selected beneficiaries were mainly single mothers, elderly and vulnerable subsistence farmers, taking into account their access to and number of hectares of land to harvest and the number of livestock. This selection was carried out together with the community leaders and leaders of the Red Cross branches.
- SPHERE standards were respected for food aid in relation to nutritional requirements and rations.
- During presence in the communities, Red Cross volunteers were encouraged to make the emblem visible on their clothes, and labelling of rations and distributions points was also practised.
- The programme was closely coordinated in the field with local and central authorities. The Red Cross criteria prevailed: ie distribution of one ration to each family, as opposed to the government proposal of giving the responsibility for selection of beneficiaries to community leaders. Emphasis was also placed on the origin of fertilizers, since the authorities were also carrying out distribution of fertilizer, in order to avoid politicization of support.

National Society Capacity Building

In El Salvador, 25 members of the **Salvadorean Red Cross Society** relief department and the branches involved in the operation gained experience in several relief and rehabilitation components of the operation, and particularly in agricultural recovery. The relief department of the National Society led the implementation of the operation in Morazán department, supported by the Federation's disaster preparedness delegate and the Spanish Red Cross. The implementation of the agricultural component included the participation of beneficiaries and community development organizations and cooperatives, providing technical assistance. This consolidated the confidence between the Red Cross branches and communities, particularly in relation to agricultural recovery.

In Guatemala, 20 Red Cross volunteers from four branches of the **Guatemalan Red Cross**, some members of the national intervention teams, were involved in relief activities and received training in logistics procedures. Another 33 volunteers participated in health training and detection of malnutrition in children. The operation was an opportunity to strengthen the capacity of different departments, especially relief, health and youth, promoting an integral approach. The National Society gained

experience in disaster preparedness, purchasing procedures, relief distributions, coordination and decentralization, cooperating with other national and international organizations regarding transport management, community capacity building, detection of malnutrition and health education. The new health and disaster preparedness teams worked well and beyond the framework of the appeal, attending to community requests. The Red Cross was perceived as an appropriate and useful partner thanks to its nation wide network and was consulted by World Food Programme regarding further activities.

In Honduras, both the **Honduran Red Cross** headquarters and the branches involved in the operation, with the active participation of staff and Red Cross volunteers, enforced their capacity in relief distributions and implementation of surveys; they also received training in detection of malnutrition and agricultural recovery integrating relief, community capacity building, health and agricultural activities. The National Society led the implementation of the operation, working in close collaboration with other members of the Movement, technical teams from the Swiss Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross. A positive component towards the strengthening of National Society capacity was the establishment of departmental strategic warehouses which stored contingency items. Strategic alliances with national and international agencies such as UNICEF and CIAT contributed to strengthen the Red Cross image as a positive field partner in the humanitarian sphere. The implementation of the activities including the participation of beneficiaries and community development organizations when selecting beneficiaries, providing technical assistance and follow-up, boosted confidence in the Red Cross at community level in the support of the most vulnerable. Branches have designed and identified new community development projects, together with the communities.

In Nicaragua, 23 volunteers from the **Nicaraguan Red Cross** branches in Managua, Madriz and Nueva Segovia improved their technical knowledge relating to the management of drought and food insecurity situations. The National Society is better prepared to support communities facing potential drought in the north of the country.

Coordination

During the entire operation, Red Cross personnel actively took part at national and local level, in meetings with national authorities, such as the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, departmental representatives and municipalities in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. At regional level, the regional disaster preparedness delegate and the regional coordinator for the drought and food insecurity programme assigned from the Pan American Disaster Response Unit, met representatives from several United Nations agencies, mainly the FAO, the Pan American Health Organization, UNICEF and World Food Programme. At least, one agreement was signed with Ministries in the countries involved in the operation. For example, the Guatemalan Red Cross signed an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food (MAGA) to obtain fertilizers at low prices in order to cover all vulnerable beneficiary farmers. In El Salvador, the Secretary for Family lent warehouses to the Salvadorean Red Cross Society for food distributions for 6,300 people.

In order to avoid duplication, planned activities were coordinated with governmental and non governmental organizations with presence in the field, such as Acción contra el Hambre (Action against Hunger, the Spanish branch), Acciones Futuras (Future Actions), CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Christian Development Commission, Doctors without Borders, Escuela Zamorano (Honduran agricultural technical school), the Salvadoran Fund for Economic and Social Development, Movimundo, *Postcosecha* cooperatives, Save the Children and Visión Mundial (World Vision). Close cooperation was achieved with several organizations to ensure maximum impact at country level. For example, Action Against Hunger (AAH), Spanish branch, supported the Guatemalan Red Cross in a training of trainers' workshop for Red Cross volunteers, who later were responsible for the training of local health

promoters and midwives in malnutrition and early warning in children under 5 years old in 21 communities.

With regard to Red Cross regional coordination, efforts were made to ensure synergy with the participating National Societies working in the region to ensure the impact of all initiatives taken to alleviate the effects of the drought. For certain projects, the PNS shared logistics and technical personnel coordinating both schedules and activities with the national societies to promote the most effective assistance; in example, the Nicaraguan Red Cross, the Netherlands Red Cross and the Federation shared technical personnel and logistics to implement the agricultural recovery component in northern Nicaragua. Between 16 and 18 April 2001, the heads of relief departments of all Central American National Societies, the national and regional disaster preparedness delegates, the regional programme coordinator for the drought and food insecurity programme, a member of the Federation's Pan American Disaster Response Unit and a representative of the American Red Cross, took part in a coordination and review meeting in Guatemala City. The aim was to discuss and agree on a common regional strategy regarding contingency planning and mid-term evaluation of the impact of the first phase of the operation.

Assessment and Lessons learnt

Between 29 and 31 October 2002, the heads of relief departments of all Central American National Societies, operating National Societies' technical staff, Federation delegates, participating National Societies: the American, German, Netherlands, Spanish and Swiss Red Cross, and representatives of OXFAM UK, UNICEF and the World Food Programme took part in a final review of the Red Cross drought and food insecurity programme. In general, the participants agreed on the initial assessments and the subsequent appeal as appropriate. Despite funding constraints during the first six months of the operation, there was support from the Federation and the participating National Societies in order to implement the country plans of action. Some objectives needed re-assessment according to actual needs encountered during the implementation of the operation, and consequently, the operation required a five month extension.

Lessons learned as agreed by participants taking part in the review of the operation, are described below:

- The target population included in the appeal was covered and numbers were exceeded. Red Cross activities implemented in response to the appeal were possible due to the prompt response on the part of branches and volunteers. During the operation, there was a common request from the operating National Societies to invest more in human resources and training, using resources from specific technical teams, including national intervention team and regional intervention team members. It is considered important to train volunteers in specific areas and not to lose capacities already built.
- Strategic alliances (i.e. with WFP, UNICEF, AAH) worked well and must be strengthened to integrate activities from agencies with expertise in different fields of work. For example, there is a comparative advantage of the Red Cross working in health due to its network and the health teams already established with an early warning system functioning in the communities. Alliances were also a good opportunity for sharing knowledge, procedures of work and didactic materials.
- Communities were actively involved in all the components of the operation. Community leaders took part in decision making and re-assessment of needs. Many examples of community organization can be found in all the region during the second phase of the operation. In El Salvador, recommendations were made to farmers regarding creole seeds and the use of water. In Guatemala, meetings with community members took place to discuss alternatives to fertilizers,

since funding constraints were preventing the purchase of sufficient products. In Honduras, with the support of technical organizations, communities participated in the decision to set up silos to be managed by the communities.

- The community health component included effective strategic alliances, training of volunteers, participation of multidisciplinary teams and the establishment of nutritional and meteorological early warning systems in several places. On the other hand, time constraints and centralization did not allow full integration of key elements and hindered further ownership at branch level.
- The agricultural component represented a good opportunity to link relief and development. There was an active participation of communities, branches, PNS and the Federation. Inter institutional coordination worked well. Diversification of crops was achieved, and results of training were measurable. Technicians remained in the areas of work and most of the farmers involved participated in the entire operation up to its conclusion. Moreover, sustainable employment was generated during the operation. On the other hand, only in El Salvador did the agricultural component result in guaranteeing high-impact sustainability.
- The warning systems worked where established, for example, in detection of malnutrition. The identification and implementation of more integral warning systems is considered a priority. This would allow the flow of information from the communities to branches and vice versa and could include vulnerability and capacity assessments.
- Local purchase was possible. Sometimes, scarcity of product prevented local purchase, but agreements with alternative/local producers of the use of non traditional creole seeds made possible adequate and timely assistance.
- Some logistics limitations during the relief distributions was the result of the combination of remote communities and the need to respect the sowing season in order to achieve positive results.
- Some National Societies (Guatemala and Nicaragua) centralized activities despite the fact that the plan of action was designed to take into account the development of the branches. Communication between branches and headquarters could be improved. Improved participation can be achieved through the involvement of branches, volunteers and communities from the beginning of the project cycle.
- Regional meetings were useful to learn from other experiences within the Red Cross. Good coordination was a positive result, achieved though internal Red Cross and inter-agency relations. Nevertheless, the exchange of information between countries could be improved.
- Coordination between institutions was achieved. The National Societies signed several agreements with the Ministries of Health and Agriculture. On the other hand, it is hoped to generate more fluent communication with technical and scientific institutions and universities to promote efficiency.
- Drought must be considered as a specific, institutionalised, permanent programme of the National Societies, with clear and specific priorities. Drought response should be coordinated with the national development plan of the National Societies and implemented within relief plans.
- Strengthening of the disaster preparedness approach should be a focus of attention through training of technical teams, volunteers and communities in community development. Volunteers can also train communities in other Red Cross issues to ensure constant communication between branches and communities and to promote recruitment of new volunteers.
- There is a need to identify and implement community warning systems, including the use of risk mapping. Existing strategic alliances and scientific institutions could provide support for the constant need for updated information through alert systems on meteorology, agriculture, health, nutrition and market issues.

The balance of funding remaining at the close of the implementation of the drought and food insecurity operation results from a combination of two factors: the important component of support provided by the World Food Programme and the fact that the Nicaraguan Red Cross did not utilize Federation funding available for assistance in response to the drought, but rather chose to work

through the support of PNS present in the country. This balance will be utilized in 2003 for further monitoring by the National Societies and the Federation delegation of the drought situation in the region.

For further details please contact: Luis Luna, Federation Desk Officer, Phone : 41 22 730 4274; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: luis.luna@ifrc.org

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The procurement for this operation was carried out in full compliance and conformity with the Federation's standard for international and local procurement.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

This operation sought to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or long-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

Interim report	
Annual report	
Final report	x

Appeal No & title: 31/2001 Central America drought and food

Period: 2001 to 5 June 2003 provis.

Project(s): PSV512, GT512, HN512, NI512

Currency: CHF

I - CONSOLIDATED RESPONSE TO APPEAL

FUNDING	CASH		KIND & SERVICES		TOTAL INCOME
	Contributions	Comments	Goods/Services	Personnel	
Appeal budget	3,507,865				
less					
Cash brought forward					
TOTAL ASSISTANCE SOUGHT	3,507,865				
<u>Contributions from Donors</u>					
Donor - Disaster Relief Emergency Fu (DREF)	100,000				100,000
Finnish Red Cross (DNFI)	49,733				49,733
Icelandic Red Cross (DNIS)	3,362				3,362
Japan - Private Donors (DPJP)	197,297				197,297
Japanese Red Cross (DNJP)	115,760				115,760
Monaco Red Cross (DNMC)	18,344				18,344
Norwegian Govt.via Norwegian Red Cro (DGNNO)	283,072				283,072
Norwegian Red Cross (DNNO)	31,450				31,450
Private Donors-online donations (DPOLD)	81				81
Swedish Govt.via Swedish Red Cross (DGNSE)	78,000				78,000
Swedish Red Cross (DNSE)	46,847				46,847
Closed appeals balances (DBAL)	-10,514				-10,514
WFP			82,193		82,193
TOTAL	913,433		82,193		995,626

II - Balance of funds

OPENING	
CASH INCOME Rcv'd	913,433
CASH EXPENDITURE	-846,916

CASH BALANCE	66,517

Appeal No & title: 31/2001 Central America drought and food

Period: 2001 to 5 June 2003 provis.

Project(s): PSV512, GT512, HN512, NI512

Currency: CHF

III - Budget analysis / Breakdown of expenditures

Description	APPEAL Budget	CASH Expenditures	KIND & SERVICES		TOTAL Expenditures	Variance
			Goods/services	Personnel		
<u>SUPPLIES</u>						
Shelter & Construction		32,026			32,026	-32,026
Clothing & Textiles						
Food & Seeds	2,220,000	400,620	82,193		482,813	1,737,187
Water & sanitation		66			66	-66
Medical & First Aid						
Teaching materials	7,000					7,000
Utensils & Tools		2,330			2,330	-2,330
Other relief supplies	400,000	432			432	399,568
Sub-Total	2,627,000	435,475	82,193		517,668	2,109,332
<u>CAPITAL EXPENSES</u>						
Land & Buildings						
Vehicles						
Computers & Telecom equip.						
Medical equipment						
Other capital expenditures						
Sub-Total						
<u>TRANSPORT & STORAGE</u>	160,000	26,077			26,077	133,923
Sub-Total	160,000	26,077			26,077	133,923
<u>PERSONNEL</u>						
Personnel (delegates)	80,000	87,858			87,858	-7,858
Personnel (national staff)	105,000	97,222			97,222	7,778
Sub-Total	185,000	185,080			185,080	-80
<u>GENERAL & ADMINISTRATION</u>						
Assessment/Monitoring/experts		7,612			7,612	-7,612
Travel & related expenses	20,000	13,912			13,912	6,088
Information expenses	8,000	17,151			17,151	-9,151
Admin./general expenses	95,000	67,413			67,413	27,587
External workshops & Seminars	27,000					27,000
Sub-Total	150,000	106,088			106,088	43,912
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>						
Programme management	236,535	57,664			57,664	178,871
Technical services	70,806	17,319			17,319	53,487
Professional services	78,524	19,213			19,213	59,311
Sub-Total	385,865	94,195			94,195	291,670
Operational provisions						
Transfers to National Societies						
TOTAL BUDGET	3,507,865	846,916	82,193		929,109	2,578,756

Central America - drought and food insecurity

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 31/2001

PLEDGES RECEIVED

05/06/03

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				3,507,865		TOTAL COVERAGE 66.7%
AMERICAN - RC		25,000	USD	41,250	23/11/01	DIRECT SUPPORT TO NICARAGUA RC
AMERICAN - RC		21,750	USD	35,888	23/11/01	DIRECT SUPPORT TO SALVADOR RC
AMERICAN - RC		25,000	USD	41,250	23/11/01	DIRECT SUPPORT TO HONDURAS RC
AMERICAN - RC		8,034	USD	13,489	09/01/02	DIRECT SUPPORT TO GUATEMALA RC
JAPAN PRIVATE DONOR		17,912,736	JPY	228,835	20/12/01	HEALTH & REHABILITATION
FINNISH - RC		33,638	EUR	49,734	01/10/01	
GERMAN - GOVT		150,000	DEM	111,000	22/11/01	DIRECT SUPPORT TO HONDURAS RC
ICELANDIC - RC		200,000	ISK	3,310	19/09/01	
JAPANESE - RC				115,760	18/12/01	
MONACO - RC		80,000	FRF	18,032	20/09/01	
NETHERLANDS - RC		6,400	USD	10,675	26/11/01	DIRECT SUPPORT TO HONDURAS RC
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		1,700,000	NOK	313,650	13/12/01	
SPANISH - RC		80,000,000	ESP	708,240	28/11/01	DIRECT TRANSFER TO NICARAGUA, HONDURAS, GUATEMALA, EL SALVADOR RC
SPANISH - RC		26,686,436	ESP	236,247	23/05/02	DIRECT TRANSFER
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		800,000	SEK	120,400	24/09/01	
SWISS - GOVT				80,410	04/12/01	DIRECT SUPPORT TO HONDURAS RC
PRIVATE DONORS		50	USD	81	06/11/01	
WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME		78,730	USD	130,416	11/12/01	DIRECT SUPPORT TO GUATEMALA RC
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				2,258,667	CHF	64.4%

KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
WFP		49,395	USD	82,193	16/05/02	FOOD DONATION, TRANSPORT, INS. & STORAGE, DIRECT TO GUATEMALA RC
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				82,193	CHF	2.3%

ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
BRITISH - RC		20,130	USD	33,391	12/02/02	TRUCK, BILATERAL
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				33,391	CHF	