

# ***CAMBODIA: FLOODS***

## ***Information bulletin no. 02***

*07 October, 1996*

### ***The disaster***

The swollen Mekong River has caused widespread flooding throughout six provinces in Cambodia (Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, Kampong Cham, Kandal and Prey Veng). The worst flooding occurred in Kampong Cham and Prey Veng, which have been effectively cut off from Phnom Penh and neighbouring provinces. Some districts of Phnom Penh have also been affected and the municipality is in the process of placing 100,000 sandbags in strategic positions to prevent the river from flooding the city further.

The number of deaths due to the floods has risen to 16, while tens of thousands remain homeless and an estimated 500,000 people are facing immediate food shortages. Irrigation systems, dams and three major roads have been damaged, including Route no. 1 and Route no. 6 which run from the capital to Vietnam and Kampong Thom province respectively.

The situation is still changing rapidly and some affected areas have not yet been fully assessed. Field assessments are under way in all of the six flooded provinces, and until more accurate figures are obtained, the National Committee for Disaster Management (NSDMC) is maintaining last week's estimates that approximately 1.3 million people (13% of the total population of Cambodia) have been affected, of whom 500,000 will require assistance.

### ***Government Action***

Priority needs remain food, shelter and medicines, which will be required during and following the emergency phase to combat potential epidemics (diarrhoea and fever).

On 4 October, the National Secretariat for the Disaster Management Committee (NSDMC), with the assistance of the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC), the Federation and WFP, issued an appeal on behalf of the Royal Cambodian Government for US\$ 5,163,250 in cash, kind and services to provide immediate emergency assistance. It is asking international and local donors to supply 7,500 MT. of rice, 35,000 cartons of instant noodles, 100,000 plastic sheets for shelter and 200,000 items of clothing (Kroma and Sarongs) to the estimated 500,000 most vulnerable victims for one month.

UNDP reported that the UN Department for Humanitarian Affairs will issue the appeal in order to assist in the mobilisation of an international response.

The NSDMC has provided 43 MT. of rice, 87,000 sandbags, 2,000 litres of fuel and 10.5 million riels (US\$ 3,900) to the affected provinces and the municipality of Phnom Penh.

- ◆ The Ministry of Agriculture has donated 250 MT. of rice seed to Kratie province, and the provincial government in Kampong Cham donated 110 MT. of rice to flood victims in that province.
- ◆ WFP/CRC have made available 84,000 sandbags and 2,300 MT. of rice from their existing stocks, which will need to be replaced.
- ◆ UNICEF has pledged US\$ 25,000 for plastic shelters, sandbags and medicines.
- ◆ UNHCR will donate 4,000 plastic sheets and 5,000 family health kits from existing stocks which will also need to be replaced.
- ◆ WHO will make available technical staff to assist in assessing the situation.
- ◆ UNDP are considering a contribution of US\$ 50,000 to assist with co-ordination.
- ◆ The governments of the USA and Japan through their Embassies in Phnom Penh have donated US\$ 25,000 & US\$ 100,740 to the Royal Cambodian government respectively. The British government will donate US\$ 74,000.
- ◆ CWS has donated US\$ 10,000 to the CRC; ADRA has donated 4,000 plastic sheets.

Following the emergency phase and when accurate statistics are available, it is anticipated that a further appeal will be made by the NSDMC and include: food aid, rice seed, vegetable seed and housing kits.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

The CRC and the Federation are continuing to visit the affected areas with the NCDM and assist in distributions. The CRC to date has distributed 1,050 plastic sheets, 100 cartons dry food, 425 sleeping mats, 30 cartons of biscuits and 675 mosquito nets to 440 families.

The CRC and the Federation, together with WFP, the American Red Cross and the Disaster Management Committee, form the core of the Flood Working Group chaired by CRC. This group was established on 1 October and will be responsible for assessing the situation, and undertaking a vulnerability assessment. This will include the location and numbers of people affected, numbers of livestock lost, damage to houses, infrastructure, rice fields and farmland. The Group will also be responsible for receiving funds and in-kind donations and services from donors, procurement of emergency supplies, ensuring the effective co-ordination of the emergency operation, distribution and monitoring of emergency supplies to the target beneficiaries, and centralising and redistributing information from provincial disaster committees.

A central data base has been established at CRC to provide regular reports on the situation. It will also list requests for assistance, pledges, donations and distribution details.

Dr. Sun Huot Hong, Secretary General of the CRC, will return to Phnom Penh from Bangkok tomorrow, when the Federation HOD will discuss with him the possibility of a Red Cross appeal. The HOD and Branch Development Delegate have been working closely with the CRC during the past week and will continue to do so as long as necessary.

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