

# 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

## NAMIBIA: CAPRIVI FLOODS

Emergency Appeal no. MDRNA003

Glide no. FL-2007-000030-NAM

28 April 2007

*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 183 countries.*

### In Brief

**Appeal no. MDRNA003; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 22 March to 22 April 2007; Appeal coverage: 41.3%.**

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#### Appeal history:

- [Emergency Appeal](#) was launched on 22 March 2007 for CHF 877,479 (USD 719,245 or EUR 545,018) to assist 15,000 beneficiaries (3,000 families) for six months.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 112, 877.

**Outstanding needs: CHF 515,410 (USD 423,857 or EUR 318,154).**

**Operational Summary:** To date, flooding in the Caprivi Region of Namibia has resulted in nine deaths and displaced over 6,000 people from two constituencies (Kabbe and Katima Rural). The displaced people, who lost their homes and crops, relocated to camps in upland areas of Lusese, Kabbe, Schuckmansburg and Impalila.

The Namibia Red Cross, in support of government efforts to assist the affected people, proposed to assist at least 3,000 flood-affected households in need of shelter, water, sanitation, health, hygiene promotion and provision of non-food items for six months. The Federation regional delegation in Harare has been providing technical support, focusing on capacity building of the Namibia Red Cross.



A community member treats water after receiving sachets of water purification chemical from the Namibia Red Cross.

Since the operation begun, over 6,000 beneficiaries have been registered in relocation sites and relief items have been distributed to 2,077 families. The items include 1,763 tarpaulins, 3,589 blankets, 880 jerry cans, 318 mosquito nets, 434 bars of soap and 33,952 sachets of water purification chemicals.

The existing partnership between the Regional Emergency Management Unit (REMU) and the Namibia Red Cross has been enhanced through collaboration in planning and implementation of the relief operation.

**This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out 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.**

## **Background**

Due to heavy rains in Angola since December 2006, the Zambezi River burst its banks in February 2007, causing flooding in the Caprivi region of Namibia. Floods are a perennial phenomenon in Caprivi, with the most devastating flooding having been experienced in 2004. However, this year's floods are expected to be the worst since 1958; on 4 March 2007, the water level of the Zambezi River stood at 7.28 metres compared to 3.80 metres at the same date in 2004.

The floods have affected four constituencies, namely Kabbe, Katima Rural, Linyanti and Kongola. The most severely-flooded areas are in the Kabbe and Katima Rural constituencies where many villages, fields, cattle and boreholes were submerged. Nine people have been reported to have died since the beginning of the floods (through drowning, crocodile attacks and snake bites), 11 schools affected (with 1,120 pupils relocated to other schools in higher grounds of Schuckmansburg, Lusese and Kabbe) and roads in all the floodplains rendered impassible. In the Linyanti and Kongola constituencies, there were no losses or threats to human life but crops were submerged in water, signaling food insecurity as these areas are the 'bread baskets' of the region. The affected communities were evacuated and resettled in four identified sites in Lusese, Schuckmansburg, Kabbe and Impalila. The resettled people need assistance in the form of shelter, food, health, water and sanitation.

## **Operational developments**

Although the water level of the Zambezi River is now decreasing (5.78 metres on 18 April 2007), the displaced people cannot return to their homes since villages in the flooded plains are still unreachable and houses are either destroyed or still partially flooded. Aerial assessments revealed that some villages are still underwater thus the relocated people are likely to stay in relocation camps until August 2007.

The main challenge to the relief operation has been lack of resources due to slow funding response to the floods emergency appeal. The Namibian government released NAD 10 million (CHF 1.7 million) for the floods operation and has been supportive to the Namibia Red Cross in purchasing relief items and providing transportation means (trucks and boats). The National Society, with support from government, has distributed non-food relief items (NFI) such as blankets, rigid jerry cans, tarpaulins, sachets of water treatment chemicals and soap to beneficiaries in the four relocation sites. The Red Cross has so far been able to assist more than 8,000 people, within the relocation sites and other vulnerable communities.

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

**Overall Objective: Provision of shelter, water and sanitation, communicable disease prevention and distribution of non-food items to 3,000 affected households.**

Since the onset of the disaster, the Caprivi branch of Namibia Red Cross has been involved in the operation in collaboration with the Regional Emergency Management Unit (REMU). The collaboration has been in areas such as planning, coordination meetings, assessments, training of Red Cross volunteers and distribution of relief materials.

**Objective 1 (Shelter): To provide temporary shelter to 3,000 households in the four relocation sites.**

### **Progress**

Red Cross volunteers managed to register all affected people arriving at the relocation sites. This was complimented by government officers who also registered people for the distribution of food. The table below shows the number of beneficiaries registered as of 18 April 2007.

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**Table 1: Beneficiaries registered at relocation sites (as of 18 April 2007)**

| <b>Name of camp</b> | <b>Households</b> | <b>Total beneficiaries</b> | <b>Under five years</b> | <b>Elderly</b> | <b>Pregnant women</b> | <b>People with disabilities</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Lusese camp A and B | 448               | 1,576                      | 355                     | 45             | 35                    | 10                              |
| Lusese teachers     | 20                | 96                         | 0                       | 0              | 0                     | 0                               |
| Kabbe camp C        | 231               | 1,079                      | 183                     | 54             | 19                    | 12                              |
| Kabbe camp D        | 29                | 160                        | 0                       | 0              | 0                     | 0                               |
| Schuckmansburg camp | 312               | 1,405                      | 343                     | 33             | 35                    | 29                              |
| Lisikili School     | 0                 | 508                        | 0                       | 0              | 0                     | 0                               |
| Impalila            | 64                | 302                        | 77                      | 40             | 7                     | 10                              |
| Kasika              | 103               | 478                        | 100                     | 53             | 7                     | 11                              |
| Balasinte           | 87                | 477                        | 87                      | 49             | 5                     | 4                               |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>1,294</b>      | <b>6,081</b>               | <b>1,145</b>            | <b>274</b>     | <b>108</b>            | <b>76</b>                       |

In terms of shelter, the Red Cross has distributed tarpaulins and plastic sheeting for temporary shelter to all the relocated households. Red Cross volunteers will continue to provide tarpaulins and plastic sheeting to new arrivals still trickling into the camps, at an average rate of ten people per week.

**Constraints**

Due to a lack of resources, provision of tents has not been undertaken by Red Cross. The Namibia Red Cross had to rely on the government, which has provided 233 family tents, to purchase items for use in the operation. The National Society also requested REMU to assist in purchasing plastic sheeting and nails. Furthermore, due to transport difficulties, some of the relocated people with no shelter could only receive shelter materials and other non-food items from 5 April 2007, when boats became available.

**Objective 2 (Health): To facilitate community-based first aid and prevention of communicable diseases through health education and hygiene promotion at the four relocation sites over a period of six months.**

**Progress**

The Ministry of Health (MoH) is providing all curative services from clinics near the relocation sites. Additional nurses have been deployed to assist in these clinics and an outreach programme has been set up in all outposts. At the start of the relief operation, the National Society trained 20 volunteers (five in Lusese, five in Kabbe and ten in Katima) to conduct first aid and health education in the relocation sites using the anti-retroviral therapy (ART) tool kit. An additional 52 volunteers have been trained and are involved in health promotion and awareness.

During the reporting period, a total of 2,000 households were reached with health and hygiene education campaigns. The campaigns were conducted by trained volunteers, and included the following activities:

- Educating communities on health, hygiene practices (such as washing of hands and utensils with soap and clean water) and environmental hygiene;
- Supporting the establishment of hygiene facilities such as rubbish pits, pot racks and bathing shelters;
- Supporting home-based care (HBC) clients in the relocated sites, using volunteer care facilitators;
- Promoting proper and hygienic use of latrines.

**Objective 3 (WatSan): To provide safe drinking water and sanitation at the four relocation sites namely Impalila, Schuckmannsburg, Kabbe and Lusese.**

**Progress**

The water supply situation has improved at relocation sites of Lusese A and B, and Kabbe C, where piped water has been installed. This has increased the water supply level to acceptable standards; each person has access to 20 litres of safe water per day. The Namibia Red Cross has distributed 33,952 sachets of water treatment chemicals to 1,662 households in relocated sites, and members of communities have been assisting in the purification of drinking water.

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To date, the National Society has so far constructed 30 latrines, out of the proposed 44, and ten more will be completed before the end of April 2007. So far, no disease outbreaks have been reported in the relocation sites. This can partly be attributed to the action by the Red Cross in provision of safe water and promotion of proper hygiene practices in the camps.

**Table 2: Water and sanitation activities (as of 20 April 2007)**

| Site/camp      | Population | Water situation  | No. of proposed latrines | No. of latrines pending | Comments  |
|----------------|------------|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Lisikili       | 508        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplying 5,000 litres per day (to be increased to 10,000 litres per day).</li> </ul> | 6                        | 2                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bathing shelters done.</li> <li>• Use of latrines encouraged.</li> </ul>           |
| Kabbe D        | 279        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fetching from a borehole.</li> </ul>  | 12                       | 0                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latrines in deplorable state (they need to be cleaned).</li> </ul>                 |
| Kabbe C        | 1,079      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piped water supply.</li> </ul>  | 10                       | 4                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of latrines encouraged.</li> </ul>   |
| Lusese A       | 725        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piped water supply.</li> </ul>  | 8                        | 4                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of latrines encouraged.</li> </ul>   |
| Lusese B       | 1,005      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piped water supply.</li> </ul>  | 8                        | 4                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of latrines encouraged.</li> </ul>   |
| Schuckmansburg | 1,221      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Borehole.</li> <li>• Open well.</li> <li>• Piped tank.</li> </ul>                     | 0                        | 14                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 latrines under construction (to be completed before end April 2007).</li> </ul> |
| Impalila       | 302        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untreated piped water.</li> </ul>   | 0                        | 4                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No latrines as yet (plans at advanced stage).</li> </ul>                           |

**Constraints**

At Kabbe D, there are 12 toilets belonging to the school but are not being used due to their deplorable condition. There is a great need in health education and good hygiene practices, especially in promoting proper use of latrines and using lime chloride to disinfect them. A lack of motivation and participation by the communities has delayed latrine construction. Due to these delays, MoH deployed eight environmental labourers to assist in the construction of the latrines. The government has also provided material resources for latrine construction.

At the Lisikili School camp where 508 pupils have relocated to, only 5,000 litres of water is being trucked in on a daily basis, which is far less than the camp's daily needs. Recommendations were made to increase the truck load to 10,000 litres per day but efforts to improve the situation have been hampered because there is insufficient water in the borehole to pump into the available 10,000 litre water tank. At Kabbe D, 160 people are getting their water from a borehole which may have been contaminated.

In Schuckmansburg, safe drinking water is still a challenge as the available water sources are overwhelmed by the number of people on the island; the island normally has 80 households but now has 312 households. A Red Cross water and sanitation technician is working together with Ministry of Rural Water Development to increase the water supply. A new 1,000-litre tank will be sent to supplement the existing one and a generator has been purchased and is already on site. In Impalila, people are using untreated piped and have been provided with some sachets of water treatment chemicals. There is need to purify water in the distribution tank before use.

At Kasika and Balasinte, members of the community and the relocated people are using water from open wells that may have been contaminated. The communities complained of insects in the water. However, the water has not been tested due to inaccessibility of the area.

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### **Objective 4 (Relief items): To provide non-food items to 3,000 households over a period of six months.**

#### **Progress**

Namibia Red Cross distributed NFI to families who had lost all their property. By 19 April 2007, the National Society had distributed 1,763 tarpaulins, plastic sheeting, 3,589 blankets, 880 jerry cans, 318 insecticide-treated mosquito nets (ITNs), 480 bars soap and 33,952 sachets of water treatment chemicals to 2,077 families.

#### **Constraints**

Communities that were evacuated were urged to bring along some household items but many could not as the boats could only carry small loads. Due to insufficient stocks of soap, the available soap bars were cut into 4 x 250g tablets.



Namibia Red Cross distributing relief items to relocated families.

### **Objective 5 (Institutional development): Namibia Red Cross has appropriate and affordable organization structures at provincial and branch levels, with equipment to improve the capacity in disaster response.**

#### **Progress**

Red Cross volunteers have been trained on carrying out relief distributions, health and hygiene promotion, water chlorination, construction of latrines, registration of beneficiaries and as committee members for managing relocation camps. Furthermore, Namibia Red Cross staff has participated in coordination meetings, managing logistical needs and have been accountable for all resources for the relief operation.

#### **Constraints**

The Namibia Red Cross does not have a health officer to spearhead activities within the health sector. The current flood response activities are putting a strain on other programme staff whose attention is diverted to the flood operation to the detriment of their programme activities.

#### **Federation coordination**

In response to the floods, the Federation regional delegation in Harare has been supporting Namibia Red Cross in ensuring consistency in service delivery. A disaster task force was formed at the Federation regional delegation in Harare in February 2007, led by the disaster management unit. Other members of the task force include the regional programmes coordinator, health officer, WatSan delegate as well as information and reporting senior officers. Regular meetings and teleconferences are being held to share information and to ensure a well-coordinated response. Two Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) officers were sent to support the Namibia Red Cross in improving planning and coordination with other partners.

Namibia Red Cross has a good working relationship and cooperation with other partners, and is part of the coordination mechanism established by the government to respond to disasters in Namibia. At regional level, REMU set up a task force to coordinate the response mechanisms, at the first sign of floods. The task force meets three times a week to get feedback on the operation as well as to plan future activities. These meetings are also attended by other partners, including World Food Programme (WFP) and the private sector.

#### **Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement - Principles and initiatives**

Namibia Red Cross will pay particular attention to the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, giving special emphasis on voluntary service and humanity during implementation of the intervention activities. This should help build a better understanding of the Red Cross and also encourage a better understanding of health and hygiene issues surrounding cholera outbreaks.

The Red Cross activities will enlist the participation of women and children as they are key players in health, HIV and AIDS prevention programme, water and hygiene-related issues, while also working together with community and opinion leaders in affected communities.

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### **Capacity of the National Society**

The Namibia Red Cross is present in all 13 regions of the country, implementing projects aimed at alleviating the suffering of the most vulnerable people. The strength of the National Society lies within its regional structure which has 11 RDRT-trained staff members actively supporting the floods relief operation.

Previous experiences in responding to the floods (in 2003 and 2004) provided Namibia Red Cross with the capacity to be a partner of the government in disaster response. The National Society is a member of Disaster Management Committee of the Directorate of Disaster Management (DDM), at national and regional levels. The Ministry of Health is very interested in coordinating activities such as community-based health and care, HIV and AIDS prevention as well as advocacy activities with the National Society.

During the current floods operation, the local Red Cross branch collaborated and coordinated all the relief activities with the relevant departments. Some of Namibia Red Cross regional offices are implementing partners of the World Health Organization (WHO), WFP, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with regards to humanitarian activities such as health and care services, HIV and AIDS prevention programme, food security and refugee situations.

### **Communications – Advocacy and public information**

The Federation regional delegation in Harare will continue supporting Namibia Red Cross in advocating for the funding of relief materials. In addition, the National Society will increasingly use its information bulletin as an advocacy tool. National and the regional information officers visited the flooded areas to document the floods disaster and profile Red Cross actions. This provided material for the web news pages, Federation press releases and photographs. This material would be made available for use by the National Society and the media.

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