

PARAGUAY: DROUGHT

8 May 2000

appeal no. 07/2000

situation report no. 01

period covered: 7 April - 7 May, 2000

In response to the hardship caused by a persistent drought in northern Paraguay, aggravated by frosts and fires, the Paraguayan Red Cross/Federation operation is endeavouring to provide a two months food package to 26,800 people in the worst hit communities. The supplies are intended to tide them over until the next rainy season, expected in June. However, a very low response to the appeal is limiting the numbers who can be helped.

The context

A drought has been affecting the north of Paraguay, and in particular the departments of Concepcion, San Pedro and Chaco Central, since June 1999. The area suffered further setbacks from frosts in May and June last year and from fires triggered by pasture clearing methods. There is an acute shortage of water, not only for farming and livestock but also for human consumption.

The current climatic conditions are unstable, with temperatures reaching over 35°C. The Government of Paraguay declared a state of emergency in September 1999. The Paraguayan Red Cross successfully carried out an operation for fire victims in October, 1999, providing food to 17,315 persons with funds made available from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). Because the drought shows no immediate signs of breaking, the Paraguayan Red Cross is seeking to provide food to 26,800 persons in the most severely affected communities, which have a total population of 34,800.

The operation started on 17 April.

Latest Events

In the past week, 28 April - 5 May, there has been some rain, but not sufficient to make a significant difference to the situation. The original plan of action is therefore being maintained.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The Paraguayan Red Cross has received CHF 100,000 from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund through the Regional Delegation in Buenos Aires, which is also assisting with technical support. With these funds it has bought food for 1,800 families which is temporarily stored in a warehouse in the town of Filadelfia. A census of beneficiaries has been completed and the distribution was scheduled to begin today (8 May).

With USD 25,000 provided by USAID in Paraguay, the National Society has assisted the community of Boqueron with food and the digging of wells.

The transportation for the Paraguay Red Cross/Federation operation will be provided by the Government of Boqueron.

The objectives of the appeal and the achievements so far are given below:

Affected Communities	Appeal target	Estimate % achieved
Boqueron	5,017 families	35.87%
Alto Paraguay	350 families	0%
Presidente Hayes	1,600 families	0%
TOTAL	6,967 families	25%

The Spanish Red Cross provided food to 8,533 families with funds from ECHO amounting to CHF 535,000. In coordination with the NS it is preparing another funding request for ECHO.

Outstanding needs

The response to the appeal to date has been very low: coverage is currently 1.3%. Funds are urgently needed if the objectives of the appeal are to be fully achieved and all beneficiaries are to be assisted.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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