

CUBA: HURRICANE LILI

28 October 1996

***Preliminary appeal no. 16/96
information bulletin no. 01
period covered: 22-27 October***

Latest events

After the issue of a preliminary appeal by the Federation on 21 October, Federation delegates and the Caribbean Regional Delegation, working closely with the Cuban Red Cross (CRC), are continuing to assess needs, gather information and finalise details of the complete appeal, which is expected to be ready mid week.

The Federation is currently represented in Cuba by two delegates -- Eduardo Romero, Development Delegate of the Caribbean delegation and Alfonso Vargas, on loan from the Colombian RC. They will be joined shortly by Martin Acosta, from the Dominican Republic Red Cross, who will assist with logistics.

To collect more information on the situation, Vargas will try to visit the small but badly affected island of La Juventud tomorrow or Wednesday, while Romero will have meetings today with NGOs in Havana, visit a shelter for evacuees and review CRC storage facilities.

The Cuban authorities have issued an epidemic alert for hepatitis and leptospirosis (spread by rats and mosquitoes) in Matanzas and Sancti Espiritu, two of the worst-hit provinces. In southern Matanzas, a mangrove swamp area, water sources have been contaminated by sea-water.

Unearmarked funds received in response to the Federation's preliminary appeal will be used for the purchase of medicaments. A planeload of goods with a value of CHF65.000, donated by the Canadian Red Cross, chiefly water purification tablets and Oral Rehydration Salts, is due to arrive in Cuba tomorrow, 29 October.

The PAHO (Pan American Health Organisation) office in Kingston has lent the Federation a satellite phone, which will be sent in to Cuba on Wednesday and should make communications both easier and cheaper.

Outstanding needs

Contributions to the preliminary appeal so far total only CHF 170,000. Cash is urgently needed.

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