

INFORMATION BULLETIN



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

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: FLOODS

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 80,000

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 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This document is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. In addition to the floods in the Dominican Republic, Tropical Storm Odette hit the south east region of the country on Saturday, 6 December. Given the generous response to the floods operation and the limited degree of damage incurred by the tropical storm, it is expected that major funding needs have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, unearmarked funds to repay the CHF 80,000 DREF allocation are required.

The Situation

After heavy rains and electric storms in late November, the Yaque del Norte and Yuna rivers, as well as their tributaries, burst their banks, causing flooding in the northern region of the Dominican Republic. In total, the flooding affected approximately 65,000 people. Some 47,270 people were evacuated and there was damage to homes, agriculture, fishing and the potable water supply. There was also damage to several roads that hindered access to some communities, although most roads are now functional and all communities are now accessible.

On 6 December, tropical storm Odette hit the province of Barahona in the southern region of the country, and San Juan de la Maguana in the northwest region. Approximately 10,000 people were affected, including 4,759 people who had to be evacuated. The gates of several dams were opened to reduce the potential impact of heavy rains. Damage from the storm was mostly to homes, particularly roofs, and agriculture. In addition, the town of Guerra, near Santo Domingo, was hit by a mini tornado and 50 families from the area were severely affected. The storm interrupted the process of returning residents to their homes after initial flooding and slowed relief operations that were already underway.

The evacuated families from both the floods and the tropical storm have now returned to their homes and the Dominican Red Cross (DRC) has completed the rescue phase of the floods response operation. The DRC, supported by the Federation, is continuing to address the needs of approximately 20,330 of the most vulnerable people affected by the floods.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The actions described in this information bulletin correspond to the emergency plan of action that was drawn up by the Dominican Red Cross, with the support of the Federation. The overall operation is partially financed by a EUR 250,000 donation from ECHO, channelled through the Federation. Other significant donations include EUR 150,000 ECHO/the Pan American Health Organization and EUR 300,000 from ECHO/OXFAM. The Dominican Red Cross has drawn up a plan of action in order to assist a total of 3,000 families in the worst flood-stricken

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communities in the provinces of Montecristi, Santiago, Valverde and Duarte. Three operational phases are anticipated: the emergency phase which has just been concluded; the relief and rehabilitation phase which will take place between 20 November and 20 February 2004 and the recovery phase to be closed by 20 August 2004.

With funding secured from the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and from OFDA, and through an agreement with the World Food Programme, food rations and complementary nutritive kits targeted at children and lactating women are under distribution, together with hygiene kits, kitchen sets and family kits. Given an agreement with the World Food Programme, an additional 1,666 food kits are being distributed, bringing the number of beneficiaries targeted by the Federation and the DRC to 20,330. The DRC is also coordinating with USAID, UNICEF, UNDP and various local Ministries.

Targeted beneficiary selection is currently in progress in all of the affected communities that are receiving Red Cross assistance. Assistance is being provided to those with significant damage to their homes or personal belongings, and particular attention is being given to families living in shelters, female heads-of-households and households with children under 12 years of age. Teams of volunteers have been going house-to-house verifying that those with the greatest needs will receive Red Cross relief goods. The following chart illustrates the progress made thus far towards assisting those in need:

Floods Operation	Targeted	Reached to Date
Beneficiary Families	4,006	2,722
Number of Beneficiaries (individuals)	20,330	12,258
Women older than 5 years of age	9,145 (approx. 45%)	4,427
Children under 5 years of age	4,066 (approx. 20%)	2,432
DRC branches involved	4	4
DRC staff and volunteers trained through ERU	175	105

Haitian immigrants, both legal and illegal, are a particularly vulnerable group due to their economic and social situation. There are Haitians living in almost all of the communities being assisted by the Red Cross, with particularly high concentrations in the border region. Discussions are ongoing between the Dominican and Haitian Red Cross Societies, and daily adjustments to beneficiary selection, registration and service delivery are being made to ensure that the needs of this group are addressed. In addition, Haitian volunteers are among those being trained in beneficiary selection procedures, and a Haitian delegate sponsored by the ICRC is working in some of the border areas affected by the flooding. Furthermore, the DRC recently signed an agreement with the Haitian National Red Cross Society regarding border activities that is applicable in this situation with respect to family reunification.

The first phase of emergency relief distributions is nearly complete, and thousands of beneficiaries have already received food and hygiene kits, and access to potable water. DRC distribution teams have been created in Montecristi, Duarte, Santiago and Valverde, which are among the worst affected areas. These teams are trained in Federation distribution best practices and standards, including "Distribution with Dignity," a concept that focuses on delivering relief in a manner that promotes the resilience and self-esteem of the beneficiaries. In addition, all relevant Federation relief tools and materials have been translated into Spanish to facilitate integration.

Items being distributed during the first phase of distributions include 3,666 food kits, 4,066 hygiene kits and 4,000 mosquito nets to benefit 4,066 families. Food and hygiene kits contain the following:

Hygiene Kits
Toothpaste (2)
Soap (5)
Shampoo (1)
Sanitary napkins (2 packages of 20)
Toilet paper (4 rolls)

Food Kits
Oil (1 gallon)
Rice (25 lbs)
Sardines (15 oz)
Chocolate (10 bars)
Salt (2 lbs)
Sugar (5 lbs)
Pasta (400 g)
Matches (10 packets)

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Water and sanitation activities have also been a priority, given that there was a previous lack of clean water and adequate sanitation which was exacerbated by the flooding. OXFAM has taken a lead role in the management of the emergency water and sanitation situation along with the government water company, INAPA. The DRC is providing all its available resources, including a 5,000 litre water tanker in Montecristi that is distributing water daily, and has offered to support OXFAM operations.

To assist in relief activities, the Federation has conducted several rapid trainings sessions to quickly instruct DRC staff and volunteers in Federation relief tools, concepts and standards. To date, more than 105 DRC staff and volunteers have been trained. In addition, the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) hopes to host a national intervention team (NIT) training next month. Every opportunity is being taken to build DRC response capacity for this emergency situation and future responses.

Logistics operations are being managed by the DRC with some technical guidance from the Federation. PADRU is providing logistical support through its regional logistics unit (RLU). Through a competitive tendering process, food and hygiene kits have been procured rapidly and cost-effectively. These items, as well as kitchen sets and mosquito nets are being procured locally. There have, however, been some problems in providing regionally procured items due to delays in Dominican customs.

PADRU technical support has been provided since the beginning of this operation, with two PADRU staff members being deployed shortly after the flooding occurred. A disaster management delegate and a regional intervention team (RIT) member are working in the country. Support has focused on coordination, assessments, financial accountability, information collection and dissemination, donor facilitation and general operational management.

The first-ever deployment of an American Red Cross sponsored Emergency Response Unit (ERU) is supporting the DRC in the distribution of relief items. The ERU started work in-country on 26 November as an official Federation response mechanism. Beneficiary selection and registration, relief distribution and associated training courses are being managed by the DRC with ERU technical support. The ERU module consists of three ERU delegates, including one team leader and two distribution delegates, with equipment such as radios, satellite phones, bibs, armbands and megaphones.

Monitoring and evaluation are fundamental components of all Federation operations, and tools specifically designed for emergency relief operations are being used. For example, DRC staff are currently conducting visual inspections of distributions in many areas, and DRC volunteers and staff have been trained to use Federation emergency relief monitoring and evaluation tools.

A Netherlands Red Cross delegate is currently in the Dominican Republic to work towards identifying possible rehabilitation and reconstruction projects related to the floods operation, and will coordinate with the Federation and the DRC. Projects will later be presented to ECHO. The Federation will also deploy a water and sanitation delegate in January to work on health, water and sanitation, branch strengthening, food security and disaster preparedness projects. These projects will also benefit the Haitian National Red Cross Society as several of these will be located in the border region.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact:

- *The Dominican Red Cross in Santo Domingo; Phone (1809) 221 6716; Fax (1809) 682 3792; email cruzrojadom@codetel.net.do*
- *Guillermo García, RIT member deployed to the Dominican Republic; Phone (1809) 696 9947*
- *Nelson Castaño, Head Pan American Disaster Response Unit; Phone (507) 316 1001; Fax (507) 316 1082; email ifrcpa07@ifrc.org*
- *Gilberto Guevara, Head of Regional Delegation, Panama; Phone (507) 317 1300; Fax (507) 317 1304; email ifrcpa51@ifrc.org*
- *Luis Luna, Regional Officer; Phone 41 22 730 42 74; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email luis.luna@ifrc.org*

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

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