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CHINA: EARTHQUAKE IN YUNNAN PROVINCE

The Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) assessment team has returned to Beijing from the earthquake stricken area in Yunnan province. During their mission they were able to visit numerous sites and speak with many of the disaster victims and Red Cross beneficiaries.

The assessment team visited the Yunnan Provincial Red Cross Hospital where some of the seriously injured earthquake victims are being treated. They also visited the hospital in Lijiang Prefecture, in the affected area, where a number of seriously injured are being cared for in tents, although some of the most badly injured have been transferred to larger hospitals in Kunming. The team also noted that shelters were being erected from plastic sheeting.

During its tour the assessment team observed distribution of Federation sponsored relief goods flown in to Kunming during the past week, for which the Yunnan Provincial Red Cross arranged transport to the disaster area. The Lijiang airfield, although small, is being used by planes flying in goods from Kunming.

Many of the inhabitants of the earthquake area, which is 2,400 meters above sea level, are poor people and the current very cold weather is adding to the misery of the one million affected individuals. To date, some 1,500 after shocks have been recorded. Casualty and damage statistics continued to be gathered. In addition to the previously reported toll, it is estimated that more than 30,000 tons of grain were lost in the disaster.

Mr Liu Dewang, Director of the Disaster Relief Department at RCSC Headquarters, will remain in Yunnan Province to provide guidance and support to the Yunnan Provincial Red Cross, and to co-ordinate the Society's relief operation.

The Australian Red Cross, which has close ties to the RCSC in Yunnan Province through its HIV/AIDS education programme, has made a cash donation of AUS \$25,000 to assist the victims of the earthquake.

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