

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

Appeal no. MDRBO002
23 February 2007

BOLIVIA: FLOODS

GLIDE no.
FL-2007-000012-BOL

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 185 countries.

In Brief

Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 15 February to 22 February 2007; Appeal target: CHF 605,450 (USD 484,360 or EUR 373,735); see the operational summary below for a list of current donors to the Appeal. Coverage percentage to be confirmed.

(The Contributions List is currently being compiled and will be available on the website in due course, along with an Interim Financial Report)

Appeal history:

- Launched on 15 February 2007 for CHF 605,450 (USD 484,360 or EUR 373,735) for 6 months to assist 7,188 families (35,940 beneficiaries)
- Final Report is therefore due on 15 November 2007.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 120,000.

Operational Summary: *The Bolivian Red Cross (BRC) is carrying out surveys and identifying beneficiary families and communities for the distribution of food items and tools for agricultural rehabilitation in the Departments of Beni, Cochabamba and Potosi as defined in the BRC Plan of Action. Activities are underway for the procurement and storage of food and tools and strategically located communities are being selected for distributions to take place in each Department. Capacity building for the National Society in needs assessment and response is in preparation and is expected to take place shortly for BRC volunteers and relief personnel.*

The BRC is coordinating with all national and departmental authorities, and with humanitarian actors working in the country to ensure the needs of those affected are responded to effectively. The BRC forms part of the emergency response committees present across the country and is working with other humanitarian actors through sector groups for actions such as food and rural development. The Federation is supporting the National Society through the Regional Delegation in Lima, and the presence of two Disaster Management Delegates and two Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members in coordination, assessments and during distributions.

Contributions have been received in support of the BRC Plan of Action from the American Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation as well as the contribution from the Federation's DREF fund. Bilateral contributions include those from the Chinese Government and the Spanish Red Cross. Additional requests have been put forward by the Canadian and Italian Red Cross Societies to their respective emergency funds, and the Italian Red Cross has also announced a contribution towards the Appeal with its own funds. All contributions will support the BRC's Plan of Action to respond to the emergency and to support families affected by the floods.

The International Federation undertakes activities that are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out

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four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- *In Bolivia: Dr. Abel Peña y Lillo, President, Bolivian Red Cross, e-mail cruzrobo@caoba.entelnet.bo, phone (5912) 220 2934/ 212 9225 fax (5912) 235 9102*
- *In Peru: Giorgio Ferrario, Head of Lima Regional Delegation; e-mail giorgio.ferrario@ifrc.org, phone (511) 221-8151, fax (511) 441-3607*
- *In Panama: Stephen McAndrew, Head of PADRU, e-mail stephen.mcandrew@ifrc.org, phone (507) 316 1001; fax 316-1082*
- *In Geneva: Olaug Bergseth, Federation Regional Officer, Americas Department, Geneva; email olaug.bergseth@ifrc.org, phone (41 22) 730-4535, fax (41 22) 730-0395*

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

- *For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

Background

Since December 2006, heavy rains and floods in Bolivia have affected almost 70,000 families, mostly in Beni and Santa Cruz, have caused 35 deaths and destroyed 80,000 hectares of crops according to official figures to date. Severe rainfall at the beginning of 2007 has led to a worsening of the situation and flooding in at least five of the nine Departments in the country: Chuquisaca, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, La Paz and Beni. The heavy rains caused the overflowing of major rivers and landslides, damaging infrastructure and isolating rural communities.

The Bolivian Government has received support in the form of food items and other relief items from Argentina, Spain, the United States and Venezuela as well as other countries. In addition to these contributions, a number of humanitarian organizations are working with the Civil Defence and other governmental authorities to support those affected by the floods.

The Governmental news agency ABI has since reported that at least 800 tonnes of food items and other relief items have not yet been distributed as a result of landslides and mudslides caused by the rains. There are difficulties in reaching affected areas as one of the few paved motorways (from La Paz to Santa Cruz) has been flooded. Other unpaved roads have also been cut off with flood waters.



Communities affected by the floods have been cut off.

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According to the National Director of Civil Defence, rains are expected to continue in the South of the country, particularly in Chuquisaca and Tarija, and it is probable that the cold front from the altiplano will be on-going during the coming days.

Overall, a sustained increase in disaster impacts related to climate variability, and the consequent need for humanitarian assistance, calls for attention. The relationship of these floods in Bolivia - linked to El Niño by some authorities and agencies - to environmental degradation, urban processes and socioeconomic conditions of the affected communities, should be considered. Lessons learned should be drawn in order to link response and recovery actions with clear steps towards risk reduction and development.

Operational developments

Bolivia's Civil Defence is leading and coordinating all emergency response operations alongside local authorities and humanitarian organizations. Emergency response committees (COE) have been activated at the national, departmental and municipal level. Damage and Needs Assessments are being carried out in all affected areas by multidisciplinary teams. The Civil Defence continues to work with other actors along the lines of working groups for different sectors of intervention at the national and departmental levels to ensure all needs are responded to and to avoid duplication of activities.

The Bolivian Red Cross has responded to the emergency by mobilizing volunteers and branches under a Plan of Action which includes activities to support the affected communities in Beni, Cochabamba and Potosi. At the start of the emergency, the Federation's Disaster Relief Fund (DREF) provided support to enable activities to be carried out within the National Society's Plan of Action. An Emergency Appeal has since been published to assist 7,188 families for a period of 6 months. Since the launch of the Emergency Appeal, two Disaster Management Delegates and two Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members have been deployed to the affected areas to support the BRC in coordination, assessments and during distributions.

The BRC is maintaining close communication with the local authorities (being part of the COE) and other humanitarian organizations working in the country in sectional groups such as food and rural development. Information about the situation on the ground is being shared between the BRC branches, COE and United Nations agencies.

The BRC continues to monitor the situation on the ground and further assessments with regard to the main activities within the Plan of Action will be carried out. At present, a RIT member is in Potosi carrying out Damage and Needs Assessments with BRC branches and volunteers and, in the coming days, another BRC team, supported by a RIT member, will be deployed to evaluate the situation in Beni in more detail, as this is one of the Departments where the situation could worsen.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact

Emergency relief (food items)

Objective 1: 7,188 affected families (35,940 persons) in the departments of Cochabamba (1,744), Beni (2,440) and Potosi (3,004) benefit from the distribution of food items which help them to recover from the effects of the floods.

Activities planned to reach this objective include:

- Purchasing procedures (requisition, request for quotations, comparative bid analysis, selection of the supplier and technical approval, purchase order and payment)
- Receipt of the food items
- Warehousing, transport and identification of the distribution points
- Distribution of food items by BRC volunteers
- Monitoring and evaluation by the BRC headquarters

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Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

To date distributions are being prepared in the following ways. Surveys have been carried out and the identification of affected communities in Cochabamba has taken place. The warehousing of food items for families in Cochabamba has been carried out. An assessment team in Potosi is identifying potential locations for the distribution of food and non food items. Quotations for food items have been requested and a Purchasing Committee is being organized to monitor this process. Overall coordination with organizations working in the food sector is underway and is led by the World Food Programme (WFP).

The BRC has prepared the distribution of food items (in 45kg packages) for the 1,744 families identified in 65 communities in Cochabamba. Three communities have been identified as strategically located centres for the distribution of these items to families; Ayopaya, Ivirgarzama and Valle Sacta. It is estimated that distributions will take place shortly.

On 16 February, personnel from the BRC headquarters and a RIT member were displaced to support the branch of Potosi in a field assessment to identify beneficiary families and potential locations for distributions.

Impact:

The preparation of the food distributions is taking place quickly, despite the logistical difficulties in the affected areas. The communities and families that will receive the BRC packages have been clearly identified in Cochabamba, this process is underway in Potosi and will start shortly in Beni. So far, coordination with local authorities, the Civil Defence and other actors present in the area including the WFP has been carried out successfully.

Constraints:

The lack of access to communities in Cochabamba identified by the BRC is currently a difficulty in carrying out food distribution at the desired speed to 1,744 affected families by the floods in this area. Local authorities are working to clear and repair damaged roads. It is hoped that access to the communities will improve shortly.

National holidays in Bolivia (Carnival) took place between 16 February and 20 February. During these days many national and local authorities reduced their activities, making it difficult in some cases to carry out activities such as field assessments and coordination meetings.

Early Recovery

Objective 1: 5,444 affected families (27,220 persons) in the departments of Beni (2,440) and Potosi (3,004) benefit from the distribution of tools, contributing to the resumption of agricultural activities.

The majority of families hit by the floods have lost their crops, resulting in a significant impact on their livelihoods. The BRC's Plan of Action will ensure the distribution of tools in order to help affected families to replant crops; other agencies are expected to support the affected farmers with seeds and fertilizers, as part of the coordinated recovery efforts. Each toolkit will include a shovel, a pickaxe, a hoe and a *machete* (large knife)

The content of the toolkit mentioned above will be slightly different in the Department of Potosi, where the population does not need either a hoe or knife (machete). The BRC will either extend the number of direct beneficiaries or add different tools to the kit. This decision will depend on the coordination activities with local authorities.

Activities planned to reach this objective:

- Purchasing procedures (requisition, request for quotations, comparative bid analysis, selection of the supplier and technical approval, purchase order and payment)
- Receipt of the tools
- Surveys and the identification of affected communities
- Warehousing, transport and identification of the distribution points
- Distribution of tools by BRC volunteers

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- Monitoring and evaluation by the BRC headquarters

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

Surveys have been carried out and the identification of affected communities in Potosi has taken place, while the same activity for Beni is planned for the next days. Quotations for the items in the toolkit are being requested. The operation is being monitored and coordination with food and rural development sector organizations is ensured within the framework of overall inter-agency coordination.

Impact:

60 % of the targeted number of communities and families that will receive the tool kit have already been identified, while the identification of the remaining 40 % is planned for the next days. As mentioned above, coordination with local authorities, the Civil Defence and other actors present in the area has been carried out successfully in this activity. When distributions are underway, 5,444 families will receive tools in order to resume agricultural activities, thereby reducing the mid and long term effects of the disaster.

Constraints:

The BRC field team carrying out assessments in Potosi has mentioned difficulties in exchanging information and coordination with local authorities and the population due to the national holidays taking place during these days.

Capacity Building

Objective: The capacity of the Bolivian Red Cross in needs assessment and humanitarian response is increased.

The overall capacity of the Bolivian Red Cross to respond to disasters and to support the ability of vulnerable communities to manage disaster risk at local level is a clear weakness identified by the National Society in its Strategic plan, and has thus been included as part of the ongoing support by the Federation's Regional Delegation. Bolivia, a highly vulnerable country as identified by many different agencies through their compound criteria, has been receiving support with funding from DfID with a view to integrating programme delivery at community level within a local risk management perspective; a case study is available upon request. During 2007 – 2008, the Bolivian Red Cross will, together with neighbouring Chile and Paraguay, receive intensified support to scale up its overall capacity in local risk management, taking stock of the knowledge developed in the pilot activity of previous years. The Regional Delegation team has been coordinating the link between the present disaster response and the strengthening of the BRC's overall capacities. To this end, within the framework of the Appeal a training workshop for National Intervention Team (NIT) members within the BRC will take place. Participants will include 24 volunteers and Relief Directors from the BRC branches, with the aim of improving their capacity in the assessment of needs and in humanitarian response.

Activities planned increase BRC capacities:

- Identification of the participants
- Selection of the topics to be addressed
- Preparation of the workshop
- Reporting on the workshop

Progress/Achievements (activities implemented within this objective)

The preparation of the training workshop for BRC volunteers and personnel is underway. The agenda and content of the training workshop are being developed in coordination with the Federation's Regional Delegation in Lima.

Impact:

While the impact has yet to be measured as the activity is in progress, it is expected that the lessons learned during the response operation be used as a learning tool during the training, while linking the training to wider support for 2007 – 2008.

Constraints:

No constraints have been identified to date.

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Federation Coordination

The BRC headquarters and the National Relief Department is in permanent contact with BRC branches in the affected areas, consolidating information from the Red Cross, national and departmental authorities and other humanitarian actors. The Federation is providing support to the National Society in coordination activities and through technical advice. Contacts with Partner National Societies (PNS) present in the country are being maintained by the Lima Regional Delegation.

The Federation is providing support to the BRC with the presence of two Disaster Management Delegates from the Pan-American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and two RIT members. This presence will be scaled down over the next two weeks. Federation personnel in the affected areas are providing direct support to the BRC at meetings held with national authorities. The National Society and Federation personnel have participated in a National COE meeting as well as other general coordination meetings with the United Nations Emergency Technical Team (UNETE) currently in Bolivia.

A United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team has been mobilized in view of further actions by the UN. Other agencies such as the WFP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have carried out activities including the provision of food items, tents and other items to respond to the emergency.

A flash appeal for over USD 9,000,000 will be launched by the UN system to cover needs in the areas of shelter, food assistance and nutrition, water and sanitation, health, child protection, education, agriculture/livestock, income restoration, rehabilitation of minor infrastructure, coordination and logistics. These activities will be carried out by the following agencies: WFP, UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The BRC forms part of the Health Coordination Commission in Bolivia. Participation on the part of the National Society in meetings held by the Commission has been ongoing. Contact with Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has been carried out on a regular basis to ensure the sharing of information.

The BRC and Federation personnel have participated in the food and agricultural development sector meetings. Other institutions present at the meeting included WFP, the Ministry of Rural Development, Medicos Mundi, and CARE. Information was shared at the meeting and the coordination of future actions was addressed. The sector meetings are currently taking place once a week.

A Disaster Management Delegate was deployed to Santa Cruz for a limited time to support the Bolivian Red Cross and local authorities in an overall assessment on the situation of shelter for affected communities, an area which is being managed by the Sub Secretary of Human Development from the Government with the support of other organizations.

The Federation is working closely with the above mentioned agencies to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and that the needs of the families affected by the floods are met.

Contributions to the Appeal to date through the Federation include those from the American Red Cross, the Swedish Red Cross, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the contribution from the Federation's DREF fund. Bilateral contributions made directly to the BRC's Plan of Action include those from the Chinese Government and the Spanish Red Cross. Additional requests have been put forward by the Canadian and Italian Red Cross Societies to their respective emergency funds, and the Italian Red Cross has also announced a contribution towards the appeal with its own funds. All contributions will support the BRC's Plan of Action to respond to support families affected by the floods.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and initiatives

The Federation is supporting the BRC to assist the communities that have been affected by the floods. In the planned operation, the activities to be carried out in emergency assistance are based upon the principle of

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humanity. Beneficiary selection criteria focus on the level of vulnerability of those affected, respect of the culture and ensuring gender sensitivity.

Activities planned for this appeal are based on SPHERE standards, the humanitarian charter and the code of conduct for emergency response. The operation is guided by principles and rules relating to transparency in the drawing up and dissemination of narrative and financial reports. All objectives put forward in the Appeal are in line with Strategy 2010, as well as the Strategy for the Movement and the Principles and Rules of the Movement.

National Society Capacity Building

National Society capacity building is taking place both with on-the-job coaching by Federation delegates and Regional Intervention Team members made available from other National Societies and the foreseen NIT training course, together with ensuring the connection of the present disaster response activities with the 2-year support of National Society activities with DfID funding.

It is expected that the BRC radio telecommunications network will be reinforced in order to ensure more effective and faster channels of communication.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The launch of the Emergency Appeal by the Federation on 15 February was accompanied by a press release in Europe and the Americas. The Appeal was also disseminated amongst international and local media.

A communications plan has been developed to support the implementation of the National Society's Plan of Action. This plan includes visibility, monitoring of the operation (through video and other communication materials) which will ensure accountability to donors and communities. Almost all affected communities speak Quechua as a first language, which will be considered throughout all communication activities with the community.

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