

PARAGUAY: FIRES

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The Disaster

A severe drought has affected the Department of Concepcion in Paraguay for the last 80 days and this has been aggravated by a cold wave that occurred the first week of September. Following these conditions the farmers, without realising the consequences, began fires in their traditional slash and burn method to prepare the fields for planting and these fires have gone out of control. Residents of this area are poor farmers dependent on cotton, sugar cane and maize crops, with some livestock. The zone is tropical, but the roads are in very good condition for distributions and assistance. Due to the drought conditions, the provision of electrical power has been reduced and has affected the water systems, forcing the poor to depend on small wells that in some cases produce only unpotable water.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Paraguayan Red Cross has begun very limited distributions of food in co-ordination with the government and other voluntary agencies. The government is providing some food, temporary shelter material and seeds, and is trying to improve the water situation. It does not have enough resources to provide assistance to all of the 11,500 (or 2,300 families) affected. The Red Cross intends to provide food for 3,370 persons (or 674 families) with a one time distribution consisting of rice, sugar, flour, beans, oil and pasta, to the two worst affected communities of Concepcion and Horqueta. The Paraguayan Red Cross will obtain the quotes from the suppliers, carry out the purchases, make the family packages and do the distributions.

The International Federation has released CHF 190,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) for this operation. The National Society has the personnel and volunteers to carry out this operation with the support of the Federation's Regional Delegation in Buenos Aires.

Needs

Funding is needed to effect the local purchase, distribution, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of this intervention by the Paraguayan Red Cross. Donors are requested to replenish DREF funds released by the Federation.

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