

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

COLOMBIA: STORMS

27 August 2001

Information Bulletin N° 2/2001

DREF Allocated: 35,500

With the initial support of CHF 35,500 allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), the Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) is currently implementing a CHF 408,000 relief operation to assist 4,223 persons most affected by the storms. The operational needs are now completely covered with the CRCS's own resources and the support provided from external sources. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are, however, needed. This operation will be reported on through the quarterly DREF update.

The Situation

Heavy rains affected Colombia in May and June, particularly the northern part of the country. On 1 June strong winds and heavy rains lasting two hours struck the province of Atlántico, causing rivers and streams to overflow. Eight poor neighbourhoods in the provincial capital of Barranquilla and the municipality of Soledad were severely affected. Two persons died, three persons disappeared and 200 were injured. Approximately 400 houses were completely destroyed and 450 were damaged as a result of the strong winds and resulting flooding. Some 7,500 persons were severely affected.

On 3 June another storm struck three other neighbourhoods in Soledad, leaving two hundred houses without roofs and injuring four persons. Dengue fever, common even before the disaster struck, became more widespread. The remote, rural municipalities of Sampués in the province of Sucre and Sitionuevo in the province of Magdalena were also affected. Many houses were damaged, with 24 completely destroyed. Some 700 persons were affected.

The Government of Colombia assisted the affected areas with a USD 1.1 million plan funded through the National Disaster Fund.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

As an initial response to the emergency and in collaboration with the National Disaster System of the Interior Ministry (national and local level), the Colombian Red Cross Society (CRCS) mobilised over one hundred volunteers who carried out search and rescue activities and provided first aid assistance. Mattresses, blankets, personal hygiene kits, kitchen sets, plates and clothes were dispatched from the CRCS's warehouses in Bogota and Risaralda and distributed to the victims.

Red Cross volunteers from the Atlantic Coast province branches carried out a damage and needs assessment in co-operation with local emergency committees from the National Disaster System.

The CRCS is now implementing a CHF 408,000 relief operation assisting 4,223 most affected persons in the provinces of Atlántico and Sucre.

A balance remaining from last years' floods-relief operation enabled the Federation to provide initial support of CHF 11,500 (USD 6,900) to the operation. The Spanish Red Cross delegation in Colombia released CHF 15,000 (USD 9,000) and the US Embassy in Bogota contributed CHF 100,000 (USD 60,000). CHF 35,500 was additionally provided from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF).

The action plan included the distribution of supplementary feeding rations, blankets, mattresses, clothes and plastic sheeting. The DREF allocation is covering the supplementary feeding part of the plan for 514 families (or 2,570 persons) in the Villa del Carmen district of Soledad town.

The Colombian Red Cross has well-established administrative and operational capacity and is effectively managing this operation, in close consultation with the Federation's Liaison Delegate based in Bogota and other organizations.

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

For further details please contact :

- *The Colombian Red Cross Society in Bogota ; Phone (0057 1) 429 93 28 or 4280520 or 4289423 ; Fax +57 1 42 81 725; email inter@andinet.com / mundo@andinet.com*
- *LuisLuna, Federation Desk Officer; Phone 41 22 730 4274; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email luna@ifrc.org*

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.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head, a.i.
Relationship Management Department

Santiago Gil
Head
Americas Department