

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

REPUBLIC OF CONGO: EBOLA OUTBREAK

25 March 2003

Appeal No. 07/03

Launched on 25 February 2003 for 176,000 CHF for 3 months; budget revised to CHF 229,000

DREF Allocated: None

Beneficiaries: 50,000

Operations Update No. 01; Period covered: February 25 to March 12, 2003

“At a Glance”

Appeal coverage: 35.7%

Related Appeals: 2003 Annual Appeal for the Republic of Congo (no. 01.42/2003)

Outstanding needs: CHF 147,163

Summary: This appeal has received timely and generous support from the Swedish British (via DFID), and German Government via the German Red Cross. The budget for the operation has been revised to accommodate the purchase of a new vehicle for the Red Cross, for the procurement of more protection gear, household items for affected families, training of a further 50 volunteers, and purchase of an HF radio, mattresses and allowances for their feeding, and volunteer accommodation

The Situation

The Ebola epidemic in Cuvette Ouest in the Republic of Congo continues to affect the population in the districts of Kellé and Mbomo. To date (13 March 2003), a total of 123 cases have been reported, with 113 deaths. In Kellé alone (with a population of 11350 inhabitants), 91 people (mostly women) have been registered dead, with 12 people hospitalised and 68 cases reported. The majority of these people are undergoing treatment in the health centre in Kellé. In the neighbouring village of Mbomo which has a population of 4,250 inhabitants, 12 people have died of Ebola, while 30 have been hospitalised and 38 other people have contacted this deadly virus.

The number of cases might be higher than recorded due to the population's reluctance (the majority of the population have taken flight in the surrounding bush to be shielded from the epidemic contamination), misunderstanding and mistrust, the lack of access to some of the affected areas, particularly in the zone of Kellé. The situation is still precarious. Terrified of catching Ebola, some 85 percent of Kelle's residents have fled into the forest. The Ministry of Health and WHO have

reinforced their response teams and are providing more medical supplies. Cultural norms and taboos still impede effective response.

Responding to criticism of a perceived lack of Government inaction in protecting the people of Cuvette-Ouest, the Government sent a high level delegation to the region to reassure residents of the efforts to overcome the Ebola haemorrhagic fever. The Ministry of Health and WHO have reinforced their response teams and are providing more medical supplies. The European Community has indicated support of USD 574,350 to enable the EU to set up administrative committee to fight the epidemic, improve health facilities, provide medicines, create isolation wards, provide protection for medical staff, and to set up an epidemiological surveillance unit. Local authorities have also requested Red Cross volunteers to take part in disinfecting schools and churches and help persuade the population to return to the villages, and the Federation will include this activity in their overall response strategy.

The Congolese Red Cross continues to be supported by the Federation Delegation in providing an effective response. A medical doctor from the neighbouring DRC Red Cross has been seconded to the Federation and who is presently in Kellé and Mbomo to support the local Red Cross volunteers in the operation. A Federation media specialist has arrived in Brazzaville and would soon be travelling to the affected regions to reinforce Red Cross reporting needs and promote the visibility of the Red Cross in their public education, sensitisation, surveillance and reporting activities.

Operational Developments

A multi sectoral programme for the research and prevention of Ebola was adopted at the end of a three-day international meeting in the capital, Brazzaville. The programme will be overseen by a newly created permanent co-ordination committee whose mission will be to ensure co-ordination among the different groups involved, and the elaboration and implementation of a plan of action. The conference was attended by some 70 medical researchers, anthropologists, virologists, physicians, veterinarians, and representatives from tropical disease research centres in Europe, the US, and from the UN and the Red Cross, seeking a better understanding of the virus and its environment.

Since the onset of the Ebola response operations, the Federation has put at the disposal of the CRC a land cruiser to facilitate the work of the Red Cross volunteers. This vehicle is now, however, broken down and unusable for the operation. This leaves the volunteers without transport to travel to the different locations to conduct education, sensitisation, surveillance activities. This situation has been exacerbated by the suspension of all commercial traffic to and from the area due to fears of this very contagious disease to new areas.

The Red Cross volunteers are also running out of protection gear, mattresses, and need more support for their daily feeding and accommodation. A further 50 volunteers need to be trained to provide back up to the volunteers already involved in the operation.

The budget for the operation has therefore been revised to accommodate the purchase of a new vehicle for the Red Cross for the procurement of more protection gear, household items for affected families, training of a further 50 volunteers, purchase of an HF radio, mattresses and allowances for their feeding, and accommodation in places out of their normal places of abode.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Action

Supported by the Federation, the RoC Red Cross health officers from the headquarters, the Federation Regional (ERDAC trained) resource person from the DRC Red Cross, and the provincial Red Cross teams continue to deliver full support to the WHO/national Ministry of Health co-ordinated response operation. Since the outbreak of the epidemic, these volunteers have been

tirelessly participating in sensitisation and social mobilisation activities to control the spread of the epidemic.

The appeal launched on February 25th 2003 has received generous financial support from the contributions from the Swedish, British (via DFID), and German Red Cross (via the German Government). The Finnish Red Cross has provided positive sign of forthcoming support, as well as the Spanish Red Cross.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society

The Congolese Red Cross has a total number of 13,000 volunteers among whom 765 are trained in CBFA at the national level. In the Cuvette Ouest department there are 100 volunteers trained in Ebola response techniques including public education, sensitisation, surveillance and reporting, to respond to an eventual Ebola outbreak and other transmittable diseases. These 100 volunteers are active in the sensitisation activities on the danger of Ebola.

The local Red Cross committees and the teams have been provided by the Federation with limited emergency stocks, bicycles per committees, information and education materials, office supplies, visibility materials (T-shirts, bibs) and funds for the welfare of volunteers for the operation and capacity building and actively participate in interagency co-ordination meetings.

Objectives and Activities implemented

Objective 1: Reinforce local disaster response capacity.

Activities implemented:

- 38 new volunteers have been recruited in the 19 villages affected by the epidemic in the district of Kellé and Mbomo and are being trained to create buffer teams at the community level. This will increase the number of volunteers actively involved in the operation from 62 to 100.
- A 4 WD vehicle has been released from the DRC, pending the arrival of a vehicle ordered and in the pipeline. Two motorbikes are also ordered, and efforts are underway to facilitate the purchase of HF radios for Kellé/Mbomo, a replacement radio for one damaged; disaster response and preparedness materials as well as essential reinforcement items to rehabilitate the Mbomo and Kellé Red Cross offices.
- A refresher course for the 62 volunteers trained in 2001 to provide an emergency response to the Ebola outbreak is being organised with the support of the RoC Red Cross health officers from the headquarters, and the Federation resource person from the DRC Red Cross. There is an additional need to train a further 50 volunteers to support the existing Red Cross teams.

Outstanding needs consist of mattresses for volunteers and volunteer support allowances.

Objective 2: Support health authorities and local Red Cross committees.

Activities implemented:

- In consultation and collaboration with the Ministry of Health, WHO and technical partners, the 100 volunteers trained in techniques to respond to Ebola outbreak, participate in visits to communities to communicate prevention measures and messages and conduct visits to affected families for the detection and referral of suspected cases in the three districts of Kellé, Mbomo and Etoumbi.
- The Federation Regional resource person and the Red Cross committee participate in daily joint interagency assessment missions to monitor the development of the epidemic in the affected areas.

Objective 3: Procurement of protection and social mobilisation materials and material support/households items.

Activities implemented:

- Pro forma invoices for the protection and social mobilisation materials and material support / household items are being secured in line with Federation procurement standards.
- Procurement of additional protective material.

Objective 4: In consultation and collaboration with the Ministry of Health and technical partners in the field, provide psychological and material support to affected families.

Activities implemented:

- The health officers from the RoC Red Cross, the Federation resource person, the 100 volunteers and the local committee conduct regular visits to affect families to provide moral and psychological support.
- They also provide psychological and social support in the reinsertion of survivors in their communities.
- Material support to replace destroyed household items are being purchased. More household items are needed for affected families.

Federation Delegation

To reinforce the RoC Red Cross capacity for disaster preparedness and response particularly related to health and epidemics, a DRC Red Cross Health Co-ordinator has been recruited by the Federation and arrived in the Ebola-affected area at the end of February 2003 to work with the current team composed of the MoH, WHO and other technical partners. In addition to reinforcing the capacities to combat the Ebola epidemic, the Co-ordinator is working hand in hand with the RoC Red Cross branch and with the communities in addressing the community's awareness of the danger of Ebola.

The operation is being supported by the Federation's Head of Delegation. The Federation office in Brazzaville is allocating its available logistics, financial management services and other resources to the CRC for the operation.

Co-ordination

The Government is co-ordinating the operation, working with the WHO experts, Red Cross, MSF-H, and the Congolese Ministry of Health. The medical doctors in the affected districts play a significant role in influencing community behaviour and attitudes towards the epidemic. The Red Cross team leaders are participating in the co-ordination meetings.

Advocacy/Public Information w

This operation has provided the Congo Red Cross a much welcomed opportunity to increase its visibility in the country, as a valid partner in a co-ordinated team with the Ministry of Health, WHO and others, and with the volunteers as the most effective workers playing a fundamental part of the communities. While many taboos still need to be broken to address any further outbreak and contamination through eating habits and superstitions, longer term solutions must be found to provide alternative assistance to the population and the Federation must continue to support the CRC to build its image and assist in building strong partnerships to address these problems soon.

Outstanding needs

As the epidemic continues to claim victims, there is an urgent need to:

- intensify social mobilisation, sensitization and education activities, in the line with the National MoH Plan.
- recruit and train additional 50 new volunteers in the three most affected areas (Kellé, Mbomo and Etoumbi).
- reinforce the committees with protective clothing and disinfecting materials.
- improve transportation for Red Cross teams in the affected areas.
- reinforce communications.
- provide allowances for the feeding and accommodation of volunteers.

- provide additional emergency stocks and information materials (leaflets, posters, image boxes, megaphones).
- purchase additional household items for affected families.

For further details please contact: Terry Carney, Phone 41 22 730 4298; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email terry.carney@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>.

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Congo Republic : Ebola outbreak						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 07/2003		PLEDGES RECEIVED				25.03.2003
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				229'000		TOTAL COVERAGE 35.7%
GERMAN - GOVT		33'985	EUR	49'737	07.03.03	
SWEDISH - RC		200'000	SEK	32'100	27.02.03	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				81'837	CHF	35.7%
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	

<u>REVISED BUDGET SUMMARY</u>		APPEAL No. 07/2003	
Congo Republic : Ebola outbreak			
TYPE	ORIGINAL	REVISED	VARIANCE
<u>RELIEF NEEDS</u>			
	IN CHF		
Shelter & constructions	3'000	3'000	
Clothing & textiles	13'000	10'000	-3'000
Food & seeds	5'000	5'000	
Medical & first aid	5'000	4'000	-1'000
Utensils & tools	12'000	11'000	-1'000
Other relief supplies	3'000	10'000	7'000
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS	41'000	43'000	2'000
<u>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</u>			
Vehicles	7'000	33'000	26'000
Telecom. equipment	8'000	8'000	
Other equipment	6'000	6'000	
<u>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</u>			
Programme support (6.5% of total)	11'000	15'000	4'000
<u>TRANSPORT STORAGE & VEHICLE COSTS</u>			
Transport and storage			
Vehicle costs	12'000	22'000	10'000
<u>PERSONNEL</u>			
Expatriate staff	17'000	19'000	2'000
National staff	39'000	46'000	7'000
<u>ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL SERVICES</u>			
Travel & related expenses	3'000	3'000	
Information expenses	23'000	26'000	3'000
Administrative & general expenses	9'000	8'000	-1'000
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS	135'000	186'000	51'000
TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES	176'000	229'000	53'000
LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)		81'837	
NET REQUEST		147'163	