

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

PARAGUAY: DROUGHT

8 November 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

Appeal No. 31/2002

Launched on 24 October 2002 for CHF 418,000 for 5 months for 5,950 beneficiaries.

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 70,000

Beneficiaries: 5,950

Operations Update No. 1

Period covered: 25 October - 7 November 2002

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 23.5%

Related Appeals: 01.18/2002 Pan American Disaster Response Unit; 01.22/2002 South America; 31/01 Central America: Drought and Food Insecurity

Outstanding needs: CHF 319,649

Summary: A severe drought has affected three departments of western Paraguay for two years; there were eight months during which there was no rainfall at all in these areas. A small amount of rain has begun to fall in recent days, but this cannot alleviate the serious problems faced by the drought-affected communities, which have exhausted local coping mechanisms. The Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC) and the Federation launched an appeal on 24 October to come to the urgent assistance of 1,193 families with the provision of water supplies and supplementary food. Disaster relief emergency (DREF) funding and three donations have enabled the purchase of four water bladders and a number of supplementary food parcels. However, in order to assist vulnerable families who are increasingly prey to disease and malnutrition, donors are urged to provide additional support.

Operational Developments w

An extended drought has affected the departments of Alto Paraguay, Boquerón and Canindeyú in western Paraguay over the last two years. For a period of eight months, there was no rain and the situation deteriorated.

As a result, on 2 October, a national state of emergency was declared. In Boquerón, the drought has had a particularly negative impact on agriculture, affecting 4,968 rural indigenous farming families in 56 communities who live principally on subsistence crops. Traditional water supply systems called “tajamares”, excavations where rain water is collected and distributed to the community, are completely dry and communities have exhausted their food and water reserves. Underground water sources do not offer a viable alternative given the cost of drilling wells and the difficulty in locating water of sufficient quality for human consumption. The situation is further complicated as the lack of rain has delayed the planting of new crops which may lead to a prolonged period of hunger.

Diseases associated with malnutrition have begun to appear and to date, 17 people have died from disease related to contaminated water and the local health system is unable to meet demands given a lack of medicines and other resources. The one medical centre in the region is at a significant distance from the affected communities.

In recent days, some rain has begun to fall in the Chaco central region although there is not sufficient precipitation to alleviate the difficult situation. However, even if rains were sustained, the next harvest in this region takes place in April 2003, which underlines the necessity of the Federation’s proposed programme.

Coordination w

Overall, coordination of relief initiatives is functioning well, although, at present, partners on the ground are limited to local churches and local governments. The Paraguayan Red Cross is working closely with the regional delegation in South America and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU). In addition to the launch of an international appeal through the Federation, the Paraguayan Red Cross has submitted proposals to ECHO through the Spanish Red Cross and to USAID - OFDA for funding in order to meet humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable in the region. These proposals take into account relief initiatives planned by each of the agencies. During the week beginning on 21 October, USAID, which is ensuring close liaison with the PRC/Federation, conducted an assessment of the areas of Alto Paraguay and Presidente Hayes.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action w

The planned drought operation is made up of three components:

- provision of immediate humanitarian food and water aid;
- increasing the collection and water storage capacity in the target communities specifically during dry periods;
- contributing to maintaining the quality of water throughout the water collection and distribution chain through improving community and family hygiene practices.

The combination of these three interrelated processes is designed to reduce the vulnerability of the target community affected by water shortages and water borne disease.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society w

The Paraguayan Red Cross is presently carrying out a restructuring process which will necessitate changes in its relief department. The drought operation will support this process through the analysis of structures and systems. Assessment of issues such as volunteer profiles, planning, relief systems and procedures will take place with a view to strengthening the National Society’s capacity to respond to disaster. In addition, the Boquerón branch is gaining significant experience through the activities linked to the drought operation. Activities carried out in the context of the drought will also serve to raise the National Society’s profile in the community and to recruit additional motivated volunteers.

Objectives, activities and results w

Relief w

Objective 1: *To contribute to the nutritional requirements of 1,193 families affected by the drought through the provision of supplementary food packages for five months.*

Utilizing disaster relief emergency funding, the Paraguayan Red Cross purchased 47 kg food packages, made up of rice, flour, pasta, beans, sugar, salt, cooking oil and traditional tea, to be distributed to 1,193 families in the affected region. Distributions began during the week of 4 November.

Water and Sanitation w

Objective 1: *To ensure a three month supply of potable water to 1,193 families affected by the drought.*

PADRU's regional logistics unit (RLU) sent four bladders to Paraguay. These bladders are now being transported to the drought affected areas and PRC staff and volunteers, as well as workers from the municipal government, will be trained in their use and maintenance. The capacity of distribution of emergency potable water relief has thus been increased through these bladders, three of which have a capacity of 15,000 litres and one of 10,000 litres. The bladders can be installed in trucks that will be used to transport the water to the affected communities. Distribution will continue throughout the duration of the operation or until the area receives sufficient rainfall in order that the traditional "tajamares" can support the water needs of the population.

The disaster management delegate from PADRU who is working together with the Paraguayan Red Cross, supported by the American Red Cross International Disaster Response Unit, will remain in Paraguay to assist with the food distributions and installation/operation of the bladders and overall monitoring of the operation.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives w

Click here to type Text

Indicate here how this programme is generally further advancing or address the following:

- *Although the drought is a silent disaster which has received little media attention, the Paraguayan Red Cross and the Federation are addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in the chronically-affected regions.*
- *Beneficiary criteria for the drought operation take into account issues of gender and diversity.*
- *Criteria specified under the SPHERE project have been taken into account in analysing basic needs regarding provision of food and water to the most vulnerable.;*

National Society Capacity Building w

The operation seeks to strengthen the capacity of the Paraguayan Red Cross through the implementation of the drought operation and, in particular to improve branch capacity.

Federation Delegation w

The delegation for South America and the Pan American Disaster Response Unit are working to support the Paraguayan Red Cross. A disaster management delegate from PADRU has been seconded to Paraguay to work in close collaboration with the National Society.

Advocacy/Public Information w

Information has been placed on the Federation's web site in order to draw attention to the plight of those faced with severe drought conditions in Paraguay.

Outstanding needs w

DREF funding and three donor contributions have covered the procurement of four water bladders and a number of food packages. Funding is urgently sought in order to cover the purchase of additional supplementary food packages, to provide fibre glass water tanks to increase water storage capacity and to ensure the promotion of sound hygiene practices within the target communities.

For further details please contact: Luis Luna, Federation Desk Officer for South America, Phone : 41 22 730 42 74; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: luna@ifrc.org

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
External Relations

Santiago Gil
Head
Americas Department

Paraguay - drought						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 31/2002		PLEDGES RECEIVED				08.11.2002
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						TOTAL COVERAGE
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				418'000		23.5%
JAPANESE - RC		9'200	USD	13'671	01.11.2002	
NORWEGIAN - RC		100'000	NOK	20'120	28.10.2002	
SWEDISH - GOVT		400'000	SEK	64'560	05.11.2002	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				98'351	CHF	23.5%