

# OPERATIONS UPDATE



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

## PHILIPPINES: LANDSLIDES AND FLOODS

31 August 2004

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 over 181 countries.

### In Brief

**Appeal No. 03/04; Operations Update no. 03; Period covered: 14 May 2004 to 31 August 2004; Appeal coverage: 94%; Outstanding needs: CHF 22,029; Appeal and operation extended to end-February 2005** ([Contributions List available on the Federation's website](#)).

#### Appeal history:

- Launched on 07 January 2004 for CHF 853,000 (USD 692,989 or EUR 544,144) for 06 months for 565 beneficiary families;
- Budget revised to CHF 378,148 and 300 beneficiary families (including 140 for the shelter component);
- This Operations Update notifies of a programme extension until the end of February 2005, with a shelter component of 140 houses and the final report due on at the end of April 2005.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 50,000 (reimbursed).

**Related Emergency or Annual Appeals:** [South East Asia Regional Appeal 01.66/04](#)

**Operational Summary:** Eight months into the programme to assist families left homeless by severe floods and landslides that struck the Philippines at the end of last year – and with much of the Federation appeal budget already committed – progress has been limited, due to a series of difficulties described in this report. Briefly the challenges faced have centred on the safety, suitability and accessibility of the original site, weather hazards and a complex task force structure involving a significant number of local government partners and the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC).

Nevertheless, following recent interventions at senior level by PNRC and International Federation Secretariat officials, there are now grounds for cautious optimism that work on the housing for 140 families, the operation's key component linking all other elements, will commence in the coming weeks, for completion at the end of February 2005.

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All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

## Background

The monsoon rains that afflicted the Philippines - one of the world's most disaster prone countries - for much of December 2003 severely affected five municipalities in the province of Southern Leyte and four provinces in the Caraga region of Mindanao island, leaving 174 people dead and at least 60 dead, with damage to infrastructure, agriculture and property across the disaster zone estimated at CHF 16.3 million. Of the affected provinces, Southern Leyte, with a population of 350,000 occupying 17 municipalities and one city, was worst hit, suffering the highest number of casualties - including 154 people killed - and houses destroyed. This area of the Philippines is among the most remote and inaccessible in the country, with poor roads and limited transport and communications links.

On 19 December 2003, the heavy rainfall caused three major landslides in the province, affecting 12 barangays (villages) in three municipalities of Liloan, San Francisco and San Ricardo. Flooding also occurred in the municipalities of Pintuyan and Malitbog and the capital city of Maasin, with more than 1,000 families (over 5,000 people) worst affected in these stricken areas.

## Operational developments

*Implementing partners:* The Task Force set up by the provincial government to oversee the rehabilitation of Barangay Pinut-an - comprises the municipal government of San Ricardo, the provincial government of Southern Leyte, Provincial Engineering Office (PEO), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), National Food Authority (NFA), Philippine National Police (PNP) the Philippine Army (PA) – and the PNRC. The responsibilities of each member of the task force were agreed and formalized in July with the signing of a memorandum of agreement. The task force meets every week to monitor and discuss developments of the project.

*Site selection and development:* The DENR's mine and geosciences bureau recently conducted a geophysical survey of possible relocation sites according to safety standards. This survey indicated clearly that the land first considered for the site at Barangay Pinut-an was not suitable for development and was declared unstable due to its soil composition, terrain and contour. Implementation was further impeded by the regular breakdown of heavy equipment - leading to extreme difficulties with site accessibility - and the absence of government project personnel.

Plans to build retaining walls and a water drainage system to stabilize the site were conservatively estimated at requiring at least six months for completion. Accordingly, the DENR undertook further survey work and recommended another site to which families could be re-located. To prevent further delay in the completion of the project, the Task Force agreed to relocate to this site, in the adjacent Barangay Esperanza (a distance of less than three kilometres from the Pinut-an location).

The new site needed first to be procured from its dozen or so land owners, with the local government agreeing to make the purchase, carried through in mid August. Then the families themselves and barangay officials also had to be persuaded to re-locate, an exercise which required some negotiation skills. Now, however, the DPWH are starting to clear the site and ensure the access road is passable. When the site development phase, being undertaken by the PEO, is complete, the PNRC can start to construct the duplex housing units.

*Hazards:* Since early in the operation, work has been plagued by hazards in the area with flash floods and low level earthquakes/landslides/rock falls slowing progress, directly impacting the affected communities but also preventing or restricting access. Continued tropical storms/cyclones/storm surges and massive waves have also contributed to the delays in the project - about 90% of the residential areas are within the high risk area of rock falls, landslides and storm surges.

*Beneficiaries:* A total of 140 families are due to be rehoused through the operation. Of this number, 112 are homeless and presently staying with relatives, while 28 families have existing houses but are all currently living in high risk areas.

*Red Cross:* The confusion on the roles within the PNRC at national headquarters (NHQ) and local chapter level has now been resolved, with management responsibilities clearly delineated. A project manager has been designated at the NHQ, with work at the site managed jointly by the Southern Leyte chapter administrator and a project coordinator. The field staff includes an engineer, a logistician and a driver.

While the various challenges were emerging and solutions sought, the PNRC has focused on procurement of construction materials, food for work supplies and agricultural tools and organising community participation ahead of the start of construction of the duplex housing units. A warehouse for storage of the construction materials has been built.

Construction of the duplex housing units is now expected to commence in about two weeks, with the PNRC and Federation working together to address difficulties with the lumber and food for work supplies.

*Timetable:* The PNRC and the Federation are now working to a revised schedule:

- Mid-September 2004 through end January 2005: housing construction
- January and February 2005: livelihood component and community based disaster management training
- March and April 2005: final evaluation and reporting.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact and constraints**

### **Objective 1 (revised): Provide new housing for 140 families living in evacuation centres or other temporary accommodation.**

- Construction of the duplex housing units has been delayed due to natural hazards affecting the area which hampered access to the site; furthermore, following a geophysical survey, the original site was deemed unsuitable for construction and a new site found.
- Land has been procured at a new site - Esperanza Barangay – three km from the original site from about a dozen land owners. The affected families and their representatives have agreed to relocate to the new site.
- Construction of the housing units at Esperanza Barangay by the PNRC is now scheduled to commence by mid-September 2004.
- Some of the lumber donated by the department of environment and natural resources was delivered but due to the delays in site construction the wood is no longer fit for roofing structures. This wood will need to be replaced by the provincial government.
- Construction materials have procured and delivery is underway.
- A temporary warehouse for the construction materials has been built at the new site and is secure.
- Supplies for food for work were purchased in midyear. These supplies include rice, mung beans, dried fish, sardines, instant noodles, oil, and sugar. These are currently stocked at the warehouse of the local PNRC chapter in Maasin, Southern Leyte. Distribution will start at the onset of the construction. Some challenges, due to the quality of some of food items, are currently being dealt with by the PNRC/Federation.
- Two hundred volunteers have been recruited by PNRC for the construction works. Many are experienced in similar construction work undertaken by the PNRC at the nearby San Francisco site.

### **Objective 2: Re-establish and improve access to safe water and provide sanitation facilities for the affected population**

- This element of the original Appeal is now to be undertaken by GTZ and has been removed from the operation.
- GTZ have on-going commitments and expertise in water sanitation in the area. Local level agreements provide for water/sanitation facilities to affected households.

### **Objective 3: Assist 300 of the most affected families to regain financial stability through the provision of livelihood facilities for income generation**

- Agricultural tools have been purchased and are stocked at the local PNRC chapter warehouse. These include garden tools, hoes, spades, and sprayers to be distributed following the construction of the duplex units when individual lots will be identified for backyard food gardens.

**Objective 4: Train and organise 120 community volunteers in the 12 most affected barangays of the five municipalities in community-based disaster management training (CBDMT).**

- Training for CBDM has not yet commenced, although the training module has been designed.
- The PNRC is seeking additional funding for this training.

**Federation Coordination**

The operation in the field is managed by the PNRC. The Federation has provided assistance to the national society for reporting and monitoring through the deployment of a relief delegate, who completed her mission at the end of August. Although the national society has faced challenges with its human resources for the operation, coordination between the PNRC and Federation is good. The Bangkok regional delegation disaster risk management unit officer permanently stationed in the Philippines will continue supporting the national society on day-to-day implementation, monitoring and reporting imperatives. As part of an expanded regional disaster risk management capability in Southeast Asia, he can call on considerable management and technical expertise from the Federation Secretariat's Bangkok regional delegation, which has the primary responsibility to donors for support to PNRC in programme delivery.

**National Society Capacity Building**

The capacity of the PNRC is improving with increased visibility, especially in San Ricardo; the number of volunteers has increased, as has awareness for all Red Cross programmes.

**Communications – Advocacy and Public Information**

The PNRC activities are being advertised on community notice boards, local newspapers and radio/TV. In addition, the PNRC distributes its ICDPP (Integrated Community Disaster Planning Program) materials to all participants at training events and to the local authorities. The Southern Leyte Governor, who is also the chairman of the PNRC chapter, has regular press meetings where she advocates for the Red Cross and highlights the current rehabilitation operation.

**[Contributions list below; click here to return to the title page.](#)**