

MADAGASCAR: CYCLONES AND FLOODS

14 June, 2000

*appeal no. 06/2000
situation report no. 01
period covered: March - May, 2000*

The appeal is adequately covered, and the intended assistance in favour of cyclone and flood victims primarily related to the provision of relief items has been or is in the process of being delivered. The Federation's focus is now turning to supporting longer-term activities for the Malagasy Red Cross (MRC), including training and Delegate support.

The context

The disastrous consequences of cyclones Eline (mid-February) and Gloria (early-March) in the central and northern regions of Madagascar left 184,000 people in need of immediate relief support out of a total of 737,000 affected (estimates provided by the government's National Relief Council).

While the relief operation in support of the victims was being implemented, a third violent cyclone, Hudah, hit the north of the country on 2 and 3 April. The National Relief Council estimated that an additional 111,000 people were in need of immediate support out of a total of 369,000 affected by this third cyclone. One of the worst affected areas was the north-eastern town of Antalaha which has been virtually erased.

	Population affected	Population in need of immediate assistance
Cyclone Eline and Gloria	737,000	184,000
Cyclone Hudah	369,000	111,000
Total	1,106,000	295,000

Even though the initial risk of outbreaks of epidemics was very high, especially in the areas hit by the third cyclone, there were no serious occurrences of disease. However, the situation will be monitored particularly since the country has been struggling to contain isolated outbreaks of cholera in various regions over the last year.

Against the background of poor economic conditions in the country, the destruction caused by the three cyclones created serious problems in the areas of agriculture, food stocks, health infrastructure, water and sanitation, and as well the environment and ecology.

Latest events

Hudah was the last cyclone of the season. The international relief operation mounted in response to the appeal for help from the Malagasy Government initially encountered considerable logistical constraints due to damaged infrastructure and limited air and road transport. The National Relief Council made a significant effort to co-ordinate the relief operation, optimising the limited transport facilities available.

Almost two months after the last cyclone, plans and activities for the reconstruction and rehabilitation are taking shape, with a World Bank mission currently assessing rehabilitation projects.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

In the revised appeal launched on 7 April, 2000, the MRC and the International Federation requested support to assist approximately 100,000 people to achieve the following objectives:

- cover the immediate needs of the people in the most affected regions primarily with non-food distributions;
- support cyclone and flood victims in the most affected regions with rehabilitation activities;
- establish a basic disaster preparedness structure within the Malagasy Red Cross Society to prevent cholera and to mitigate the after-effects of cyclones.

In support of the MRC's operation, the Federation opened an office inside the premises of the National Society consisting of three delegates: a team leader, a relief delegate and a delegate in charge of finance, administration and logistics.

By the end of May 2000, relief distributions had been organised in targeted areas of the country, with 73,000 people provided assistance to date. The distribution sites have been identified, with selection taking place in close co-operation with the National Relief Council and other organisations operating in Madagascar. The beneficiaries were identified by the local branches of the MRC, and distributions were organised by the branches and supervised by members of the Headquarters staff, supported by the Federation delegates. Further distributions of relief items will take place in June, and it is expected close to 100,000 people will have been reached by the completion of the relief phase. This number excludes other assistance provided by other donors, such as the distribution of clothes provided by the Seychelles and Swedish Red Cross. These clothes arrived in late May in the port of Toamasina, and distribution plan will be worked out in the coming weeks. The two following tables summarise the assistance provided in the various locations.

Place	Region	Plastic Sheeting (rolls)	Tents (units)	Chloramine (Tablets)	Soap (kg)
Brickaville	East	2		80,000	
Vatomandry	East	4		120,000	
Manakara	South-East				
Vohipeno	South-East				
Tana' (Atsi)	Plateaux	17		80,000	
Antalaha	North-East		100		
Tulear	South-West			120,000	2,000
Mahabo	South-West			60,000	2,000
Morondava	South-West			60,000	2,000
TOTAL		23	100	520,000	6,000

Place	Jerrycans	Blankets	Kitchen Sets	Total Number Beneficiaries
Brickaville		600	50	3,000
Vatomandry		900	150	4,500
Manakara		750	150	1,550
Vohipeno		2,430	490	4,500
Tana' (Atsi)		360	170	1,500
Antalaha			250	1,200
Tulear	3,000			18,000
Mahabo	4,230			18,000
Morondava	3,770	540	108	20,100
TOTAL	11,000	5,580	1,368	72,350

Medical supplies and drugs, donated by the Netherlands Red Cross, were also provided to government health structures in the following places:

Place	Region	Cholera Kits	Emergency Health Kits
Tulear	South-West	1	1
Mahabo	South-West	1	1
Morondava	South-West	1	1
Tananarivo	Plateaux	1	
TOTAL		4	3

In addition, a fifth cholera kit is enroute to Vohipeno.

The identification of the areas for the rehabilitation phase of the operation will take place during June, again in close co-operation with the National Relief Council and following a field visit to the selected areas. The main focus will be on extensive and longer-term repairs to houses and school buildings. Just before the start of the new school year in September, a distribution of school books and equipment will also be organised.

In May, a fact finding mission led by the Netherlands Red Cross visited two branches (Toamasina and Morondava) with the specific aim of looking into the possibility of setting up micro projects at the community level. The MRC has expressed a keen interest in this programme, and would like to see it start once the General Assembly (currently planned for October 2000) has taken place.

In June, the French Red Cross will start a bilateral programme in northern Madagascar focussing on disaster preparedness.

In line with the last objective of the appeal, the International Federation intends to support the MRC plans to organise training sessions at the branch level in disaster response and preparedness. The health education activities in the context of the cholera campaign will also be increased, particularly before the rainy season which is likely to bring an increase in cholera.

Outstanding needs

The budget for this operation is sufficiently covered. Upon the request of the MRC, the Federation is considering establishing a delegation to address longer-term objectives. More information on this will be made available in future situation reports.

The only outstanding need in the short-term will be the replacement of the relief delegate who is due to leave during the month of July. The Federation will recruit a delegate who combines experience in both relief and rehabilitation programmes, as well as setting up and implementing training programmes.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

At the onset of the operation the MRC received reasonable media coverage in the local and regional press. While the inevitable shift in media attention to other operations has occurred, the situation for several thousand families in Madagascar remains very difficult.

The Federation delegation and MRC are actively participating in the co-ordination meetings chaired by the National Relief Council. As described above the information made available in this forum is used by the MRC in the planning of its operations.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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