

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

BANGLADESH: MONSOON FLOODS

16 August 2002

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Preliminary Appeal no. 21/2002; Launched on 7 August 2002 for CHF 2,076,000 (USD 1,393,555 or EUR 1,422,852) for four months for 150,000 beneficiaries.

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 170,000

Operations Update No. 1; Period covered: 7 August - 15 August

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 31%

Related Appeals: Bangladesh 2002 Annual Appeal, no. 01.26/2002

Outstanding needs: CHF 1,432,143

Summary: The floods and river erosion in Bangladesh are affecting well over 3 million people already living below the poverty line. The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) has already provided emergency assistance to 7,100 families with its limited resources. Initial response to the Preliminary Appeal is encouraging. In order to support 150,000 affected people, however, additional funds are urgently needed.

Operational Developments w

This year's monsoon arrived early in Bangladesh and from late June onwards around half of the country's 64 Districts have been affected by flash floods and river erosions brought on by exceptionally heavy torrential rains and the onrush of water from swollen rivers in India. Although the situation has been gradually developing over a number of weeks, it has rapidly deteriorated during the last 15 days - with 3.5 million people now estimated as being affected across much of Bangladesh.

The plight of victims affected by river erosions and subsequent flooding continues. Many are living in squalor on elevated road embankments, spar and chars and little help is reaching them from the government or NGOs. Waterlogged agricultural land has resulted in a lower demand for farm labour, increasing the vulnerability of the landless people who



People living below the poverty line - the most affected by floods and river erosions - Gaibandha District

have no alternative opportunities for earning a living. In addition, many of the people currently affected by flooding and river erosions (particularly in Gaibandha) were also victims of recent tropical storms and tornados.

It is important to mention, that even if the overall flood situation does continues to improve it would take at least three weeks before these families would be able to go back to their water logged homes. Therefore, it is essential that these families are given minimum humanitarian assistance which includes one month food ration and a family kit with basic household utensils to get back to some normality.

In general, river water levels in Bangladesh are subsiding, with just five of 46 measurement points currently above the danger level. However, light to moderately heavy rainfall has been recorded in most localities in the Brahmaputra and Ganges basins during the last two days and these fresh rains in India are now raising water levels in the upper reaches of the Padma and Meghna river basins. A few days of heavy rain in Bangladesh (or in India) would see rivers once again flowing above the danger level at many points, aggravating the sufferings of the affected people .

According to the Ministry of Health, more than 30,000 people have been affected by waterborne diseases in the flood affected districts. Many areas of Bangladesh are now also affected by an outbreak of dengue fever. In the absence of an efficient disease surveillance system, the full extent of the outbreak is not known but in the capital Dhaka, alone, more than 25 people have died and over 1,900 have sought medical assistance and hospitalisation during the last week.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action w

The BDRCS and the Federation delegation have continued to maintain close contacts with all BDRCS Branches in the flood affected Districts. At the BDRCS national headquarters, a multi-sectoral emergency flood co-ordination team (consisting of BDRCS, Federation and German Red Cross representatives) has been established. Daily meetings are conducted at the BDRCS national headquarters to co-ordinate and expedite BDRCS flood relief ongoing operations in six affected Districts.

From 9-13 August, a joint assessment team consisting of representatives from the BDRCS, the Federation and the Branches concerned visited the most affected areas of Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Sirajganj and Bogra. Frequently using boats (often the only possible transport means), the BDRCS and Federation team's main priorities were to reach the most affected and unassisted people stranded on chars, to visit temporary shelters of displaced populations (on river embankments, along secondary roadsides etc.) and to provide necessary support to district Branches operating in the affected areas. A detailed report on the findings of the BDRCS and the Federation team was prepared and will be used in the process of beneficiary selection and for the allocation of aid.

The Federation released CHF 170,000 from its Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) on 7 August, enabling immediate deployment of BDRCS medical teams in the most affected Districts. In addition, very rapid and generous response from the Red Cross Societies of Germany, Sweden, Finland, Japan and Switzerland enabled commencement of the process of procuring necessary emergency relief items ('family kits', oil and dal). In Phase I of the relief operation, these will be distributed among an initial total of 15,000 families (5,000 in each of the most severely affected Districts - Gaibandha, Jamalpur and Sirajganj, respectively. Extension of the operation (Phase II) will depend on further funds being made available.

The BDRCS has designated two internationally experienced Officers from its national headquarters to act as field co-ordinators, providing advice and necessary support to district Branches throughout the implementation of the relief operation. As of 16 August, both Officers will be deployed in the field and the arrival of a Federation Relief Delegate (seconded by the Japanese RC) is expected in Bangladesh on 17th August. Based in Bogra (the central District of the most affected area), the Federation Delegate will further strengthen field support to the National Society.

In accordance with the terms of an MOU recently signed between WFP, the BDRCS and the Federation and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MDMR), the Ministry issued an Office Order (11 August) authorising the release to BDRCS for emergency relief distribution quantities of rice up to a total of 1,000 MT (wheat equivalent) stored in local government warehouses. Distribution of allocated rice will be done as per agreement between the BDRCS and WFP.

Objectives, activities and results w

Operation Objective: *To meet the urgent needs of 30,000 unassisted and displaced families currently living on the river embankments, spars, roadways and chars through provision of basic food items, family kits, medical services and clean water supply for the period of three months.*

Reflecting the donor response to the Appeal, to date, the relief operation has been split into two phases.

Phase I

- Immediate deployment of medical teams in six affected Districts, for initial period of one month.
- Assistance to 15,000 most affected families in the three Districts of Gaibhanda, Jamalpur and Sirajganj.
- 5,000 families in each District will be assisted with a family kit and a food ration (20 kg of rice, 4 kg of dal and 1 litre of cooking oil).

Phase II

Subject to funding (to commence as soon as additional funds are made available).

Procurement of 15,000 family kits (in accordance with established Federation procedures) has commenced. The Head of Delegation and Finance/Administration Delegate made a quality control visit to the factory of the designated supplier on 12 August. The processes for production and packaging (acknowledging sources of donation) are well underway and delivery is expected to take place during the last week of August.

Due to lack of sufficient **warehousing** space at its national headquarters, BDRCS is making necessary arrangements for direct delivery to the affected Districts - requesting use of their local storage space, wherever possible. In this context, BDRCS field co-ordinators will investigate the possibilities for short-term local storage of relief items. BDRCS will use its own trucks and rented vehicles to **transport** relief supplies from Dhaka to the distribution locations.

Beneficiaries: Beneficiaries are being selected in accordance with vulnerability criteria laid down in the BDRCS *Disaster Relief Field Manual*. This defines the most vulnerable as being: “those who are unable to survive/recover in the aftermath of the crisis and whose suffering could not be alleviated without external assistance”. In order to ensure that the most vulnerable of the affected populations are reached, beneficiary selection is largely being conducted through “door-to-door” surveys among displaced families currently taking refuge on river embankments, chars and along roadsides. The selection process will:

- Ensure as much participation by the local community as possible;
- Avoid using intermediaries as much as possible;
- Carefully avoid duplication of persons/families;
- Use Red Cross youth and volunteers who are familiar with the area under survey.

Individual beneficiary profiles will indicate at least two of the following characteristics:

- Families which have been most affected by the floods;
- Families which have not been beneficiaries or recipients of any substantial relief assistance provided by the Government, NGOs and other organizations;
- Families without any source of income (i.e. landless, jobless);
- Families having members rendered incapable of work due to disability, i.e. serious illness or old age;
- Families headed by women (i.e. widows, divorced, or separated women who have no income).

Surveys are being carried out by members of the CBDP squad, RCY volunteers and Branch Executive Committees of the respective Districts. A ration card clearly indicating the designated distribution point, quantity and date of distribution will be issued to selected beneficiaries before distribution commences.

Relief: distribution of food and basic nonfood items w

Expected result 1: *30,000 displaced and unassisted families have received the complimentary food ration within the next four weeks.*

Identification of beneficiaries is ongoing. In order to avoid duplication, beneficiary lists will be shared with all relevant bodies (government, NGOs etc.) once the process of identification is completed.

The process for procurement of dal and oil for 15,000 families is underway. BDRCS Relief Department is following up on the release of 1,000 MT of food items (rice) from local government warehouses in the affected Districts. The process might take some days, until government representatives at field level are duly informed about the clearance issued at national level by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. The WFP has offered their assistance in expediting this process.

Expected result 2: 30,000 flood-affected families received family kits and emergency BDRCS buffer stock replenished over a period of four months.

Beneficiary selection process is ongoing. Beneficiaries receiving food ration will also receive a family kit. Through rapid response and a generous donation by the German government through the German Red Cross, funds were provided for the immediate procurement of 14,600 family kits. Procurement of 15,000 family kits to be distributed during Phase I of the relief operation is completed. A supplier has been selected and kits are currently being produced and packaged. Delivery of family kits (15,000) is planned to be completed by the end of August. Distribution to selected beneficiaries is planned to take place during the first week of September.

Water and sanitation: Distribution of Water purification tablets

Expected result 3: 150,000 men, women and children in six affected districts, where water sources have been contaminated, have received water purification tablets within the four weeks of the beginning of the operation.

In the initial stage of the operation, WHO has donated 200,000 water purification tablets to BDRCS. Each medical team has been provided with water purification tablets to be distributed to affected people currently seeking medical assistance.

At a meeting organised by the BDRCS and the Federation (with the participation of operational NGOs) on 14 August, a representative of ADRA indicated a possibility of that organisation’s provision of an ‘in-kind’ donation of 20 million water purification tablets for distribution by BDRCS .

Health: Deployment of mobile medical teams

Expected result 4: Within the first month of the operation basic medical services provided to the flood-affected population, preventing possible outbreaks of water borne diseases.

On 9 August (immediately after release of DREF funds) the first two medical teams were deployed in the Districts of Gaibandha and Bogra . As of 14 August, an additional four medical teams were deployed (one in each of the Districts of Jamalpur, Shariatpur, Sirajganj and Noakhali). All teams have been deployed for an initial period of one month. Each medical team is composed of a doctor, a paramedic, an RCY volunteer and a female volunteer. Each team is provided with a month supplies of: ORS, water purification tablets, antibiotics, paracetamol, skin and eye ointments and other essential medicaments. First medical reports from the field are expected to be received in Dhaka during the next few days.



Contaminated water sources in Jamalpur district

In addition, a meeting was held with MSF-Holland and assistance has been offered to the BDRCS and the Federation if the health situation worsens.

Coordination w

On 12 August, the Disaster Emergency Group (DER) Flood Assessment teams returned from field assessment mission and presented their findings. According to their reports, more than 2.4 million people have been affected in the Districts of Gaibandha, Bogra, Sirajganj, Jamalpur and Shariatpur. More than 44,000 houses have been totally destroyed and 143,635 partially damaged in the Districts targeted by BDRCS. The reports also indicate that people living in temporary shelters are having difficulty accessing safe drinking water, as most of the tube wells have been submerged.

In addition to the DER meeting, the BDRCS and the Delegation convened a meeting on 14 August among operational NGOs (CONCERN, Save the Children UK/US and ADRA) currently active distributing relief items among affected populations in flooded Districts. The main purpose of the meeting was to share information on current assistance provided and to avoid duplication.

The BDRCS and the Federation continue to maintain good relations with the Government departments, DER Group, UN agencies and NGOs at both national and District level.

The Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Country Directors of more than 40 selected diplomatic missions and NGOs in Bangladesh continue to receive updated information from the Federation Delegation and BDRCS.

Advocacy/Public Information w

International and national media interest in the floods and Red Cross/Red Crescent relief efforts has remained high during the reporting period, with Delegates and the Head of Delegation as well as the BDRCS Chairman and Secretary General being interviewed several times by BBC, CNN, AP, Reuters, Dutch Radio and others. Wide coverage (both in Bangla and English) has also been provided in many national TV and radio stations and newspapers.

Outstanding needs w

With the monsoon anticipated to last until mid September - and with rains in India continuing unabatedly - there will be no early end to this emergency. River erosion is yet to show its real face, once the river levels start falling. This will continue displacement of people to available, marginal land. Those who return to their homes will face rehabilitation tasks (repairs, recovery of tube wells and sanitary facilities) and a subsequent threat of waterborne epidemics. With large areas still under water and with embankments and fields destroyed, income is scarce and food very much in demand.

The BDRCS is ready to provide more assistance to the most vulnerable but urgently requires funding to purchase supplies. Initial response to the preliminary Appeal has been encouraging. However, if the BDRCS is to succeed in its goal of providing aid to 150,000 families worst-affected by the flooding and river erosions, there needs to be a more generous and rapid response by donors.

For further details please contact:

- *Federation Geneva: Ewa Eriksson, Phone: 41 22 730 4252; Fax: 41 22 733 0395; email: eriksson@ifrc.org or Suzana Jekic; Phone: 41 22 730 4353; Fax: 41 22 733 0395; email: jekic@ifrc.org*
- *Federation Delegation in Bangladesh; Head of Delegation; phone: +88 02 831 5401; mobile: +88 0175 216 15; email: ifrcbd03@ifrc.org*
- *BDRCS; phone 88 933 7314; email: BDRCS@bdonline.com*

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>.

John Horekens
Director
Division of External Relations

Simon Missiri
Head
Asia & Pacific Department

Bangladesh - Floods						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 21/2002		PLEDGES RECEIVED			19.08.2002	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				2'076'000		TOTAL COVERAGE 31.0%
FINNISH - RC		60'000	EUR	88'188	01.08.2002	
JAPANESE - RC		69'700	USD	102'738	14.08.2002	
SWEDISH - GOVT		800'000	SEK	127'840	08.08.2002	RELIEF ITEMS, INCL. TRASPOT & DISTRIBUTION COSTS
GERMAN -RC		222'022	EUR	325'091	16.08.2002	FAMILY KITS
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				643'857	CHF	31.0%
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	