

Operations update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

West and Central Africa: Early Warning/Early Action

Emergency appeal n° MDR61005
Operations update n° 1
19 October, 2009

Period covered by this Ops Update: 6 August - 7 October 2009.

Appeal target (current): CHF 918,517 (USD 896,114 or EUR 605,283)

Appeal coverage: 91%; [<click here to go directly to the updated donor response report, here to link to contact details or here to the attached map>](#)

Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on 6 August 2009 for CHF 918,517 for 9 months to assist 25,000 beneficiaries.
- **Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF):** CHF 200,000 was allocated from the Federation's DREF to support this Appeal and related action.

Summary: Despite the effectiveness of this early warning and early action initiative and the related activities carried

out, the flood occurrence in many countries has been very severe due to the fact that the heavy precipitation came at the end of the rainy season often after two months of normal rainy conditions. The location of these rains (in areas with poor urbanization policies) exacerbated an already difficult situation. Based on ongoing updated meteorological reports from the African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD) highlighting heavy precipitations, other countries were included in this appeal.

Therefore, some 51 climate risk bulletins for the humanitarian community in West Africa have been disseminated to the National Societies within the zone through the Disaster Management volunteer's network (93 members of RDRT, 600 members of CDRT and 240 members of NDRT) as early warning for appropriate actions.

So far fourteen (14) countries (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Niger, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Benin, Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Togo and Guinea) have been flooded in West Africa. Early response conducted by National Societies supported by the Zone office and other movement partners (Spanish Red Cross and AECID, Danish Red Cross and Finish Red Cross) have been implemented to assist at least 738,664 most vulnerable people with stocks available in Dakar and Accra regional warehouses and transported to the countries. Some affected countries, have been supported with agricultural tools, seeds, fish nets and shelter kits to mitigate the impact of the disaster and restore their livelihoods and coping mechanisms.



Non food items distribution/ PhotoWCAZ

The situation

In line with the ACMAD forecast for the 2009 floods season in West and Central Africa, the monthly updates and the short term forecast sent by the IFRC/WCAZ focal point based in ACMAD, the West and Central Africa Zone has been systematically monitoring climate information on all timescales, linking information to action. The Early Warning and Early Action (EW/EA) framework has been implemented using different tools and different source of funding. The contingency stocks which have been constituted in 2008 through EW/EA

appeal with support from Participating National Societies (PNSs), stand alone DREF of CHF 200,000 made available in early September 2009 provided cash to cover the operational costs of the early response in terms of Non-food items (NFI) distribution, transport cost and operational costs related to NFIs distribution, health sensitization, hygiene promotion and other concerned costs as well as annual appeal funds. These annual appeal funds have been used to train National Disaster Response Teams (NDRTs), Community-based Disaster Response Teams (CDRTs) and Regional Disaster Response Teams (RDRTs) which have been extensively used during the early response to floods. Thanks to the regular support provided by the Department for International Development (DfID), the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID)/Spanish Red Cross, Irish Red Cross, Norwegian Red Cross and Swedish Red Cross. The severity of some of the floods is attributed to the fact that the rains in many areas arrived at the end of the season (after two months of precipitation under normal conditions), and the poor urbanization policies exacerbated the floods in many densely population areas.

The Early warning – Early action framework was implemented in Senegal, Burkina Faso, Niger, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Benin, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Togo and Guinea. The regional approach allows Disaster Management managers in WCAZ to allocate resource according to the needs and to move resources (NFIs and staff) from one country to another according to the context and community needs. Flexibility in resource management made available through the DREF CHF 200,000 pre-positioned contingency stocks and trained NDRT, RDRT and CDRT with community participation increased the effectiveness of early response activities. The Central African Republic (CAR), Senegal, and Burkina Faso also have been supported for early response through WCAZ contingency stock based in Dakar, Accra/Benin and Yaoundé. These countries are now covered by a specific Emergency Appeals. The rainy season is now ending in West Africa. The West and Central Africa Zone will focus on providing support to affected communities in recovery area. The African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development (ACMAD) seasonal forecast for Central Africa will be released in October and an Operation update will be issued to prepare for early response in this zone, particularly concerned by urban floods. Appropriate contingency stocks have been prepositioned in Yaoundé and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The stock used for early response activities is being partially replenished thanks to the support from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and movement partners.

Coordination and partnerships

National Societies in the affected countries have taken appropriate roles in their national emergency response systems which coordinate disaster preparedness and response activities. Affected communities themselves are at the centre of action by providing the necessary information to those most at risk, working through National Societies at the local level in working together and engaging local authorities and community leaders.

Regular information sharing is being coordinated at the Federation Zone office through the Natural Disaster and Climate change and adaptation regional platform (IASC Dakar), while at country level this is fed through National Societies into the national task forces. Consultations are occurring with major stakeholders such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to monitor the food situation. Movement coordination meetings are serving to adjust response strategies to respond to needs as they occur. Regular contact with the ICRC is taking place in order to coordinate disaster intervention in insecure areas.

National Society Capacity Building:

National Societies are benefitting in a positive way from pre-positioned stocks (both at regional and country levels) and by disaster preparedness activities in the form of training of national disaster response teams (NDRTs) and community disaster response teams (CDRTs). Contingency planning is also providing an appropriate platform to strengthen National Society preparedness, particularly in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Mali, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire as well as early response in Senegal and Burkina Faso.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Overview: In July, the following activities were conducted.

- **Guinea Conakry:** The Red Cross Society of Guinea (RCSG) has been engaged in supporting communities in the suburbs of Conakry and those living near swamps of the capital city of Conakry. The

RCSG has been able to respond to more than 5,000 affected families with hygiene promotion activities based on its pool of volunteers and with the support of the Danish Red Cross.

- **Sierra Leone:** Approximately 450 houses have been reported destroyed and nearly 700 people forced to leave their habitats in the affected areas of Freetown and the provincial districts. The Sierra Leone Red Cross Society (SLRCS) is playing a major role in mobilising its volunteers. A total of 26 SLRCS Disaster Management Action Teams and 386 volunteers have been teaming up at group levels in all affected communities, collaborating with partners such as the Office of National Security and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and other partners in order to mobilize all necessary support to bring the situation under control in the Western Area. In the affected districts, at least 17 youth and adult members took part in the monitoring, assessment, rescue and evacuation of injured persons to the government hospitals. Non-food Items were distributed for 500 families including sleeping mats, mosquito nets, blankets, jerry cans, PUR, buckets, soap, oral rehydration salt (ORS), shelter kits and kitchen sets.
- **Mali:** Heavy rains in Mali have caused flooding in several localities. The Mali Red Cross has mobilized teams of volunteers. Reports indicate that a total of 6,922 people have been affected, 1,078 houses collapsed, 20mt of food lost, and 801 latrines infected. The ICRC has supported the Mali Red Cross with NFI for 80 families while the Federation provided NFI for 231 families.
- **Gambia:** From July to September 2009, torrential downpours and strong winds across the country resulted in heavy floods and significant damage to houses and livelihoods (over 1,986 affected). The Federation supported the GRCS through a DREF allocation in July and through the provision of NFI to assist 381 families on September. Items distributed include shelter kits, kitchen sets, and blankets, tarpaulins, sleeping mats, soap, jerry cans, buckets and mosquito nets.
- **Côte d'Ivoire:** The rainy season continued in the northwest of the country. In mid-September, the villages of Duékoué, Bin-Houyé and Zouan-Hounien were flooded, with collapsed houses affecting some 1,274 people. The National Society deployed its teams of volunteers to carry out assessments, to sensitize communities on good hygiene practices to prevent cholera and water-borne diseases, to distribute food and seeds to kick-start agricultural activities, and insure food security and to distribute NFI (blankets, sleeping mats, tarpaulins, buckets and soap). The ICRC supported the National Society in carrying out these activities.
- **Ghana,** the Ghana Red Cross Society (GRCS) has distributed relief items to 983 most affected families through a DREF. Items distributed include tarpaulins, kitchen set, blankets, soap, mats, jerry cans, and mosquito nets. Red Cross volunteers continue to provide first-aid treatment, psychological counselling and health education to the community people some of whom have moved to safer places for shelter.
- **Benin:** a DREF was allocated to assist 22,035 affected families: The Red Cross of Benin (RCB) with the support of the Federation has assisted the most affected 22,035 persons (4,407 households) with basic non-food relief items including mosquito nets, blankets, soap, water purification tablets and clothing for children. The Red Cross volunteers have also carried out sensitization activities on good hygiene before relief items distribution. Items distributed include, blankets, PUR, soap, jerrycans, clothes for children and mosquito nets.
- **Central African Republic (CAR):** An appeal was launched to support the National Society to assist 6,000 beneficiaries. Volunteers have been mobilized for this operation and have prepared the sites to host the flood-affected people. The 6,000 beneficiaries targeted for this operation have received basic household items. The collective efforts of the National Society, the Federation, and PNS have resulted in the provision of safe and adequate water and reducing communicable diseases and epidemic outbreaks.
- **Chad:** 1,136 families have been targeted for Red Cross support, with a DREF allocated to continue the early response activities conducted by the National Society.
- **Mali:** In the Mali North region: 80 families have been supported with NFIs kits by Mali Red Cross supported by ICRC.

Regional preparedness: Early response has been conducted by National Societies supported by the Zone office and other movement partners (Spanish Red Cross and AECID, Danish Red Cross and Finish Red Cross). The NDRT, CDRT and RDRT training programme implemented by the Zone has enabled National Societies to take early action. A DREF was released to cover operational costs of the prepositioned NFIs in the Zone. The WCAZ is continuously working on improving its collaboration with the climatologist and the daily climate bulletin produced by ACMAD for the International Federation. This bulletin is undergoing further changes to meet the expectations of the communities at risk. Since several countries within the Zone have been supported in 2008-2009 through Community-based Disaster Response Teams (CDRT) and National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) trainings, most national societies have put their teams on standby and some deployed in the monitoring of the river level rise like in Togo and Ghana. The International Federation Desk in ACMAD produces tailored bulletin to the Federation and regularly disseminated to National Societies focussing on “red alerts” related to imminent risks. Regional contingency stocks are managed in such way to keep always a given level of capacity which means used item should be replaced. The RDRT alert remains standing for 15 RDRT members readily to be deployed. Regular inter-agency meetings are organized weekly in Dakar to exchange information on “WHO DOES WHAT AND WHERE”.

All National Societies are part of the national disaster coordination bodies, thereby ensuring complementarity in disaster response interventions.

Progress towards objectives

Early Warning System	
Objective 1: The relevant information is communicated and the appropriate action is taken in consultation with communities at risk	
Expected results	Activities planned
Volunteers at the community level are aware about weather forecast and are well organized to inform and support communities to be better prepared to related disasters and take early action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate an appropriate information to communities using low-cost communication networks (radio, sms and so on) according to the local context; Identify the communities at risk and build dialog structure with communities leader/management structure; Train the local volunteers committee in translating meteorological information to communities in intelligible messages and actions; Link early warning to action through contingency plan

Progress: Despite the initial low level of response from donors the zone has been managing with the available resources in providing timely information and improving its climate risk bulletin. So far, some 51 climate risk bulletins for the humanitarian community in West Africa have been disseminated to the National Societies within the zone through the Disaster Management volunteer’s network (93 members of RDRT, 600 members of CDRT and 240 members of NDRT). Training modules for volunteers have been developed for the use of climate information.

Challenges: The lack of trainers and disseminated information to volunteers has caused a delay. The ACMAD-tailored bulletin for the Federation needs to be translated into a format that is more used friendly especially to the communities at risk and the National Societies. In collaboration with Columbia University, efforts are being made to incorporate community leaders and structures for translating the information.

Contingency planning	
Objective: Refreshed trainings on contingency planning and assessment are organized.	
Expected results	Activities planned
Volunteers at the branch level are trained and well prepared, and contingency plans are focussed on predicted risks in coordination with partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh trainings for the branches on contingency planning with early warning system and assessment components; Community risk monitoring (rivers, dams, rainfall); Carry out simulation exercises and implement contingency plan.

Progress: Contingency plans have been reviewed in all flood-prone countries. In Nigeria, Benin and Togo simulation exercises have taken place with major stakeholders (including the UN). The contingency planning has enabled the Togolese Red Cross to affirm its auxiliary role to its government and is leading the first aid component. The Zone office has supported the Togolese Red Cross to implement monitoring on the Mano River. Technical review for this project was provided by Columbia University. With the volunteers and at risk communities participation, the early warning system in place was improved and has limited the impact of the floods on 667 families (approximately 3,335 people) living in the villages of Agome-Glozou, Batonou, Agome-Seva, Sesou-Kondji, Doh – Kondji).

Challenges: There is still a need to get to more localized contingency planning for rural areas where crops and other livelihood means are at risk. The low rate of funding response is making it difficult to conduct rapid response.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion	
Objective: The risk of waterborne and water related diseases has been reduced through the provision of safe water.	
Expected results	Activities planned
Safe water is provided to 5,000 families affected by floods (25,000 beneficiaries).	Appropriate water and sanitation kits are distributed and beneficiaries are sensitized to health risks and hygiene promotion.

Progress: The prepositioning of water purification at strategic areas within the zone is providing a quicker response whenever the flood is reported and the need identified. Water and sanitation kits are readily at different locations of the zone for deployment where necessary and specialized trained staffs from the RDRT pool have also been prepared to accompany the deployment of any kit. About 50,100 people have been sensitized by volunteers on hygiene, proper use of water and sanitation kits and mosquito net distributed.

Challenges: Although the remarkable performance of volunteers, there is still a need for more training and sensitization of communities on the use of PUR. The misuse of the tablets is a challenge, and there is a need to multiply Education Information and Communication (EIC) materials for public awareness on the use of PUR.

Non-food item contingency stock storage and distribution	
Objective: Pre-positioning of non-food items for 25,000 beneficiaries	
Expected results	Activities planned
Contingency stocks are provided with NFI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply NFI through PNS support and with the Federation Regional Logistics Unit in Dubai; Provision warehouses within the flood prone region with NFI; Strengthen warehouse maintenance and management.

Progress: So far fourteen (14) countries (Senegal, Burkina Faso, Niger, Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Benin, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Togo and Guinea) have been flooded in West Africa with at least 738,664 people affected. Stocks available in Dakar and Accra regional warehouses have been transported to the countries and have been used to assist the most vulnerable people. In line with the early warning and early action planning, the prepositioned stocks served to complement the country stock mobilized locally for rapid response. About 24,625 people were assisted with deployed stock as detailed in the table below:

Countries	Targeted Families	Tarpaulins	Blankets	MII	Sleeping mats	Jerry cans	Buckets	Tents	Shelter kits	Kitchen sets	Soap	ORS	PUR
Gambia 1	31	31	0	62	62	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Gambia 2	50	0	100	100	100	50	50	10	50	50	50	250	300
Gambia 3	300	600	600	300	600	300	300	0	0	0	300	0	0

Mauritania	400	0	800	800	400	400	400	0	0	400	1,200	2,000	0
Sierra Leone	500	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	500	500	0	500	500	6,000	2,500	3,000
Guinea	300	600	600	300	600	300	300	0	0	0	300	0	0
Mali	231	0	462	231	462	231	231	0	231	0	231	0	0
Niger	500	0	0	500	1,000	0	500	0	500	500	500	0	0
Nigeria	500	0	1,000	500	1,000	0	0	0	500	500	500	0	0
Senegal	863	199	1,338	1,532	1,726	863	669		0	179	8,028	3,345	18,370
Burkina Faso	1,250	2,173	1,000	2,000	3,500	250	750	0	0	1,250	750	0	0
Total distributed	4,925	3,603	6,900	5,325	10,450	2,894	3,700	10	1,781	3,379	17,859	8,095	21,670

Challenges: Due to deteriorated road conditions due to floods in West Africa as well as customs formalities at the borders, some transport times to deliver supplies to affected areas took longer than anticipated.

Livelihood

Objective: Reduce climate-related impact on livelihoods.

Expected results

- Seeds and agricultural tools are procured and distributed to targeted beneficiaries.
- Secure seeds for planting.

Activities planned

- Identify the targeted beneficiaries;
- Procure and distribute seeds and agricultural tools;
- Provide advice and technical support;
- Improve the seed storage system.

Progress: Communities affected by floods in Niger, Gambia, Guinea, Nigeria, Chad, Senegal and Mali have been supported with agricultural tools, seeds, fish nets and shelter kits to mitigate the impact of the disaster and restore their livelihoods and coping mechanisms.

Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The Dakar zone office, in close cooperation with the National Societies involved in the preparedness and response activities and with the support of Geneva-based colleagues, have been integrally involved and engaged in promoting the appeal and concept. Various press pieces have been produced and released, and several media coverage through interviews and press conferences has been held at the zone and country level. A tracking system has been put in place to record various actions undertaken from the alert to the actual occurrence of flooding. An evaluation will be undertaken at the end of the preparedness phase, with assessments as well to determine the effectiveness of National Society operational response to the floods.

How we work

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 (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its 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.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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Floods Western Africa

