

BANGLADESH: CYCLONE

13 August

1997

appeal no. 11/97

situation report no. 3

period covered: 19 June - 11 August 1997

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society completed food parcel distributions to 4,800 families affected by the cyclone on 3 August and is now preparing to distribute 320 tons of corrugated iron sheeting. Beneficiary selection is beginning for the third and final component of the relief operation -- the construction of wind resistant houses.

The context

Cyclone One Bravo hit the South Eastern coast of Bangladesh on 19 May. Approximately one million people took refuge in cyclone shelters, thereby significantly reducing potential loss of life. The Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) with its effective volunteer network, warning system and awareness campaigns played a major role in ensuring the population's evacuation to safety. The cyclone left a trail of devastation along the 200 km coastal belt between Chittagong and Teknaf, at the southern tip of Bangladesh. 250,000 homes were totally destroyed and over 100,000 were damaged. Crops and livestock were seriously affected. The BDRCS immediately forwarded relief goods to the affected area and provided assistance to approximately 35,000 people. Items distributed included chira (compressed rice), ghur (molasses), flour, milk, tarpaulins, corrugated iron sheets and plastic sheeting.

Latest events

Heavy rains during June and July caused further damage and suffering to tens of thousands of people previously affected by the cyclone and hampered relief efforts.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

After the emergency phase of the operation, the emphasis was placed on the provision of food and roofing materials and the reconstruction of huts for the most vulnerable in the cyclone-affected areas.

A Plan of Action and budget with three components was drawn up by the BDRCS/Federation. Teams of BDRCS Headquarters staff were deployed to the field to work with the District

Branches on the distribution/implementation phase. At District level, local implementation committees were formed and Red Cross youth and CPP volunteers in the Chittagong and Cox's Bazar Districts carried out the selection of beneficiaries.

The BDRCS/Federation purchased 4,800 food rations, consisting of 15 kg rice, 2.5 kg lentils and 1 lt oil, and corrugated iron sheets for a total of 4,310 families.

The food distribution was completed on 7 August despite the problems arising from flooding in the area of operation. The selection of the 4,310 beneficiary families for corrugated iron sheets is finished and checking by RCY and Federation Delegates is now nearing completion. Delivery of the iron sheet consignment of 352 tons should be completed by 17 August and distribution is scheduled to take place over the following three weeks.

The third component of the operation, the construction of 1,000 wind resistant huts, has commenced. Following design approval, tenders were prepared and contracts are now under negotiation for the supply of materials. Two "pilot" huts have been constructed at NHQ and will be used in training the four Erection Team Leaders drawn from among Cyclone Preparedness Programme volunteers. Beneficiary selection on a cluster basis will now start, as per the plan of action, by Project Implementation Committees under the BDRCS Unit (Branch) Executive Committees and subject to checking by Field Co-ordinators/ BDRCS Officers/RCY and monitoring by Federation Delegates.

Outstanding needs

Any further funding will be utilised to increase the number of wind resistant huts provided. Otherwise the operation will be finalised.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The BDRCS/Federation have actively followed the work carried out by the Government of Bangladesh (GOB), NGOs and international organisations. The BDRCS is ensuring co-ordination with GOB and those NGOs which are implementing housing programmes.

Several GOB co-ordination meetings were held at Inter-Ministerial level following the cyclone and were attended by the BDRCS. BDRCS Officers and the DP Delegate also attended meetings held by the Disaster Management Bureau of the Government. This level of disaster relief co-ordination is seen as a positive development.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Delays in funding commitments caused delays in the implementation of the operation, particularly in the case of the wind resistant huts component where the operation did not become viable until 35% coverage of the proposal was reached. The positive aspect of this delay was that it gave time to improve beneficiary selection, pre-distribution checking and Delegation monitoring.

Ann Naef
Acting Head
Appeals and Reports Service

Hiroshi Higashiura
Director
Asia & Pacific Department