

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

SRI LANKA: DROUGHT

13 September 2001

This Ops Update is intended for reporting on emergency appeals.

Appeal No. 25/2001

Launched on 13 August 2001 for CHF 1,258,427 for 6 months.

DREF Allocated: CHF 100,000

Beneficiaries: 39,000

Operations Update No. 1; Period covered: 13 August - 13 September 2001. Next Ops Update (No. 2) expected 15 October 2001

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 12.1%

Related Appeals: 01.39/2001 (Sri Lanka Annual Appeal)

Outstanding needs: CHF 1,106,263

The Disaster/Situation: The initial availability of Federation Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) together with timely donations from several donors enabled the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) to make a first distribution of rice, flour, dal and sugar for 45 days to 1,293 families on 31 August. A second SLRCS distribution took place on 9 September to families from the villages of Maha Ara, Namadasweva, Suriyawewa, 8 Mile Post, Beddavadiya, Andaragaswewa, and Usgala (located in the three Divisions of Andarawewa, Mahawew Kada Ara), and Wediwewa in Hambantota District. Vulnerability assessments of another 4,500 families are currently taking place through house to house surveys by local Red Cross volunteers. The Federation has convened a national level inter-agency coordination forum to enable it and the SLRCS to maintain close coordination with other operational UN and NGO agencies, the ICRC, and also with Government officials at the national, district and divisional levels. This inter-agency coordination forum has enabled assessments and plans to be shared to maximize the use of available resources.

Operational Developments:

The initial availability of Federation Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) together with timely donations from the Swedish Government and Red Cross and the Danish Red Cross enabled the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) to make a first distribution of rice, flour, dal and sugar for 45 days to 1,293 individually assessed families on 31 August. A Government Minister coordinating some of the overall drought relief operations attended the Red Cross distribution and publicly thanked the Red Cross “for ensuring early assistance for these families”.

A second SLRCS distribution took place on 9 September to families from the villages of Maha Ara, Namadagasweva, Suriyawewa, 8 Mile Post, Beddavadiya, Andaragaswewa, and Usgala (located in the three Divisions of Andarawewa, Mahawew Kada Ara), and Wediwewa in Hambantota District. Vulnerability assessments of another 4,500 families are currently taking place through house to house surveys by local Red Cross volunteers, which is the key difference between the Red Cross and other responses. The assessment criteria being used has highlighted the most vulnerable as those families who have lost two or more year's of crops; households headed by widows or by women; pregnant and lactating mothers; disabled persons; those with young children in the 0-5 age range; and children in the 5-12 age group with no food left to eat.

The Federation has convened a national level inter-agency coordination forum to enable it and the SLRCS to maintain close coordination with other operational UN and NGO agencies, the ICRC, and also with Government officials at the national, district and divisional levels. This inter-agency coordination forum has enabled assessments and plans to be shared to maximize the use of available resources.

There is some indication that families by the roadside and in towns are disproportionately benefiting from the drought relief distributions of other un-coordinated local NGO efforts, but the Red Cross has taken on the unique position and responsibility of assessing families in the interior and inaccessible parts of the most affected areas. This means that the Red Cross is only relying on self-verified information of family inhabitants after assessing them in their homes, and is not accepting lists from other sources.

The assessment may spread to include families from Moneragala and Ratnapura Districts where Red Cross branches are also reporting high levels of families in distress due to drought. A Federation Relief Delegate is also undertaking an assessment visit for one week to assess the community's food and water needs and projections for the next few months in the most affected areas. The ICRC has deployed an agronomist to assess some of the drought affected areas in sensitive conflict zones of Ampara District and will share the results when ready.

Red Cross Red Crescent action w

In order to communicate and disseminate the severity of the drought the Red Cross has undertaken considerable work to bring media coverage to its relief distribution programmes, and is promoting human interest cases to highlight the plight of the most vulnerable families, particularly those living in interior areas far away from main roads. These families have not been assessed by any other agency and miss the often ad hoc roadside distribution conducted by local NGOs and private companies donating goods often in an uncoordinated manner.

The Federation-convened weekly inter-agency coordination meeting has been widely welcomed by all implementing international NGOs, the ICRC, donors, the Ministry of Social Services, and embassies. The meetings are helping to improve geographical and sectoral coordination of relief efforts in issues such as food security, water, and health promotion. The second meeting, again convened by the Federation, will be held on 17 September. Meetings have also taken place separately between the Federation and all the UN agencies (WFP, UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, FAO) as well as with the Government to ensure a sharing of all assessments and maximizing of resources.

The Sri Lankan TV, radio and print media have given consistently high profile coverage to the international and national Red Cross response. This coverage has also provoked constructive debates in the public environment over the longer term solutions to drought conditions as a natural resource management issue, prioritizing a more planned approach to soil and water conservation programmes for the affected Districts to mitigate similar relief measures in the future. Integrated sharing of information and resources has also taken place with the ICRC Delegation in country.

Red Cross Society w

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) immediately recruited a national drought relief coordinator as well as a district level coordinator in the most affected District of Hambantota. A large number of Red Cross volunteers from Hambantota District, previously trained in Disaster Preparedness and First Aid, were mobilized

and trained through orientation meetings to undertake house to house surveys of households in the most affected areas and in places inaccessible to many other agencies (remote areas away from the public highways).

Discussions were held with the Government authorities in each affected district and division so that the survey could identify which families were in the most vulnerable categories using a standard vulnerability assessment questionnaire.

The SLRCS generated a very high public profile in electronic and print media (three languages) across the country, covering its assessment of the drought affected families’ needs and appeals for donations to support the programme to assist 39,000 beneficiaries over the next 6 months until the next harvest season in February. Six SLRCS public donation centres were opened in Colombo and received a large number of in-kind goods. Private companies and shops also donated rice, flour, and dal. The Colombo District branch launched a donation drive with door to door collections from six parts of the city

Relief distributions w

Objectives and Activities planned

The overall goal of the SLRCS operation is to provide supplementary food support to the most vulnerable of those affected by the drought until the first harvest of crops due in January/February 2002.

Relief distributions

The earlier Red Cross surveys carried out indicated that most of the worst affected families are able to provide for half of their food needs until the next harvest. This operation is designed to make up the other 50% shortfall. Quantities are based on the Sphere minimum nutritional standards and using locally acceptable staples of rice, flour, dal and sugar. Following tenders the SLRCS has purchased all the food items from the local District outlets of the Government’s State Cooperative Agency, enabling cash to be recirculated into the local farmers’ economy. This has also saved on warehousing and other logistics costs such as packaging and has facilitated easy distribution via Red Cross volunteers from lorries close to the most vulnerable interior areas where most of the vulnerable families are located.

The first 1,293 families have received their full 45 day distribution of food, each sufficient for the average family of six persons. A proportionate reduction in items was made for families with less than 6 persons. Table 1 below provides further details of the original projections for the full six month needs per family (needs which are being reconfirmed):

Table 1 - Original Food Requirements (Kgs) for 6 months

Item	Ration person/day	Total /person	Ratio	Total required/ person family for 6 months	Total required fo 6,500 families for 6 months
Rice	0.125		22.5	135	877'500
Flour	0.075		13.5	81	526'500
Dal	0.04		7.2	43.2	280'800
Sugar	0.015		2.7	16.2	105'300

Specific objectives and activities already conducted against those originally established are shown below:

Objective 1: To provide one initial food distribution to 1,000 families in one District for 3 months utilizing available DREF funds.

Activity 1: Personnel and Disaster Preparedness-trained volunteers from the SLRCS headquarters, Hambantota district, and divisional branches and a Federation delegate conducted a rapid assessment to identify 1,000 of the most vulnerable families in one Division. This was completed on time before the end of August and

families received the full amount for 45 days of 25 kgs rice, 20 kgs flour, 10 kgs dal, and 4 kgs sugar (for a 6 person family). The villages covered were Bogahaweve, Padavagama, Devranwehera, Ranawaranawa, Ilukpalassa, Una Athweva, and Uda Mathala of Lunugamvehera Division of Hambantota District.

The full distribution was made to 1,293 families. Another 293 families could be accommodated as not all the most vulnerable families had six members on average, and those families with less members received reduced rations. This enabled the saved rations to be spread among a further 293 families.

For each house to house survey form the vulnerability criteria assessed by the Red Cross volunteers included main sources of income of households and how this income has been affected; what survival strategies families used to find work, income and food and water; any family members currently employed; numbers of children in the 0-5, 5-12, and 12 and over age groups; monthly income, including from Government or non-governmental sources (e.g. Samurdhi assistance); sources of drinking water; and details of pregnant and lactating mothers. Each survey form also contained the verification signature of the Gram Niladari (Village Headman).

Activity 2: Procure and distribute food to the identified 1,000 families by first week in September. The SLRCS tender process decided upon purchasing all food items for the distributions from the State Cooperative Agency as the quality was consistent and high, and pre-packaging arrangements saved on warehousing and packaging costs. The SLRCS organized a second distribution on 9 September to 962 families of a total list of 1,055 families (with the balance being delivered within 5 days to those who did not attend the distribution itself). The families had been assessed through house to house surveys and came from the villages of Maha Ara, Namadagasweva, Suriyawewa, 8 Mile Post, Beddavadiya, Andaragaswewa, Usgala from three Divisions of Andarawewa, Mahawew Kada Ara, and Wediwewa. This distribution was conducted using local donations of food items mobilized in Sri Lanka for the Red Cross Society from the public and business sector sources. In this second distribution 832 families received the full 6 person ration for 45 days and 223 received the reduced ration for smaller family sizes.

Objective 2: To provide one food distribution to an additional 5,500 families and a second distribution to all 6,500 families

Activity 1: Personnel and Disaster Preparedness-trained volunteers from the SLRCS headquarters and Hambantota District and Divisional Branches, together with some from Moneragala District (with adjoining drought affected areas), are already conducting a second assessment to identify a further 5,500 vulnerable families. This will be completed by the third week in September. However, the Federation's disaster relief delegate has helped the SLRCS develop a plan of action to assist 3,500 of the most affected families for the next 5 months if the Appeal reaches 50% of its target, and targeting of the most vulnerable beneficiaries has been further tightened to maximize available resources.

Activity 2: Procure and distribute food to the 5,500 families identified, by mid September. The SLRCS will use the same procurement procedures as for the first distribution, and checks are being made with the local outlets of the State Cooperative Agency to ensure that adequate stocks are in place ahead of the purchasing schedule.

Activity 3: Repeat the procurement and distribution to the first 1000 families after 45 days, and subsequently to all 6,500 families in mid-November. In keeping with the earlier action plan, the Federation's disaster relief delegate has made preparations so that before commencement of the second distribution in November a survey has been carried out of a sample of beneficiaries to evaluate the impact of the first distribution and to confirm the exact needs for further assistance. This will enable modification of the programme if necessary.

The Federation's relief delegate is in the process of drawing up a proposed plan of action for the next 5 months with SLRCS officials from headquarters and affected District branches. This plan of action will contain a cash flow analysis and scenarios for distributions against variable ratios of income against the appeal total over the next 5 months.

Health w

There were no specific health objectives in the original appeal, but the Federation and SLRCS have coordinated closely with other agencies and institutions who have agreed to assume a health monitoring role.

The Federation has convened a regular inter-agency meeting where sectoral issues can also receive more coordinated attention, and has exchanged monitoring information with WHO, UNICEF, and INGOs such as SCF (UK), Oxfam, and World Vision, some of whom will continue to assess morbidity trends, possible health promotion campaigns, supplementary nutrition programmes for pregnant and lactating mothers and children under 5 years old, and other water and sanitation and hygiene related issues in a coordinated response, while the Red Cross focuses on food relief supplies.

Water-sanitation w

Although there were no specific water and sanitation related objectives in the original Appeal, the Federation and SLRCS have also decided to continue to assess possible future options, including further advocacy on behalf of those most vulnerable to not accessing water from current Government and other emergency provisions. The focus will be on assessing the water access issues and projections for supplies for the most vulnerable families through the Federation relief Delegate's mission between 10-14 September, and recommending possible scenarios for planning to the Federation by 14 September.

The Federation relief delegate, currently on a follow-up assessment mission with the SLRCS (headquarters and branch personnel and volunteers) in the affected Districts, is also specifically assessing the vulnerable families who have already received the first Red Cross food distribution for 45 days in terms of their perspectives over future water scarcity scenarios. The assessment of possible water provision scenarios will be circulated by 14 September.

National Society Capacity Building w

The SLRCS has considerable experience in relief operations and has a substantial number of volunteers available, many of whom have received training in disaster preparedness and vulnerability capacity assessments. The initial two distributions have already significantly increased the coordination, logistics and resource mobilization skills not only of headquarters personnel and drought-affected branches, but also in branches such as Colombo who undertook widespread communications and fundraising work, and finally sent 40 volunteers to participate in the second food relief distribution itself on 9 September.

Following the learning exercise from the cyclone relief operation in December 2000 the SLRCS has strengthened its response structure by:

- Employing a specific national drought relief co-ordinator at headquarters as well as a counterpart drought relief project coordinator in the Hambantota Branch to oversee this programme and to be responsible for the training of volunteers.
- Conducting a number of training workshops for volunteers involved in the distributions to prepare them for their roles. This was carried out before the main distribution and assessments took place. 150 volunteers (women and men) were trained in Hambantota District in mid-August.
- Volunteers who have been involved in this programme will be retained within the branch organization and will be included in the SLRCS's wider Disaster Preparedness training programme to commence later this year with support from ECHO and the Spanish Red Cross. They will become a focal point for this programme within the Branch but may also be used as resource persons for volunteer training in other Branches.

Federation Delegation w

The programme is being managed by the Federation Representative in Sri Lanka, with assistance from a disaster relief delegate. The Delegation has maintained close coordination with the SLRCS and with the ICRC Delegation who had deployed an agronomist to assess the areas in the conflict affected parts of Ampara District.

The responsibility for day to day monitoring of the operation will be with the SLRCS, primarily at branch level but supervised closely by a headquarters officer specifically assigned to co-ordinate the project. Daily

coordination meetings are taking place between the Federation and the SLRCS to oversee progress against the specified activities.

Coordination

As explained above, the Federation has taken the initiative to convene a widely attended national level inter-agency coordination meeting to enable all agencies, key Government ministries, and the ICRC where appropriate to share assessments, coordinate sectoral responses, and plan to maximize the collective use of available resources.

At the District level the Ministry of Social Services has requested all agencies to coordinate relief assessment and distribution activities through the local Government Agent. The SLRCS has been following this protocol from the earliest discussions, and local Government authorities have expressed high satisfaction with the Red Cross cooperation and at the same time at the role the Red Cross has played to bring attention to the most vulnerable, particularly those in the interior areas, through its well coordinated house to house surveys.

The SLRCS will continue to work closely with the Hambantota and other Districts' local Government Agents to ensure that there is no duplication of effort and that the most vulnerable families are all identified. The SLRCS has nevertheless ensured that it acts independently in the final selection of beneficiaries.

Outstanding needs

The initial funds raised by contributions from the Swedish Government and Red Cross, and from the Danish Red Cross, have enabled the first 45 day distribution to be completed on time to the targeted families as per the original plan of action. Although some soft pledges have been received from a few other National Societies, there is an urgent need to mobilize further funds to enable the further distributions to take place for the next 5 months to the projected 6,500 families in total.

The Spanish Red Cross also made a bilateral donation of approximately Euros 12,000 to the SLRCS. The Norwegian and German Red Cross have indicated that they are actively seeking funds actively from their Governments. The Canadian Red Cross has pledged Canadian \$25,000.

For further details please contact: Charles Eldred-Evans, Phone: 41 22 7304320; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: eldred@ifrc.org

Donors providing in-kind relief in response to large-scale emergencies are urged to contact the Federation's Logistics and Resource Mobilization Department to avoid any unnecessary delays in the clearance and delivery of emergency relief assistance.

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Head a.i.
Relationship Management Department

Hiroshi Higashiura
Head
Asia Pacific Department

Sri Lanka drought						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 25/2001		PLEDGES RECEIVED				13.09.2001
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				1'258'427		TOTAL COVERAGE 12.1%
CASH CARRIED FORWARD						
DANISH - RC		185'000	DKK	37'574	10.08.2001	
SWEDISH - GOVT		700'000	SEK	114'590	23.08.2001	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				152'164	CHF	12.1%
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
SPANISH - RC		12'000	EUR	18'228	13.09.2001	BILATERAL DONATION
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				18'228	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						