

CAMBODIA: FLOODS

28 September 2000

appeal no. 22/2000

situation report no. 2

period covered: 20 - 27 September 2000

Initial response to the Federation's appeal launched on 13 September has been positive and the Cambodian Red Cross Society, supported by the Federation, has been involved in relief activities in favour of vulnerable flood victims. Numbers of flood-affected and the scope of the damage caused by the floods cannot yet be fully assessed as flood waters remain high in many areas. Co-ordination between humanitarian agencies and the government has been particularly effective in ensuring allocation of responsibility in emergency health interventions.

The context

Cambodia has been devastated by flooding following early heavy rainfall since July. The country has seen twice the annual seasonal rainfall with monsoon thunderstorms causing both localised floods and extensive, prolonged flooding of the Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers as well as their tributaries. Estimates today indicate that over two million people have been affected. Only now are water levels beginning to recede in a limited number of areas. On 13 September, the Federation launched an emergency appeal to assist 500,000 beneficiaries for 9 months. On 20 September, a first situation report was issued, together with a revised budget of CHF 4,049,830.

Latest events

The following table illustrates the water levels, as recorded at the monitoring stations throughout the Mekong watershed in Cambodia.

Water level information at 26 September 2000

Provincial Monitoring Station	Warning Level (metres)	Current Water Level	Compared to 25.9.00	Water level compared to this time 1999	Water level compared to this time 1998
Stung Treng - Mekong River	10.70	8.52	-0.28	+ 0.40	+ 0.25
Kratie - Mekong River	22.00	20.07	-0.44	+ 0.47	+ 2.69
Kampong Cham - Mekong River	15.20	14.83	-0.23	+ 0.88	+ 2.09
Phnom Penh - Bassac River	10.50	11.11	-0.03	+ 1.51	+ 1.67
Kandal - Mekong River (Neak Lung)	7.50	7.99	-0.04	+ 1.27	+ 0.15
Kandal - Meking River (Koh Khel)	7.40	7.88	-0.02	+ 0.73	+ 0.80
Tonle Sap - Prek Khdam	9.50	10.26	0	+ 1.77	+ 1.93

Source: Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology, Hydrology and River Works Department

There is a continuous movement of people to higher ground and over 100 safe areas.

Below is a breakdown of the affected areas and estimates of the numbers of villages, families and individuals affected as of 25 September 2000.

Summary of Affected Areas and People on 25 September 2000

Affected Areas				Affected People			
Province	District	Commune	Village	Families	Persons	Deaths	Evacuated Families
1. Stung Treng	5	29	63	4,719	29,129	1	
2. Kratie	4	37	179	11,232	56,347	5	6,274
3. Kampong Cham	14	105	671	97,061	570,673	52	3,157
4. Prey Veng	12	85	503	84,166	417,547	26	3,253
5. Takeo	6	34	105	9,142	39,382	7	837
6. Kampong Thom	8	64	482	32,536	97,608	27	649
7. Siem Reap	4	18	113	3,435	16,843	1	
8. Koh Kong	5	8	23	665		1	
9. Odtar Mean Chey	1	4	18	706	3,250		
10. Svay Rieng	7	46	231	25,627	139,678	8	11,589
11. Kandal	10	103	428	95,494	427,836	41	17,132
12. Kampot	6	40	102	13,928	68,776	2	1,768
13. Preah Vihear	1			300	1,647		
14. Phnom Penh	4	16	52	17,046	68,681		1,199
15. Kg. Chhnang	5	27	132	18,081	76,429	2	
16. Ratanakiri	9	49	240	1,770	6,614		
17. Pursat	4	17	84	4,385	17,650		
18. Battambang	4	20	29	7,430	27,044		692
				427,723	2,065,134	173	46,550

Source: National Committee for Disaster Management dated 25 September 2000

Whilst the Ministry of Health (MoH) has taken responsibility for collecting data on morbidity, it is recognised that capacity to handle the volume of epidemiological data is limited. The Federation and WHO are working with the MoH to find a solution.

The MoH has approached the CRC with a view to including packages of oral rehydration salts (ORS) in emergency household kits and a community education campaign is currently being developed. The MoH has also requested support for the provision of severe diarrhoea kits for distribution to the provinces. It has already been active in the distribution of essential drug kits and anti-snake venom to ensure that the provinces have adequate supplies during this critical period.

The division of responsibility for water and sanitation has been clarified between the MoH and the Ministry of Rural Development (MRD). The MoH will take responsibility for the quality of water supplied in the initial emergency phase, with the MRD taking responsibility for the rehabilitation of fixed water points in the community. The MoH is recommending water purification tablets (1 tablet per 25 litres) for drinking water. Three million water purification tablets are available from the MoH, however demand will exceed these supplies.

MEDICAM, a local NGO for facilitation of health related matters, called a meeting of all NGOs working in the field of health and water and sanitation. At this meeting NGOs were briefed by the MoH and the MRD. This provided the first opportunity for NGOs to meet and discuss common issues and look for opportunities to co-ordinate efforts. These meetings are scheduled on a regular basis.

The MRD has held two meetings with agencies dealing in water and sanitation in order to discuss the approach to be taken and has begun provincial assessments of the damage which is now estimated at many thousand water points throughout the affected communities. From this meeting, the development of an agency support matrix to help identifying gaps in response by the myriad of agencies working in this area and the development of technical guidelines for consistency in approach between agencies has commenced. Significant support to this process is being provided by the Federation.

Food security remains a concern and the Federation has raised the issue of nutritional surveillance. The Federation has also stressed the need for emergency vaccination and fodder for livestock which play an essential role in food security.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

The Cambodian Red Cross Society (CRC) will be responsible for distribution of 5,000 Mts of rice in favour of 500,000 beneficiaries donated by the World Food Programme (WFP). Canned fish, salt and vegetable oil will also be provided through the CRC, given the ongoing partnership between the two organisations, and the proven capacity of the National Society to implement efficient distributions. It is planned to complete the initial emergency distribution before the end of October. WFP foresees that a further 5,000 Mt of food will be distributed to 250,000 people in "food for repair" activities (repairs and clearing of debris by individual families). This will be implemented in November and December. An additional 5,000 Mts of food will be distributed to 150,000 people through "food for work (FFW)" programmes in areas which are not currently covered by the FFW programme. This will take place between January and March 2001.

With Federation support, the Cambodian Red Cross Society began responding to the immediate needs of flood victims in late July when the flooding first commenced. To date 36,822 families (169,668 individuals) have been assisted with food, clothing, shelter materials, hammocks and mats. Additional assistance to the most vulnerable includes the distribution of emergency household kits containing 21 essential family items purchased as a preparatory measure through funding from the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), as well as 10 item kits purchased and pre-positioned through funds provided by Action Against Hunger (AAH) in 1998-1999. The procurement process for additional emergency relief supplies is currently taking place.

The severity of the flooding has seriously affected communications and complicates assessment of the impact on villages and communes in the affected provinces. With 3,455 villages affected, many of which are totally isolated by vast expanses of flood waters, the CRC continues to respond proactively

to identified needs. The cadre of trained Red Cross volunteers (RCVs) is providing valuable information and assistance to victims. Moreover, there is constant dialogue and information sharing with government officials, the United Nations' Disaster Management Team (UN-DMT), international organisations and NGOs. In addition, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) and CRC joint assessment teams are providing data, in accordance with which the CRC is finalising plans for continuing emergency response throughout October. These plans include the identification of the most vulnerable for priority relief assistance.

The CRC is working in close co-operation with the MoH to develop a clear role for RCVs as regards the provision of health information and education. The MoH and CRC will then draw up a MoU on the role to be played by the RCVs.

The CRC with Federation assistance has worked with the MoH subgroup at the National Centre for Health Promotion, developing key messages on water purification and will work further on the development of other essential messages such as prevention of diarrhoea, use of latrines, personal hygiene and use of ORS.

In addition, assistance in water and sanitation in the safe areas is currently being planned to improve implementation as soon as field teams are briefed and the necessary material has been supplied.

Outstanding needs

Whilst initial response to the appeal has been positive, longer term needs during the recovery and rehabilitation phase may require additional intervention once full damage assessments have been carried out as the water subsides.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Co-ordination is taking place between the WFP, the CRC and the Federation in view of additional food distributions to take place as part of the food-for-work activities in November and December, as well as in relation to longer term needs of the flood victims.

Health is at the forefront of relief activities. The Ministry of Health (MoH) has set up a health sub committee under the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) which ensures co-ordination with all agencies including the WHO, UNICEF, MSF, USAID, agencies working in the field of water and sanitation and government Ministries. The MoH has also established co-ordination committees at provincial level through which health teams can be mobilised.

The CRC and the Federation held a press conference for the English speaking media on 22 September. This was followed on the same day by a briefing for the international community on the flood situation which provided information on Red Cross action taken to date and future steps planned. Those attending included representatives from the British government's Department for International Development (DFID), UN agencies, the World Bank, international organisations and NGOs. Regular Emergency Response Group (ERG) meetings are scheduled in which the CRC and the Federation will participate.

The Cambodia Daily, an English language newspaper based in Phnom Penh, launched a local appeal in response to the Federation's emergency appeal. The newspaper continues to prioritise articles on the flood situation and has received contributions in support of the Federation appeal.

The CRC and the Federation invited the English speaking media to attend and participate in a major relief distribution in Kandal Province on 22 September. The Khmer speaking media has widely reported on the current crises and Red Cross action taken since July. The Federation was also invited to attend a RGC distribution in Takeo Province on 21 September. The distribution was presided over by the Prime Minister and attended by numerous members of the Council of Ministers. The occasion offered an opportunity to discuss the ongoing disaster and address important issues relating to co-ordination of relief at both national and provincial level. DFID concluded a week's assessment of the flood disaster on 23 September and put forward recommendations including the need for additional funding to meet both emergency and medium term needs of the flood victims in Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

The Federation Delegation has kept the Royal Palace informed about Federation and CRC support following the flood crises in the country by sharing all Federation documents as they are issued.

A 3-member assessment team from the Asian Disaster Response Unit of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was thoroughly briefed by the CRC and the Federation at the beginning of their assessment mission and further exchange of information is foreseen before the mission is concluded. An ECHO representative participated in an emergency relief distribution in Kandal province on 25 September and an application for a 3-month emergency operation has been submitted to ECHO. The Federation has also discussed both emergency and longer term rehabilitation needs with the Chief of the World Bank Resident Office in Phnom Penh.

CARE is actively engaged in responding to the emergency in certain districts in 6 provinces: Prey Veng, Kompong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang, Kandal, Banteay Mean Chey, as well as the Municipality of Phnom Penh. Actions are closely co-ordinated with the Provincial Red Cross as regards the distribution of sand bags, compact (dried) food, instant noodles, iodised salt, vegetable oil, soy sauce, buckets and plastic sheets. World Vision has responded to the emergency in the 7 districts in 3 provinces where it is currently implementing its programmes: Kandal, Kampong Chhnang and Kampong Thom. Initial response and assistance criteria were co-ordinated with the provincial CRC branches and the district authorities. World Vision is continuing a needs assessments and has submitted a proposal for further relief and a recovery/rehabilitation programme in these same 7 target districts. CONCERN is assisting disaster victims through work with the Provincial Red Cross in 3 provinces: Pursat, Siem Reap and Kompong Chhnang. Oxfam UK has kept the CRC and the Federation informed of plans to support the Federation's emergency appeal, as well as to participate in rehabilitation activities.

Students and teachers from the International School of Phnom Penh (ISPP) have been active in donating clothes, food and cash to the Cambodian Red Cross Society and plan to assist in packing of emergency relief supplies and participate in relief distributions.

The head of delegation in Cambodia will provide input on the Federation Regional Delegation's briefing on the flood situation for missions and the UN System in Bangkok on 28 September.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

The Cambodian Red Cross has received a positive response to its local emergency appeal made by the President of the National Society on 26 July. The CRC received cash and in-kind donations from diplomatic missions in Cambodia and Thailand, sister National Societies, international organisations, NGOs, the local business community and the private sector. Major donors include the Embassies of the United States of America (through the American Red Cross) France (through the French Red Cross), Japan, Israel and the Chinese Red Cross. OCHA also channelled its initial contribution for shelter material through the UN system to the CRC.

Conclusion

In a few areas the waters have begun to recede leaving behind a landscape of damaged and destroyed homes, infrastructure, lines of communication and transport. Whole villages, communes and districts have suffered devastation. The process of recovery and rehabilitation will be long, complex and arduous.

In many other provinces, water levels remain high compounding the difficulties of an already large population of marginalised people. It will be many more weeks before the full extent of the damage is known and the recovery process can begin.

Long term food security will be a major issue resulting from the loss of rice fields and livestock, and severe malnutrition will occur unless food security issues are addressed urgently. Should this not be the case, there will be a significant migration of the destitute to Phnom Penh and other urban areas in search of work, with the resultant stress on urban infrastructure.

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Cambodia floods						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 22/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED				09/28/00
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				4,049,830		TOTAL COVERAGE 39.0%
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT		250,000	AUD	249,600	16.09.00	
BRITISH GOVT/RC DFID		245,098	GBP	634,803	15.09.00	RELIEF ITEMS, OPERATIONAL NEEDS
CANADIAN - RC		5,000	CAD	5,767	14.09.00	SUPPORT RELIEF OPERATION
JAPANESE - RC				82,000	20.09.00	
ICELANDIC - RC		200,000	ISK	4,295	22.09.00	
KOREA, REP. - RC				50,000	25.09.00	MEDICAL SERVICES
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		1,000,000	NOK	192,647	27.09.00	
SWEDISH - GOVT/RC		1,500,000	SEK	280,650	26.09.00	RELIEF NEEDS & OPERATIONAL NEEDS
SWISS - RC				80,000	26.09.00	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				1,579,762	CHF	39.0%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0	CHF	0.0%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						
PKH517,						