

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Mongolia: Hand, foot and mouth disease

DREF operation n° MDRMN001
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Update n° 1
14 July 2008

The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

Period covered by this update:
10 June to 8 July, 2008

Summary: CHF 69,000 was allocated from the International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 10 June 2008, to support the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) in delivering assistance to 40,000 beneficiaries through hygiene promotion and strengthened capacity in Red Cross branches.

Hygiene promotion activities have commenced and already volunteers and staff of the Mongolian Red Cross Society have been mobilized to deliver important messages to the public about the prevention of this disease. Activities to support capacity building at the branches for the ongoing prevention of hand, foot and mouth disease will start in late July.



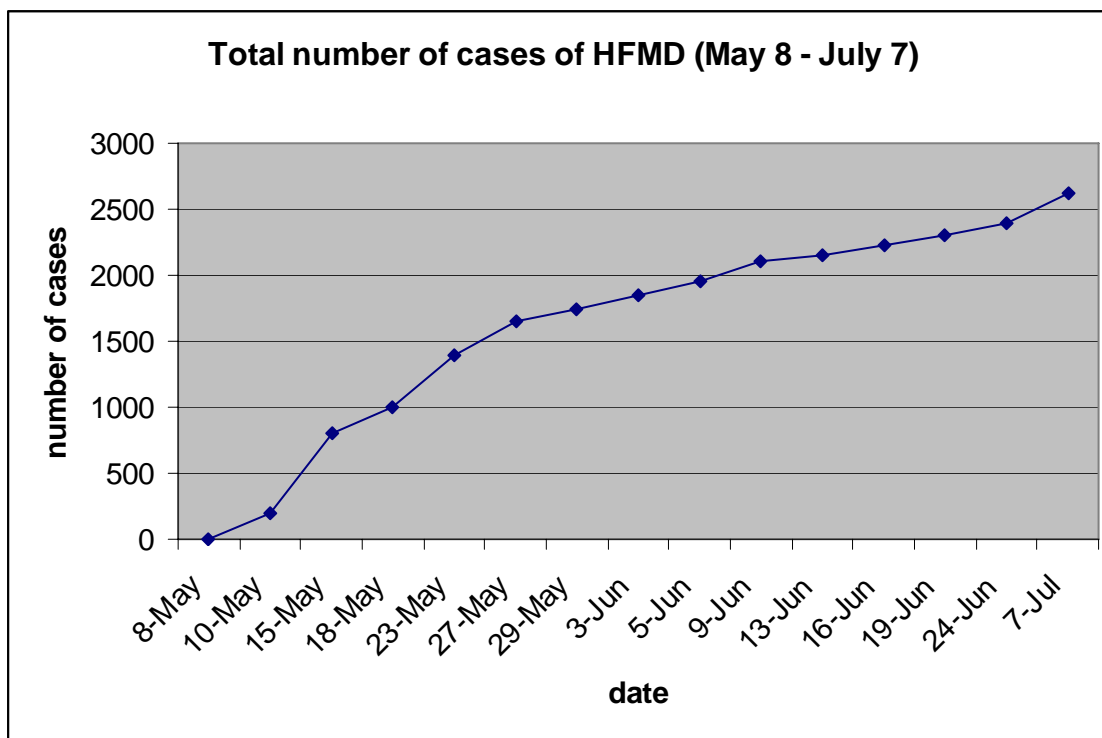
Mongolian Red Cross volunteers target youth and their parents in hygiene promotion activities in Ulaan Bataar. MRCS

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The situation

Since 8 May, a serious outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) due to Enterovirus 71 (EV71) has affected thousands of children and families throughout Mongolia. As of July 7, a total of 2,618 people have been diagnosed with this virus. 83 per cent of the reported enteroviral diseases occurred in children who were younger than ten years and ten per cent of those infected were younger than one year.

Although many have recovered on their own and no fatal cases have been reported to date, as of 7 July, 24.5 percent of all those diagnosed with Enterovirus 71 had complications that required hospitalizations. Several patients had severe complications such as aseptic meningitis, encephalitis, myocarditis and poliomyelitis-like paralysis, which may lead to disability or even death. It is known that pulmonary edema or haemorrhage, which is a common complication, can kill a child within one day, therefore health workers all over the country have been working around-the-clock providing intensive care to patients in critical conditions. Largely owing credit to these efforts, no casualties have been reported to date. As of 7 July, 162 individuals remain hospitalized and 599 people have been discharged from hospitals.



Source: Ministry of Health of Mongolia. July 8, 2008

This is the largest spread of Enterovirus recorded so far in Mongolia and since its first case in 8 May, it has already affected 90 per cent of all territories within Mongolia. Next to Ulaanbaatar, the most affected areas are in the Eastern region (Sukhbaatar, Khentii, Dornod provinces), the Orkhon- Selenge region (Selenge province), the Gobi or Southern region (Dornogobi province) and the Khangai region (Uvurhangai province).

As Naadam, Mongolia's most popular festival approaches, the authorities fear that it may bring another spike in the epidemic of HFMD, and are thus conducting activities to increase the communities' outbreak control and preparedness. While schools and kindergartens resumed their normal operations in most places, the youth summer camps have been suspended until mid-July.

Concurrent to this major outbreak, many of the affected provinces are coping with the devastating consequences of the snow fall disaster that struck most of Mongolia in early May in which 52 people died and 150,000 livestock animals perished. It was estimated that 1,500 people were affected in that disaster and now face risk of encountering HFMD shortly thereafter.



Children and their parents receive hygiene promotion materials from the MRCS Red Cross volunteers to help prevent the spread of hand, foot and mouth disease. MRCS

Coordination and partnerships

The MRCS has been actively monitoring the development of the epidemic and exchanging information with relevant government agencies, the national emergency management agency and the ministry of health. The office of UNICEF in Mongolia has produced radio spots on hand washing and has broadcast public service announcements on national television channels. Supported by the ministry of health, UNICEF Mongolia has developed and disseminated technical guidelines for health facilities in affected areas and has conducted trainings of primary health care doctors on diagnostics and clinical management of HFMD. The statistics relevant to HFMD cases in Mongolia have been received from the ministry of health and the national infectious diseases study center, and the key messages the MRCS has used in the public education materials were provided by the above organizations.



Children in Ulaan Bataar show that they have received hygiene promotion materials on hand, foot and mouth disease from the MRCS. MRCS

The MRCS has established a partnership with a well-known trade company, “Tavan Bogd Cosmetics”, and received in-kind donations from the company for its HFMD public education campaign activities (3,500 soaps, worth USD 1,250). The HFMD public education campaigns of the MRCS will be conducted in close cooperation with local national emergency management agency branches and health agencies at provincial and district levels.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: Reduce HFMD related morbidity of people living in Mongolia’s eight eastern and southern provinces and eight districts of Ulaanbaatar over the next three months through the immediate provision of community-based HFMD prevention activities and preparedness for potential outbreaks in early fall 2008.

Expected Result 1: Improved public awareness of hygiene practices to reduce transmission of HFMD in targeted eight provinces and eight districts of Ulaanbaatar, reaching an estimated 3,500 households within three months.

Achievements: Upon receiving the immediate release of DREF funding, the MRCS health and disaster management team quickly made preparations for the launch of a three-month public education campaign in seven provinces and eight districts of Ulaanbaatar most affected by HFMD. One of the key messages of this campaign is to teach young children and their families and other at risk groups to wash hands, hence, the campaign is called “Clean Hands”.

The MRCS HFMD response team, comprised of health and disaster management managers at national headquarters, developed and disseminated technical guidelines on HFMD and outbreak control for mid-level branches and volunteers. In developing these guidelines, the MRCS consulted closely with UNICEF, the ministry of health and other health technical agencies, and incorporated its extensive experience with existing tools and educational materials from the hygiene promotion and water sanitation project in Ulaanbaatar.

According to these guidelines, each mid-level branch has established HFMD prevention volunteer teams selected from a pool of trained Red Cross volunteers in the communities and all the volunteer teams have received training on HFMD.

From 23 June, these teams started intensive public education campaign activities on HFMD in public places such as food markets, shopping places, railway and bus stations and cultural centres. The volunteers will also visit households in poor *ger* districts in Ulaanbaatar. Altogether, 720 volunteers will be mobilized across the country for this campaign over the next two months.

The volunteers have been provided with T-shirts carrying "Clean Hands" campaign messages and hygiene items such as hand sanitizers for their personal protection. The printing of health promotion materials to support the campaign activities has already been carried out and distributed to the participating Red Cross branches. To date, MRCS volunteers have distributed 25,000 stickers and 35,000 brochures with the campaign's messages on HFMD.

Expected result 2: Within three months, mitigate the effects of a likely future outbreak of HFMD by developing the capacity of eight provincial branches and eight districts to respond rapidly to outbreaks.

The priority for MRCS is to assist in the control of the ongoing outbreak and the activities under this expected result will start in July and will continue into the month of August.

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.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with 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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