

Operations update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

West Africa: Floods

Focus on Ghana

Emergency Appeal No. MDR61002

*GLIDE nos. FL-2007-000153-GHA,
FL-2007-000158-TGO
and FL-2007-000132-BFA*

1 November 2007

Operations Update no. 3

Period covered: 5 to 20 October 2007.

Appeal target: CHF 3,922,365 (USD 3.2m or EUR 2.3m) for the entire appeal; the Ghana budget component is CHF 2,505,722 (USD 2.1m or EUR 1.4m).

Appeal coverage: 54% (for the entire appeal).

Remaining needs: CHF 1,181,827.

[<Click here for the donor response report>](#)

Targeted beneficiaries: 60,000 persons in Ghana.

Appeal history:

- [Preliminary Emergency Appeal](#) for Ghana was launched on 17 September 2007 for CHF 1.47 million for 6 months to assist 60,000 people.
- [Revised Preliminary Emergency Appeal](#) was issued on 18 September 2007 for CHF 2.5 million to assist some 82,000 people in Ghana and Togo for 6 months.
- [Revised Appeal \(focus on Burkina Faso\)](#) was issued on 2 October for CHF 2.9 million (USD 2.5 million or EUR 1.7 million) to assist 94,825 beneficiaries in Burkina Faso, Ghana and Togo for 6 months.

Summary: The Ghana Red Cross Society (GRCS), in collaboration with Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) members and the Federation's Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT), completed assessments in four districts of Upper East Region (26 villages) and four districts of Northern Region (27 villages). Some 60,000 persons were identified as most vulnerable and were targeted by the Red Cross intervention. The initial plan of action was consequently revised in line with the assessment results.



Ghana Red Cross Society mothers' clubs will play a key role in hygiene and health promotion.

With assessments complete, FACT and RDRT members departed by 25 October. A three-pronged core Federation team is now being put into place to support the implementation of immediate relief operations and mid-term recovery/shelter activities: One team will be based in the Lagos sub-office to coordinate for the three countries; the second team will be based in Ghana while the third team will be based in Togo. Once the Ghana team is in place, relief operations – distribution of essential non-foods items – will start in earnest with the aim of reaching the 10,000 targeted households.

Background

Continuous and exceptional rains that set in from mid-July 2007 resulted in flooding which caused considerable damage to life and property in the Northern and Upper East regions of Ghana. The floods were an unexpected reversal of the harsh conditions which had threatened agriculture in the northern part of the country following two months of drought (5 June to 15 August 2007).

The situation was made worse by the unannounced discharge of water from the Bagary Dam in Burkina Faso during the last week of August. The discharge caused Volta River to overflow, washing away 52,000 hectares of farmland and extensively damaging 58,000 crop fields in Ghana. Altogether, 800 communities have been hard hit in one way or another, with over 20 per cent of them totally submerged.

According to government figures, over 200,000 people have been affected, with 40,000 temporarily displaced. Many of the affected have either lost part of or entire livestock and crops; their houses have been damaged or have collapsed. The displaced people sought shelter in schools, churches or in unaffected homes of their relatives. Over 30 people are reported to have been killed as a direct consequence of flooding, mainly by sudden crumbling of mud houses, drowning and acute watery diarrhea. Bridges and roads have collapsed making it difficult for the affected to access basic facilities.

The levels of floodwater continue to recede in most locations of Upper East Region and displaced people are slowly returning to their home communities. Health concerns however remain due to the readily available mosquito breeding spots, contamination of water sources and the limited accessibility to health facilities. Boreholes and shallow wells were contaminated by floodwater thus increasing the likelihood of waterborne disease outbreaks.

Because of the preceding drought and the end of the planting season, a food insecurity crisis is looming in the affected regions and is likely to last until the next harvest; the next planting season is May 2008. Additionally, many local food storage sites have been damaged or were washed away, increasing the vulnerability of affected communities to food insecurity.

Operational developments

From the onset of the flooding disaster in Ghana, Ghana Red Cross Society (GRCS) responded to the needs by assisting in the evacuation of affected people and in salvaging their belongings from flooded houses. Red Cross volunteers also provided first aid and health education to the affected people. The Red Cross volunteers continue playing a vital role in the disaster response operation. They have been engaged in assessments, distribution of emergency relief and shelter items, health and hygiene education and monitoring.

With assessments complete, focus is now on implementing relief operations. Distribution of essential non-foods items is set to start in earnest once the core Federation field operations team is in place, with the aim of reaching the 10,000 targeted households. Federation and GRCS teams have adjusted the implementation plan based on the resources available to date. Though implementation has delayed a bit, it was prudent to adjust the plan vis-à-vis the response to the Appeal to date so that proper prioritization is done.

A core Federation team is now in the final process of being put into place to support the National Societies of Burkina Faso, Ghana and Togo in implementing immediate relief operations and mid-term recovery and shelter activities. One team will be based in the Lagos sub-office to coordinate for the three countries (overall operations manager, a finance delegate and a reporting officer), the second team will be based in Ghana (operations manager, a logistics delegate, a logistics RDRT member, a relief RDRT member, and a shelter RDRT member), and the third team will be based in Togo. Once the Ghana team is in place, relief operations – distribution of essential non-foods items – will start in earnest with the aim of reaching the 10,000 targeted households.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Health and Care, Water and Sanitation

Objective 1.1: Contribute to reducing morbidity and mortality rates in the flood affected communities through community-based health education and hygiene promotion activities among at least 10,000 households.

Progress

The training of trainers who will conduct community-based health education and promotion activities was carried out on 13-14 October in Northern Region and on 15-16 October 2007 in the Upper East Region.

The capacity of the GRCS will also be strengthened through recruitment and training of additional volunteers. In addition to training, focus will be put on prevention of malaria, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infections and vaccine preventable diseases, which are the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in the flood-affected communities.

As regards water and sanitation, sachets of household water purification chemicals will be provided, alongside jerry cans, to ensure that beneficiaries have appropriate means to rapidly purify contaminated drinking water. Trained Red Cross volunteers will sensitize communities on the correct use of household water treatment chemicals as well as on safe hygiene practices.

Hygiene promotion will also be provided through the GRCS mothers' clubs. Furthermore, the Red Cross will ensure that 50 low income communities have access to clean water by rehabilitating flood-damaged hand dug wells. Access to sanitation facilities by 1,000 families will be improved through construction of latrines.

Objective 1: Support Ghana Health Services to provide integrated epidemic preparedness, surveillance and reporting of priority diseases.

Progress: Surveillance of priority diseases has been initiated by Ghana Health Service (GHS) in both regions and is being extended through community health workers, GRCS volunteers and GRCS mothers' clubs network. Any suspected cases of diseases are being reported immediately to health authorities while simple case definitions are being used to improve diagnostic skills.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capacity of Ghana Red Cross Society to partner with Ghana Health Services and UNICEF in ensuring effective planning and coordination of the emergency response.

Progress: The GHS established weekly health sector meetings in Northern and Upper East regions to coordinate the overall health response in flood-affected areas. Sub-committees in health education, disease surveillance and prevention, outbreak preparedness and case management were also formed, of which the Ghana Red Cross Society is a member.

The National Society has an active network of volunteers at regional and district committees, district organizers and community-based youth and mothers' clubs. Furthermore, GRCS is currently implementing a community-based accelerated child survival, nutrition and development project in collaboration with GHS and UNICEF. The project covers the flood-affected Upper East and Northern regions.

Emergency relief and shelter

Objective 1: To provide emergency shelter and essential household non-food items to at least 10,000 vulnerable flood affected households.

Progress: In agreement with Ghana Government authorities, the GRCS is to register beneficiaries in affected areas and carry out direct distributions, with support and monitoring from the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO). For that purpose, 32 Red Cross volunteers have been trained on beneficiary registration and non-food item (NFI) distribution techniques. The volunteers are now ready to carry out registration and distributions; these are set to commence by early November once the field operations team is in place.

Items prioritized for immediate distribution include tarpaulins, sleeping mats, jerry cans, water purification chemicals and mosquito nets. Distribution of these items will be undertaken in close coordination with WFP food distributions.

The Federation's field operations team in Ghana, including RDRT members and local staff, is expected to be complete and operational by early November 2007. Once it is in place, relief operations will start in earnest, with the aim of reaching the targeted 10,000 households. The National Society is mobilizing additional teams to ensure a steady rotation of volunteers and staff.

Recovery and rehabilitation

Objective 1: To assess, plan and implement early recovery activities together with the affected communities and key local, national and international stakeholders.

Progress: Food insecurity remains a major concern and is likely to worsen. Up to 50 per cent of staple crops in the flood-affected areas were destroyed leaving households with hardly any food reserves. Additionally, prices of basic food commodities such as maize, millet and corn are reported to have doubled in the local markets. Because of this situation, implementation of the relief operation will be done hand-in-hand with shelter and early recovery assessments. Such an approach will ensure that early recovery needs – mostly on food security – are identified and prioritized to help in averting the looming food insecurity crisis.

As regards shelter, undertaking training on better building techniques and materials is still being considered. The training could be carried out by the Red Cross, with support from the Federation's zone office and the government. This approach would complement the multi-use tools provided for rebuilding and agricultural purposes. Overall, the intent is to link all sectors closely with recovery as more of a mid-term intervention to meet a variety of needs as part of a holistic and integrated approach.

Capacity Building

Objective 1: To prepare for effective, timely and appropriate monitoring and response to emergencies and vulnerabilities.

Progress: The training of trainers who will conduct community-based health education and promotion activities was carried out on 13-14 October in Northern Region and on 15-16 October 2007 in the Upper East Region. Additionally, 32 Red Cross volunteers have been trained on beneficiary registration and non-food item (NFI) distribution techniques. The capacity of the GRCS will also be strengthened through recruitment and training of additional volunteers.

Logistics

The logistics team is supporting the operation in tendering processes, drafting tender documents, and providing technical support as regards transport, clearing of items and warehousing. The team will strengthen coordination with counterparts in the humanitarian sector to create synergy.

Challenges/constraints

Implementation of distributions has been delayed, firstly due to the centralization of management and distribution of relief items by government authorities, and secondly because of the adjustments made to the implementation plan based on the resources available to date. However, it was prudent to adjust the plan vis-à-vis the response to the Appeal to date so that proper prioritization is done.

Coordination and partnerships

Movement partners continue to work in close cooperation to ensure that activities undertaken as part of the emergency response are complementary and well coordinated. With the departure of FACT and RDRT members, the Federation field operations team and GRCS operations staff members will assume the responsibility of ensuring Red Cross participation in the various coordination meetings. By early November 2007, the field operations team will be in place and will assist with the operations while continuing the close working relationship established between the Federation and GRCS counterparts.

The GRCS will continue working with the National Disaster Management Organization in registering beneficiaries in affected areas and carrying out direct distributions.

Communications- Advocacy and public information

Once the field operations team is complete, media relations established from the beginning of the Red Cross intervention will be enhanced. The in-country team will work closely with the Lagos sub-office and the communications team at the Federation's West and Central Africa Zone office in Dakar to ensure regular profiling of the Red Cross and sharing of information on progress.

The GRCS will actively continue meeting with private sector entities and others – such as embassies – to share information and to fundraise. Visibility is being ensured in the field through tabards, caps, polo shirts and t-shirts bearing the Ghana Red Cross Society and Federation emblems.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the National Society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The International Federation's activities are carried out under its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

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