

## ***BOLIVIA: FLOODS***

Appeal no: 5/2001  
1 February 2001

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,503,575  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 36,200 BENEFICIARIES FOR 3 MONTHS***

### ***Summary***

Exceptionally heavy rains have been falling continually throughout Bolivia since December 2000, causing floods and landslides. The rainy season usually begins in mid-January and continues until March. The latest estimate indicates that 7,240 families have been affected throughout the country. The Bolivian Red Cross has carried out damage and needs analysis assessments, assisted by the Federation regional disaster preparedness and relief delegate based in La Paz, and is now undertaking a relief operation in coordination with the national system of civil defense, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and agencies such as WHO/PAHO, the World Food Programme and international and national NGOs.



## The Disaster

Heavy rains in Bolivia usually occur as of mid-January and continue until February or March. This year, however, continual rainfall began as early as December and intensified throughout the month of January. To date a total of 14 people in the different regions of the country have lost their lives as a result of the flooding. Assessments carried out by the Bolivian Red Cross as well as governmental and non-governmental institutions such as the civil defense and various municipalities indicate a total of 7,240 families throughout the country are affected by the disaster.

Daily, heavy rainfall resulted in landslides, causing considerable damage in western areas of the city of La Paz. A large number of houses were destroyed and families evacuated to the homes of relatives or to temporary shelters. The table below indicates the number of families affected in the provinces assessed by the Bolivian Red Cross and the Federation.

DEPARTMENT	PROVINCE	TYPE OF DISASTER	Nº of FAMILIES	ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT*
La Paz	Murillo	Landslides/floods.	90	DNAA
La Paz	Lareceja (incluya Huanay)	Floods	1,300	DNAA
La Paz	Camacho	Floods	70	DNAA
La Paz	Iturralde	Floods	857	DNAA
La Paz	Caranavi	Floods	61	DNAA
La Paz	Loayza	Floods	230	DNAA
La Paz	Ingavi	Floods	1,260	DNAA
La Paz	Sud Yungas	Floods	121	DNAA
La Paz	Aroma	Floods	640	DNAA
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,629</b>	
Oruro	Cercado	Floods	450	DNAA
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>450</b>	
Cochabamba	Chapare	Floods	150	DNAA
Cochabamba	Quillacollo	Floods	130	DNAA
Cochabamba	Capinota	Floods	650	
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>930</b>	
Tarija	Mendez	Floods and Hailstorm	27	DNAA
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	
Beni	Jose Ballivian (Incluya Rurrenabaque)	Floods	837	DNAA
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>837</b>	
Santa Cruz	Ñ. de Chavez	Floods	240	NONE
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>240</b>	
Pando	Manupiri	Floods	127	NONE
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>127</b>	
		<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>7,240</b>	

**\*DNAA : DAMAGE AND NEEDS ANALYSIS ASSESSMENT**

Enormous volumes of water flowing from the high mountain regions caused flooding along the banks of rivers as waters surged towards the northern parts of the country. On 12 January, the Tipuani and Mapiiri rivers broke their banks and caused heavy flooding in the town of Huanay (Department of La Paz). Hundreds of homes were destroyed forcing the evacuation of families to higher ground. The situation was further complicated as flood waters seeped into the gasoline tanks of one of the town's gasoline stations, creating a two metre river of gas and water which inundated the city. This mixture was ignited by a spark from a truck, producing a fire which spanned several blocks and destroyed a large number of homes and property, some of which had not yet been affected by floodwaters. Rising

water also ruined farmland worked by indigenous subsistence farmers, forcing members of these communities to flee both the waters and the eroding river banks. Overall, 1,300 families, in both rural and urban areas, were affected in this region.

Also in the Department of La Paz, landslides and flooding occurred in the valleys of Luribay, particularly in the town of Viacha. Furthermore, flood waters took their toll on the provinces of Murillo and Aroma (two provinces within the department of La Paz) where a total of 5,189 families have been affected. The same situation occurred in the community of Sanbuenaventura (province of Iturralde), north of La Paz, and its surrounding area, damaging 100 homes in the town as well as affecting some 875 families within the dispersed rural population.

The full force of flood waters surging through the Beni river, which forms the border between the departments of La Paz and Beni, built up near the town of Rurrenabaque (province of José Ballivián) where 400 homes were flooded. Extensive areas of farmland on which people eked out a subsistence in Chamas and Tacanas were flooded, and overall some 903 families were affected in both rural districts and urban areas where people lost their homes. To date, 1,013 families in the Department of Beni have been affected by the floods.

Significant numbers of families have also been affected in other regions throughout Bolivia.. For example, in the Department of Oruro 450 families were affected in the city of Oruro and along the highway to Challapata. Some 930 families have also felt the impact of the floods in the department of Cochabamba. Assessments in the departments of Santa Cruz and Pando estimated the number of families affected at 240 and 127 respectively.

The number of families affected rises daily as the rains and flooding continue unabated throughout Bolivia. The most immediate obstacle to relief operations is the poor road conditions which are hindering transportation and creating hazards for drivers. Should the current levels of heavy precipitation continue through February and into March, the already precarious conditions will be further aggravated. There is a high potential for further significant material losses and an increase in the numbers of affected families requiring humanitarian assistance.

## *The Response so far*

### **Government Action w**

The Government declared a state of emergency on 19 January, 2001 in the following four departments: La Paz, Oruro, Beni and Cochabamba which have been severely affected by the floods. Given the difficult economic context of the country (Bolivia's economy ranks among the weakest in the America's region with a per capita income of USD 970 and a ranking on the Human Development Index of 114 out of 174 countries), the Government has limited resources to respond to the needs. The national civil defense (SENADECI) is the government body responsible for coordinating all disaster relief operations including maintenance of close relations with related institutions. The civil defense has, to date, distributed a limited amount of food as well as other materials such as agricultural tools, blankets and clothing. The prefecture (departmental government) has also distributed food items in cooperation with the World Food Program (WFP), but again in limited quantities.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent Action w**

CHF 150,000 was released from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to boost relief efforts and expedite the delivery of assistance. The Bolivian Red Cross rescue workers have been involved in evacuations and the setting up of temporary shelters, and branches in the affected areas have assisted with delivering supplies, in cooperation with other involved institutions.

### **Other Agencies' Action w**

Several organizations are implementing relief operations. WFP, through the civil defense and the departmental government of La Paz, has provided food items in a one-time distribution to families in Huanay and Rurrenabaque. The WHO and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) have participated in health-related work based on assessments. The Bolivian Red Cross will distribute water

containers provided by PAHO to the same beneficiaries who have received WFP-procured food supplies. USAID has provided air transport support for the delivery of supplies. CARE Bolivia carried out detailed assessments through its offices in Huanay and Sanbuenaventura. Caritas is providing support to relief efforts and the Bolivian media have launched a national solidarity appeal for clothing, food and financial donations. Oxfam is assisting in the area of water and sanitation infrastructure.

### **Co-ordination w**

The Bolivian Red Cross, as a member of the national system of civil defense, has participated in all coordination meetings together with other agencies, the MoH and departmental and municipal governments. While maintaining an active presence at these meetings, the Bolivian Red Cross is also involved in strengthening bilateral relations with many of these organizations in order to facilitate joint plans of action.

## ***The Intended Operation***

### **Assessment of Needs •**

The Federation regional disaster preparedness and relief delegate based in La Paz has assisted the Bolivian Red Cross in the two-week damage and needs analysis assessment (10-24 January, 2001) which took place in the La Paz, Beni and Iturralde provinces. At the same time, relief teams of volunteers from the Bolivian Red Cross have carried out assessments in the Provinces of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. There are also assessments under way in three other departments, jointly carried out with, among others, PAHO and WFP. A more thorough assessment will be undertaken by the Red Cross as conditions in the affected areas improve.

### **Red Cross Objectives •**

- Provide immediate humanitarian assistance consisting of food for 3 months, kitchen items, mattresses, blankets, agricultural tools, water treatment supplies and tents to 7,240 of the most vulnerable families affected by flooding and landslides throughout Bolivia (see attached budget).
- Implement a community-based disaster prevention and preparedness programme including community health components, in the operational areas.

### **Immediate Needs for the Emergency Phase (*January - April 2001*) •**

National, departmental and local governments as well as non-governmental institutions, community organizations and Red Cross assessment teams have agreed on the following needs:

- ***One-time distribution of food parcels and domestic items to the most affected households*** (see \* below for food parcel and domestic item details): WFP has already carried out a first distribution, and the Bolivian Red Cross with Federation support will follow this up with a second distribution in the same communities as soon as possible. Only one distribution is planned due to the widely dispersed nature of the beneficiary community and the associated high cost of transportation.
- ***Community-based disaster prevention and preparedness training and projects***: The first objective of the Disaster Preparedness component of the Federation's 2001 Annual Appeal for the South America region (Appeal no. 01.30/2001) is to strengthen National Society capacity by developing a more comprehensive disaster preparedness and response approach by reinforcing their emergency and disaster preparedness structures. These activities are directly linked to the situation in Bolivia and this emergency appeal, and the capacity of the Red Cross branches in high risk areas will be increased by implementing a community-based disaster prevention and preparedness programme. Two community-based workshops will take place immediately to provide training with the distribution of relief items. Projects will include community health, water and sanitation and protection of the environment in the operational areas.

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\* *the food parcel per family will consist of: rice (15 kg), pasta (6 kg), sugar (10 kg), flour (5 kg), maize flour (5 kg), salt (2 kg), vegetable oil (2 lt), for an approximate total of 45 kilos. Domestic items will include: kitchen utensils, hygiene materials (towels, soap, detergent), mattresses and blankets, temporary shelter (tents), water equipment (water containers and liquid chlorine), and equipment for relief volunteers will be distributed (see attached budget for details).*

**Anticipated Later Needs •**

- Agricultural tools and seeds: with the rains continuing the operation continues to evolve and at this point it is impossible to provide accurate figures on the number of hectares flooded and crops destroyed. As soon as conditions allow, a re-assessment will take place in collaboration with other agencies such as CARE. Despite the lack of access to affected areas, it is widely acknowledged that the main crops destroyed are bananas, yaca, rice and fruit, and with the new planting season starting in March it is imperative that tools be made available now to prepare for the planting season. The agricultural tools will only be purchased once the other goods and services for the operation are secured, and on condition there is enough funding. In-kind donations of this item are also requested.

**Capacity of the National Society •**

The Bolivian Red Cross has the necessary capacity and skills needed for the planning and implementation of the operation. The Bolivian Red Cross is composed of a national board based in La Paz and 9 departmental branches with their respective boards. In this operation the Bolivian Red Cross has the support of 95 volunteers from 5 departmental branches. The national office includes the national department of administration and finance and an operational technical area made up of the departments of relief, social medicine, youth, social welfare, volunteers, diffusion and communication.

**Present Capacity of the Federation in Bolivia •**

The Buenos Aires regional delegation, through its La Paz-based disaster preparedness and relief delegate, has provided support to the Bolivian Red Cross in all aspects of the operation thus far, facilitating communication with the regional delegation, supporting follow-up efforts, assisting in damage and needs assessment and assisting with the appeal process. The regional delegation continues to provide technical assistance notably in the area of information, communication and administration. The Federation office is being reinforced by a relief delegate from the region. The regional delegation's information officer has been assigned to La Paz to assist the National Society and the Federation delegates in their media activities.

**Evaluation •**

In keeping with the Federation commitment to the principles and standards of the Sphere Humanitarian Charter, the impact of the Federation operation will be evaluated with the input of beneficiaries through the use of appropriate participatory methodologies.

## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

The early arrival of the rainy season, the high number of victims, the severe and widespread damage, and the ongoing nature of the situation requires an urgent appropriate response from donors, particularly since the heavy rains are expected to continue until mid-March. Assistance is badly needed given the limited in-country resources.

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**This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>**

		ANNEX 1
<b><u>BUDGET SUMMARY</u></b>		APPEAL No. AP05/2001
BOLIVIA FLOODS		
TYPE		VALUE
<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>		IN CHF
<u>Clothing &amp; textiles</u>		
Blankets		111,351
Mattresses		222,912
<u>Food items</u>		
Salt		4,539
Sugar		81,591
Cooking oil		33,688
Rice		138,813
Flour		39,661
Maize		36,316
Pasta		40,736
<u>Water recipients</u>		66,318
<u>Utensils &amp; tools</u>		
Tools (axe, pickaxe, spade)*		172,022
Kitchen sets		270,000
Hygiene supplies (Towel/soap/Detergent)		35,241
		<b>1,253,188</b>
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>		
Programme management		101,386
Technical support		30,350
Professional services		33,658
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE &amp; VEHICLE COSTS</u>		16,830
<u>PERSONNEL</u>		
Expatriate staff		24,509
National staff		3,300
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</u>		
Travel & related expenses		8,161
Information expenses		10,000
Administrative & general expenses		10,717
External workshops & seminars		11,477
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</b>		<b>250,387</b>
<b>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES</b>		<b>1,503,575</b>
<b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>		
<b>NET REQUEST</b>		<b>1,503,575</b>
*Note: The agricultural tools will only be purchased once the other goods and services for the operation are secured, and on condition there is enough funding .		