

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Benin: Floods Extension

DREF operation n° MDRBJ006
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The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

Period covered by this update: 7 August to 25 September, 2009.

Appeal history:

- **CHF 90,882 (USD 83,462 or EUR 59,845) was allocated on 10 July, 2009 from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Red Cross of Benin in delivering immediate assistance to some 5,285 beneficiaries. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**
- **On 6 August 2009, CHF 483,473 (USD 425,554 or EUR 320,690) was allocated to support the Red Cross of Benin to extend the assistance to some 22,035 beneficiaries for three months.**



Red Cross volunteers sensitizing the communities on how to use bed net/Red Cross of Benin

Summary

The Red Cross of Benin (RCB) continued to provide relief assistance to people affected by floods in Benin. The Red Cross has distributed non-food items such as soap, blankets, plastic buckets, water purification tablets and Insecticide Treated Mosquito Nets (ITN) to the affected people in Dangbo, Cotonou, Abomey-Calavi and Porto-Novo. The Red Cross volunteers continued to sensitize communities in these communes on good hygiene practices, treatment of potable water and on the code of conduct. With the DREF Extension and at no extra cost, the Red Cross of Benin is also assisting the population affected by the recent floods in the communes of Athiémé, Lokossa and Grand-Popo. The National Society has distributed NFI to the most affected households in these communities and the Red Cross volunteers are presently carrying out sensitization on good hygiene practices among the affected communities. The National Society had also trained 177 volunteers for the continuation of the relief operation.

The National Society continued to collaborate with government agencies, local authorities, community leaders and the UN agencies in alleviating the impact of floods in the affected communities. The collaborative efforts of the Red Cross are contributing to meeting the immediate needs of the affected communities and reducing the risk of epidemics outbreak in the various areas. This operation was expected to be implemented over 3 months, and completed by 30 September 2009. However, with the recent floods in Mono Couffo region and the intervention of the Red Cross, the National Society seeks

for another extension period of 2 months at no extra cost. This operation will now be completed by 30 November 2009. In line with Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by February, 2010).

The DREF allocation has been replenished by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) and the Canadian Government. The major donors to the DREF are the Irish, Italian, Netherlands and Norwegian governments and ECHO.

<http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/responding/drs/tools/dref/donors.asp>;

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The situation

The torrential rains during the last week of June 2009 have caused heavy floods in the Atlantic and the Coastal regions of Benin. The heavy flooding was compounded by the construction of houses in drainage areas, thereby blocking the drainage system. The blockage has caused flooding in two residential areas of Akogbato and Cocotomey in Abomey-Calavi and in 16 other areas in Cotonou namely Agontinkon, Fifadji, Ahogbohoulè, Agongbomè, Ahwansori, Ladjì, Vossa, Akpakpadodomè, Yagbé, Minontchou, Avotrou, Zogbohoulè, Ayibatèn, Irédé, Agbodjèdo, Cadjèhoun/Houéyiho. The Red Cross of Benin in collaboration with local authorities carried out a preliminary assessment of the situation. According to the Red Cross, seven persons have died and an estimated 13,464 persons from 2,064 households have been affected by the floods. Some 5,749 children under 5 years were among the affected persons.

Many buildings including schools, health centres and other infrastructures have been submerged by the flood water. Potable water points, latrines, culverts and many personal belongings such as clothes, school materials and domestic animals were also affected. All these have been estimated at millions of francs CFA (national currency of Benin). Most of the houses in the Akogbato area are makeshift houses thereby making them easy to be submerged by floods. With their houses flooded by water, the affected people have had to seek shelter in unorthodox ways, including on table tops or other surface, as there was no other alternative.

The Government of Benin has declared it a national disaster and called on humanitarian organizations, both local and international, to assist the affected communities. While assisting the targeted people with the DREF received, the Red Cross of Benin carried out a new evaluation of the situation in the field and realized that most of the people affected were still at risk and the number has increased to 60,238 people because of the incessant rainfall and water stagnation particularly in Cotonou, Abomey-Calavi, Porto Novo and Dangbo. Communities worse affected are Agontinkon, Fifadji, Ahogbohoulè, Agongbomè, Ahwansori, Ladjì, Vossa, Akpakpadodomè, Yagbé, Minontchou, Avotrou, Zogbohoulè, Ayibatèn, Irédé, Agbodjèdo, Cadjèhoun/Houéyiho all in Cotonou, Cocotomey, Cococodji, Dekoungbe, Godomey, Hevie in Abomey Calavi, Agbokou, Zoukpa, Gbezoukpa, Donoukin, Tokpota, Kpogbonme, Dowa, Djlado, Tokpota 2, Dodji, Hlogou, Houssouko, Sokome, Honnou, Hondji, Fila, Abame, Donoukin, Guevie-djeganto, Djegandaho, Kotongbe in Porto Novo and Hetin-Dame, Mitro, Yokon, Zoungue, Houedo, Gangban, Adjido, Houedimey in Dangbo with accessibility to these communities constituting a challenge.

The table below shows the statistics of the situation

Affected Commune/Arrondissement	Number of affected households	Number of beneficiaries	Infants (below 5 years)	Men	women	Pregnant women	Damaged houses
Cotonou	5,110	25,550	1,148	13,131	11,271	160	57
Calavi	4,561	22,803	1,637	8,189	12,972	1,244	13
Dangbo	775	3,875	179	2,332	1,364	35	11
Porto- Novo	1,602	8,010	456	1,109	1,270	51	6
TOTAL	12,048	60,238	3,420	13,806	10,793	1,490	87

Source: Red Cross of Benin

The new situation

The continuous rainfall in the north of Benin since August 2009 and the opening of the Nagbéto Dam in Togo has led to the increase in the water level of the Mono River causing it to overflow. The impact of the overflow has caused flooding in 47 villages in Athiémé, eight in Lokossa and three in Grand-Popo communes. The access to these communities was made very difficult with more communities flooded as the water level continues rising. According to the inhabitants, floods in the area occur every four years and get critical during the month of September and recede by end of March with no serious consequence; but this year situation is quite different as the water level rises to 8.60 metres. The Red Cross volunteers were only able to carry out assessment in villages that are accessible as there are no motorized boats to ferry them to other affected villages. During this partial assessment in collaboration with local authorities, a total of 59,419 persons (9,746 households) were affected by the floods with three deaths and many houses and farmlands including crops destroyed in the villages covered by the assessment team (see table below).

Affected commune	Total population	Total number of affected households	Damaged houses	Affected farmlands (hectares)
Athiémé	37,472	6,532	1,133	15,850
Lokossa	8,251	1,050	346	2,001
Grand-Popo	13,696	2,164	463	-
Total	59,419	9,746	1,942	17,851

Source: Red Cross of Benin

The floods have rendered many households homeless prompting them to be temporarily sheltered in public building like schools. In Athiémé, 300 households with 300 children under five years were displaced and are currently sheltered in the public primary school of the district. The authorities are considering relocating them to another temporary site with tents as pupils will be returning to school very soon after the long vacation. The floods have affected sources of potable water like wells and have damaged many latrines in the communities; this coupled with the poor sanitation habits of the communities, constitute health and hygiene risks in these vulnerable communities. With 17,851 hectares of farmlands affected (source: Centre de Promotion Agricole), the affected population mainly subsistence farmers are exposed to food and economic insecurity.

In Porto Novo and some affected areas, the water receded and the registered affected people have been assisted by local associations, or have recovered or have left for another settlement. Therefore, the Red Cross of Benin in line with the Movement approach to assist the most vulnerable people revised and adapted the distribution plan to the beneficiaries' real needs. The decision to direct the relief (remaining stock of non-food items) to the new affected areas was made in close collaboration with the national emergency response systems, which coordinate disaster response activities in the country. To assist the 17,500 most affected persons (3,500 households) in Athiémé, Lokossa and Grand-Popo, the Red Cross of Benin is extending its flood emergency intervention for two months at no extra cost. The National Society is also using its remaining NFI in the current DREF Extension operation.

Coordination and partnerships

The National Society continued to play an integral role of leadership in the national emergency response mechanisms that coordinate disaster response activities in the country. At the local level, Red Cross branches continued to collaborate with local authorities and community leaders to ensure efficiency in the provision of humanitarian assistance, minimizing/eliminating waste of resources and avoiding overlapping. The local authorities are also collaborating with the national government to find sustainable solution to the situation. The comprehensive assessment carried out by the National Society on the risks and damages was well coordinated with the technical services department of the municipalities and local authorities. The lists of the targeted beneficiaries were validated by the local authorities and all distribution activities were undertaken so far in close collaboration with them. This helped to facilitate the assistance and address some issues or misunderstanding raised by the communities.

A high level government delegation led by the President of the Republic of Benin was in Athiémé to provide moral support to the affected people. The delegation also witnessed the activities of the Red Cross volunteers who were also assisting the affected population to evacuate their belongings. The Mayor of

Athiémé briefed the President on the efforts of the Red Cross as the first humanitarian agency to come to the aid of the affected people in the communities. The Red Cross efforts were commended by the government and the UN system in the country. An inter-ministerial team was deployed to the field to carry out comprehensive assessment. The team worked in close collaboration with the Red Cross and the UN agencies.

The government organized an extraordinary ministerial meeting to take urgent measures to address the situation. Some of the measures include the movement of the affected people to a temporarily site, the procurement of engine boat to facilitate movement of people and the provision of potable water.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) made financial donation to the government, while the Libyan government provided NFI including drugs to Benin to meet the immediate needs of the affected communities. The Lions Club and some other individuals also donated some NFI to the local authorities of Athiémé.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Red Cross volunteers including NDRT and RDRT members mobilized and deployed in the affected areas continued assisting the affected population covered by the DREF Extension. The Red Cross volunteers are sensitizing the population on good hygiene practices the distribution of NFI and the disinfection of wells in the target communities. The morale of the volunteers was enhanced with the visit of the Deputy Head of West and Central Africa Zone, Dakar and the Regional Representative of the West Coast regional of the International Federation in Abuja to some of the affected areas. They also participated in the distribution of NFI, the sensitization of the target communities and the disinfection of some wells. They commended the communities for their cooperation with Red Cross volunteers and also commended the volunteers for their selfless humanitarian assistance to the affected population which is contributing to enhancing visibility of the Red Cross Movement.

With the DREF extension, the volunteers have distributed shelter kits (blankets, mosquito nets) and hygiene kits (soap, chlorine tablets and plastic buckets) and children clothes to 341 households of 2,269 beneficiaries in Cotonou and Dangbo. Some of the distributed NFI, mostly blankets and mosquito nets, arrived late due to some logistics challenges.

The Red Cross of Benin continued distributing NFI to the affected population in the Mono Couffo region. The distribution is being done from the DREF extension at no extra cost as the number of target beneficiaries remained the same.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: 4,407 most vulnerable households affected by the floods in Cotonou, Porto Novo, Dangbo and Abomey-Calavi benefit from the distribution of non-food items (blankets, mosquito nets, clothing for children).

Activities planned

- Distribute non-food items at target distribution points;
- Monitor the emergency situation;
- Procure, airlift, transport and distribute 4,407 mosquito nets, 8,814 blankets; 6,840 pieces of children clothing;
- Replenish the stock used from DISAO+ project and the Federation regional stock;
- Monitor and assess the emergency activities and submit reports on the distribution of relief items.

Progress and impact: As the water has started receding and the affected people returning to their normal daily activities in some communities especially in Porto-Novo and Abomey-Calavi, the Red Cross of Benin deemed it not necessary to continue the distribution of NFI in these communities. The National Society therefore only carried out distribution in some communities of Cotonou and Dangbo that are still exposed to flood risks. The Red Cross distributed 937 mosquito nets; 72,029 chlorine tablets; 1,811 blankets; 4,434 bars of soap, 917 sets of children clothing and 936 plastic buckets to 953 households (6,980 persons) out of which 612 were the most affected by the recent floods in Athiémé. Each household received one shelter kit depending on the family size (one or two blankets and one mosquito net), one hygiene kit (one plastic

bucket, 90 chlorine tablets for three months, two to five bars of soap and one set of children clothing (see table below).

Commune / Villages (districts)	Beneficiaries		Items Distributed by the Red Cross of Benin						Number of persons sensitized
	Number of households reached	Number of beneficiaries reached	Number of blankets	Number of ITN	Number of water purification tablets	Number of bars of soap	Number buckets	Number of sets of children clothing	
DANGBO									
Yokon	10	90	20	10	90	20	10	10	18
Agbonou	8	51	16	8	72	40	8	8	14
Damè	56	303	95	41	360	229	40	40	91
Agonguè	10	56	19	10	90	47	10	10	18
Sodji	9	54	18	9	81	45	9	9	19
Hondji Adokpomè	10	61	20	10	90	47	10	10	20
Déwémè	3	14	6	3	27	15	3	3	12
Wozounmè	10	56	20	10	90	50	10	10	17
Houèdomey	52	439	87	51	459	210	51	51	80
Mitro	24	518	48	24	2,160	120	24	24	33
TOTAL 1	192	1,642	349	176	3,519	823	175	175	322
COTONOU									
Iréde	109	417	202	109	9,810	483	109	109	351
Avotrou	40	210	80	40	3,600	200	40	40	136
TOTAL 2	149	627	282	149	13,410	683	149	149	487
ATHIEME									
Gbéddji	65	343	123	65	5,850	304	65	62	167
Adjovè et Adanlokpè	109	874	216	109	9,810	539	109	109	389
Awamè I	118	1,061	234	118	10,620	584	118	116	329
Awamè II	74	699	148	74	6,660	370	74	74	141
Agbobada	69	481	132	69	6,210	327	69	63	138
Assèddji	73	480	143	73	6,570	356	73	73	182
Awakou	104	773	184	104	9,380	448	104	96	289
TOTAL	612	4,711	1,180	612	55,100	2,928	612	593	1,635
GRAND TOTAL	953	6,980	1,811	937	72,029	4,434	936	917	2,444

According to the beneficiaries, the Red Cross assistance is going a long way in protecting them against malaria, cold and water related diseases.

Challenges: The delay in the procurement of some relief items delayed the distribution phase of the operation. The Red Cross was also faced with the request by the affected communities for assistance in the provision of tents, the reconstruction/rehabilitation of their latrines, houses and the provision of food items as their farmlands and crops have been washed away by the floods thereby exposing them to food insecurity. The recovery issue is under discussion at the Sub-Zone level to be addressed globally for all the affected countries.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Objective: To reduce the risk for waterborne diseases through provision of drinking water and sensitization on good hygiene practices to 1,057 most vulnerable households in Cotonou and Calavi.

Activities planned

- Procure, airlift, transport and distribute 22,035 pieces of soap (250g);
- Procure 396,630 water purification tablets and 4,407 jerry cans;
- Promote health and hygiene within the affected areas;
- Edit health and hygiene promotion kits;
- Treat 575 water points;

- Refresh training for 267 volunteers on hygiene and health promotion.

Progress and impact: The National Society has procured and distributed hygiene kits (water treatment tablets, plastic buckets and soap) to the target population affected by the floods. The National Society's 124 trained volunteers have sensitized, through demonstration, a total of 2,444 persons on the use of the water treatment tablets. They have also sensitized a total of 4,108 persons on good hygiene and sanitation practices in Cotonou, Abomey-Calavi, Porto-Novo and Dangbo (see table below).

Communes	Number of persons sensitized
Cotonou	2,115
Abomey-Calavi	1,015
Porto-Novo	110
Dangbo	868
Total	4,108

The Red Cross volunteers have disinfected some wells in these communities (see table below). This effort is positively impacting in these communities as the risk of outbreak of epidemics is reduced.

Communes	Number of target wells	Number of treated wells	Remarks
Cotonou	245	252	Exceeded target number because of availability of treatment items and the request by the communities
Abomey-Calavi	195	173	The gap is due to the request by the owners to allow them clean out their wells before treatment
Porto-Novo	100	58	Disinfection continues in some districts
Dangbo	35	10	The remaining target wells will be treated after the flood water recedes.

The Red Cross volunteers continued hygiene and sanitation sensitization and disinfection activities in the communities where distribution has been concluded.

Challenges: The deplorable condition of the roads worsened by the flood water makes access to target houses for disinfection difficult.

Logistics

The Logistics Unit from the West and Central Africa Sub-Zone in Dakar, Senegal has been supporting the National Society while the West Coast regional representation in Abuja, Nigeria provided operational vehicle to support the National Society.



A session on water purification/Red Cross of Benin

Communications – Advocacy and Public information

The flood response activities of the Red Cross of Benin (RCB) provide an excellent opportunity for the National Society to demonstrate the added value of the intervention of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to the public. The RCB assistance was given a national coverage by the two local television stations (Canal TV and ORTB TV), two radio stations (Wèkè and Capp FM) and other national dailies like *Challenge*, *le Matinal*, *le Matin*, *la Nation*, *Fraternité*. The OCHA SITREP was also disseminated to humanitarian agencies at national and regional levels. It was a good opportunity for the National Society communication department to improve the visibility on the volunteers' action that is highly appreciated by the government and the population.

The Federation's Zone information team will continue to assist the National Society to formulate strategies to address the public and the media, document the distribution process, witness the interaction between Red Cross staff, volunteers and beneficiaries and produce relevant articles and photographs to enhance the visibility of the Red Cross in and outside the country.

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

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