

## *DPR KOREA: Typhoon*

*14 February 2001*

*appeal no. 25/2000*

*situation report no. 4 (programme extension to March)*

*period covered: 1 December 2000 - 31 January 2001*

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*The worst winter in 50 years and a poor harvest are adding to the difficulties faced by those who are still homeless after the typhoon last September. The DPRK Red Cross/Federation have completed the distribution of winter clothing to 12,000 beneficiaries. The procurement of blankets and kitchen sets is under way and their distribution is scheduled for March. Because the reconstruction of homes is proceeding very slowly, hampered by the harsh weather and in-country shortages, the operation may be extended to include a rehabilitation support element when Spring comes.*

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### *The context*

Typhoon Prapiroon (Tropical Storm No.12) hit the north-east coast of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) late at night on 30 August 2000. It brought with it nearly 30 hours of heavy rain, causing flash flooding in many places in the east of the country. Because the storm coincided with a tidal wave in the east Sea of Korea, roads, bridges, railways, communications, houses, paddy fields and land were seriously damaged. It was the country's worst natural disaster since 1995.

South Hamgyong Province was the worst hit: 11 cities and counties were severely affected, with more than 10,000 left homeless. In the Hoesang District in Hamhung city, (350 km north east of Pyongyang), five villages were particularly hard hit by flash flooding and around 550 people (178 families) lost their

homes and belongings. The district Red Cross branch located 180 injured people and provided first aid for about one-third of them, referring the others to upper level hospitals. The area was also slightly affected by Typhoon Saoma, which struck on 15 and 16 September. Other parts of the country, in particular North Hamgyong and Kangwon Province, were also badly affected by the typhoon and tidal wave.

Following a rapid joint assessment by the DPRK Red Cross Society and the Federation delegation, an appeal was launched on 19 September 2000 for CHF 950,000 to assist 6,000 homeless people in four of the worst hit counties in South Hamgyong province. The number of beneficiaries was later increased to 12,000 and the budget revised.

## ***Latest events***

The current winter is the coldest in the DPRK for 50 years. In Chagang Province in the north, temperatures reached -37° Celsius and in Pyongyang -28° Celsius. For a population already weakened by years of food shortages, limited access to utilities such as electricity, and to basic health services, and ever more difficult access to firewood, these severe winter conditions have potentially deadly consequences. Few homes in the DPRK are sufficiently heated and public buildings such as hospitals, schools, offices and factories have little or no heating at all. Extensive deforestation means that people have to walk increasing distances in sub-zero temperatures to collect firewood.

At the same time, many areas which experienced drought or typhoon damage are facing even more critical food shortages due to the poor harvest. It was estimated that food provision through the Public Distribution System (PDS) would cease by the end of January 2001 in most parts of the country. The United Nations food-aid monitors reported that food distributions via the PDS were around 200 grammes of cereals per person per day, which translates into some 720 k/cal, way below the minimum daily requirement for an adult of 2,200 k/cal. Many people have turned to alternative food, such as noodles made from tree bark, leaves and twigs. Institutes have reported an increase of people seeking medical attention for digestive problems.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

### **Disaster Preparedness & Response**

As the country is further weakened by series of natural disasters, it is essential to provide provincial branches with regular information on health and disaster management in order to enhance the coping capacity of the local population, besides raising the profile of the Red Cross in the area.

The typhoon programme in South Hamgyong province was the first Red Cross operation in the area. Against this background, a two day disaster preparedness and response workshop was organised by the National Society/Federation, 19-20 December 2000. All the participants, who were key staff or volunteers in the typhoon operation, were given an overview of the history and background of Red Cross and its fundamental principles. Disaster management topics such as the targeting of beneficiaries, field logistics, the distribution process, and health issues were also discussed.

### **Distribution of winter clothing**

In late November, 3,325 winter jackets, donated earlier by the Norwegian Red Cross, were released from the disaster preparedness warehouse and distributed in Hamhung city districts. Because of the change in focus of the operation from shelter to winter clothing, which set back the programme by about a month, as

well as the difficulties in procurement and transportation in the country, the second phase distribution of 8,675 winter jackets and 12,000 pairs of winter boots took place on 21-23 January 2001 after transportation difficulties due to slippery roads and thick layers of snow.

A summary of the distribution follows:

City/County	District	Beneficiaries	Distribution of jackets in November	Distribution of winter clothing in January
Hamhung	Hoisang	3,040	2,145	895
	Sapo	440	325	115
	Haean	700	635	65
	Tonghungsan	320	220	100
Hongwon		2,100		2,100
Pukchong		2,500		2,500
Kumya		2,900		2,900
<b>Total</b>		<b>12,000</b>	<b>3,325</b>	<b>8,675</b>

**Blankets & Kitchen sets**

The procurement of blankets and kitchen sets is still under way. The distribution is expected to take place in early March.

***Outstanding needs***

The Phase 1 distributions of relief items, winter clothing, blankets and kitchen sets were useful for people who lost all or most of their belongings during the typhoon. Nevertheless, most of these people are still living in neighbours' houses, public buildings or temporary mud houses. As the government is focusing its efforts on the repair of infrastructure, the local authorities were left to support the reconstruction of houses for the people through their own merits. There is clearly a need to review the possibility of resuming the rehabilitation programme.

Although there were no outbreaks in waterborne diseases, it was reported that the quality of water worsened significantly after the typhoon disaster. The water purification tablets which were distributed earlier in the operation, and the boiling of water are only short term solutions. The Federation water and sanitation delegate will review the situation and needs after the winter ends.

***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

The National Society, at both headquarters and branch level, has regular contacts with the government Flood and Damage Relief Committee (FDRC) in order to co-ordinate assistance. The Federation participates in the co-ordination group set up by the UN Disaster Management Team, providing the UN agencies and NGOs with data on the Red Cross operation and liaising on relief activities.

***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

## *Conclusion*

The extremely severe winter has greatly increased the hardships facing the homeless. The limited resources in country have made it difficult for most local authorities to support the reconstruction of individual homes. Since the government is focusing its efforts on the reconstruction of infrastructure, the National Society/Federation, depending on developments, could eventually complement the rehabilitation phase for the typhoon victims by providing building materials.

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DPR Korea: Typhoon						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 25/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED			02/14/01	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>CASH</b>						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				<b>596,124</b>		<b>TOTAL COVERAGE 109.2%</b>
AUSTRIAN - RC		25,000	EUT	38,933	03.10.00	
BRITISH - GOVT DFID		49,020	GBP	122,550	09.10.00	RELIEF ITEMS
CANADIAN - RC		25,000	CAD	28,835	21.09.00	
CHINA - HONG KONG - RC		219,316	HKD	47,100	27.12.00	
ECHO (03002)		100,000	EUR	150,410	14.12.00	
FINNISH - RC		33,637	EUR	52,383	27.09.00	
ICELANDIC - RC		200,000	ISK	4,295	22.09.00	
JAPANESE - RC				48,000	25.09.00	
SWEDISH - RC		500,000	SEK	93,550	26.09.00	
SWISS -RC				37,296	27.09.00	
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH</b>				<b>623,352</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>104.6%</b>
<b>KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
ECHO/CHILDREN'S AID DIRECT		7,524	GBP	18,810	22.09.00	3'600 CONTAINERS OF 800 WATER PURIFICATION TABLETS DIRECTLY TO THE FIELD
Singapore	Delegate(s)			8,542		
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES</b>				<b>27,352</b>	<b>CHF</b>	<b>4.6%</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET</b>						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
<b>SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED</b>				<b>0</b>	<b>CHF</b>	
<b>THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:</b>						