

# Operations update



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Suriname: Floods

Emergency appeal n° MDRSR002

Glide No. FL-2008-000095-SUR

Operations update n° 1

7 July, 2008

**Period covered by this Ops Update:** 27 June 2008 to 7 July, 2008;

**Appeal target (current):** CHF 381,174 (USD 363,022 or EUR 234,280).

**Appeal coverage:** 0%;

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### Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on 27 June 2008 for CHF 381,174 (USD 363,022 or EUR 234,280) in cash, kind, or services to support the Suriname Red Cross to assist 3,000 families (15,000 beneficiaries) for 6 months.
- **Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF):** CHF 140,000 was initially allocated from the Federation's DREF to support the national society to respond.

**Summary:** Heavy rains have caused serious flooding primarily in the Marowijne, Lawa and Tapanahoni regions of Suriname. Multi-agency coordination and preliminary assessments indicated that more than 3,000 households were affected. This Operations Update no.1 describes the activities accomplished by the National Society in the provision of relief items in the form of food and non-food relief items, supported by the promotion of water and sanitation practices. Additional emphasis has been placed on capacity building of the Suriname Red Cross, in the areas of water and sanitation, psychosocial support and IT telecom. Although the DREF funds have allowed some emergency relief items to be dispatched to the affected areas, no multilateral and bilateral donors have responded to the Emergency Appeal. External assistance and support from donors is crucial in order to accomplish the objectives planned for this operation. Once funding is received, it is anticipated that a revised appeal will be launched, to include the need for an additional one month food parcel distribution.

This operation is expected to be implemented over 6 months, and will therefore be completed by 27 December 2008; a Final Report will be made available by 27 March 2009 (three months after the end of the operation).



Two Suriname Red Cross volunteers in Dribabiki going out to perform damage and needs assessments.  
Source: International Federation

## The situation

On 28 May 2008 constant rainfall flooded several villages located on the northern part of the Marowijne river. Two children died while evacuating the area, while many people were evacuated to higher ground or to the neighbouring country of French Guyana. Rainfall increased from the onset of the disaster, with high peaks in the week from 1 to 7 June 2008, leading to the overflow of the Tapanahony and Marowijne rivers and consequently flooding various villages and surrounding cropland. As the water receded it became clear that many crops, on which the population relies, were destroyed. The most affected areas are in the Southern region of Suriname: Tapanahoni, Lawa, upper Marowijne and Coeroeni area.



A flooded town near Dritabiki.  
Source: International Federation

Flooding has been similar to those experienced in Suriname at the beginning of May 2006, when torrential rainfall caused serious flooding throughout the country and affected approximately 25,000-30,000 square kilometres of land and 25,000 people. However, in this year's emergency the population was better prepared than in 2006. People undertook early attempts to protect their personal property, by moving household items to higher grounds. In addition, other families elevated their houses. However, due to extremely high water levels, damages are still extensive.

In the southern region of Suriname, close to the border with French Guyana, the flood water reached levels similar to those in the 2006 floods. Even during the dry season, the only way to access these villages is by boat via the river, as there are few to no roads. However, as a result of this year's floods, many schools, houses, resorts and roads were reported damaged. In addition, reports indicate 30 percent of the livestock, 65 percent of crops and 90 percent of the fishing industry have been affected.

On 16 June - two weeks after the flooding started - water had receded in most parts. However, some areas remain flooded, which makes life increasingly difficult for the population of those areas. In addition, there continues to be sporadic rainfall in the region with heavy rainfall expected in the near future. The government and the Suriname Red Cross are conducting damage and needs assessments in the affected areas. Due to limited access and lack of roads to the affected areas there has been difficulty conducting detailed assessment

Available information indicates sources of drinking water are polluted and that the collection of rainwater is limited. Food shortage is also starting to affect the population, nearly one month after the onset of the disaster, due to crops having been submerged for an extended period and the fact that fishing and hunting in many areas is no longer possible. In addition to these food shortages, the specific threats identified by the National Coordination Centre for Disaster Management (National Coordinatie Centrum Rampenbeheersing – NCCR) are the economic consequences that include damaged tourism facilities, reduced employment opportunities, reduced supplies for tourists, damaged micro- enterprises and damaged crops and artisan gold-mining facilities.

## Coordination and partnerships

Since the onset of the emergency the government has been working with the Suriname Red Cross (SRC) carrying out damage and needs assessments and has provided Red Cross with transportation food and non food items to the affected regions.

The NCCR is leading the coordination of the operation and has organized regular coordination meetings. The SRC has played an active role in these meetings and is a key participant.

The Ministry of Regional Development has distributed more than 1,000 food parcels – sufficient for a family for two weeks –. In addition, six temporary shelters were established by this Ministry. Also, some 600 Red Cross plastic sheets were distributed, through the Ministry of Regional Development.

The SRC has worked through NCCR to coordinate its water and sanitation promotion activities as well as the food and non-food items distributions. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) is planning to provide SRC with chlorine tablets, which will be distributed together with SRC jerry cans and water buckets.



SRC volunteers preparing the food parcels at the Suriname Red Cross headquarters.  
Source: International Federation

From the onset of the disaster, the SRC has been in close contact with the International Federation, including the Regional Representation office for the Caribbean as well as the Pan American Disaster response Unit (PADRU), to share information and coordinate activities and resources.

### National Society Capacity Building

The SRC invested time and funding since the 2006 floods focused on increasing the National Society's disaster response programming. Since 2005, nine RITs have been trained. In addition, two members of the SRC have completed the Global Relief Training and one member has completed Field School. This year, as part of a DIPECHO disaster preparedness program, 19 NITS have been trained, as well as 20 VCA (Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment methodology) facilitators. Various in-country capacity building trainings, including water and sanitation and relief, have also been conducted. The SRC has a well structured Disaster Management Team.

The above mentioned resources have been critical to the recent flood response and have highlighted importance of the recent years of efforts spent on capacity building, including DIPECHO VI funding. To date, more than 30 volunteers have responded to the emergency in support of the SRC.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The SRC has been able to start partial implementation of the Plan of Action (PoA), based on the completion of detailed damage and needs assessment data which confirms the 3,000 family target, using funds allocated from the DREF; however, the NS is awaiting support from potential donors in order to carry out the full Plan of Action as current funding stands at 0 percent. The Suriname Red Cross, along with an International Federation Disaster Management Delegate met with an ECHO representative to discuss possible project funding, as well as the possibilities of conducting a joint-assessment of the Dritibaiki area and surrounding communities. It is anticipated that a revised appeal will be launched, to include the need for an additional one month food parcel distribution.

The DM delegate and general RIT member that were deployed by PADRU to provide technical support to the operation and to support the SRC with the relief activities, remain in Suriname.

### Progress towards objectives

#### Relief distributions

**Objective: 3,000 families (15,000 people) will benefit from the distribution of food parcels and NFI items (buckets).**

| Expected results  | Activities planned   |
|---|--|
| 3,000 of the most affected families have received food parcels for 15 days as well as one bucket. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct rapid emergency damage and needs assessments.</li> <li>• Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.</li> <li>• Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end user.</li> </ul> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| A contingency stock of non food items has benefited possible unattended affected families | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contingency stock of NFI in-country to support affected families in inaccessible areas.</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

### Progress:

The SRC sent four assessment teams to the field over a two week period to conduct detailed damage and needs assessments. The results from the assessments confirm the 3,000 family beneficiary target; highlighting the primary need of the communities: food.

As a result of the detailed assessments, the SRC registered beneficiaries deemed most vulnerable, targeting families who had severe damage to their dwellings and livelihoods (agricultural plots). Beneficiaries were registered with the SRC and issued distribution tickets which can be exchanged for humanitarian assistance.

The SRC received a partial shipment of 1,800 jerry cans and 720 buckets (from PADRU) on 4 July, 2008. The remainder of Non Food Items (NFI) are expected to arrive 8 July, 2008. In addition, the SRC procured 3,000 food parcels locally on 4 July, 2008.

The SRC began distributions to beneficiaries on 5 July, 2008 in the following areas:

- Dritabiki and surrounding communities – 417 families reached;
- Stoelmanseila and surrounding communities – 750 families reached;
- Langatabiki and surrounding communities – 629 families reached.

Due to the delayed shipment of NFI, families in the above communities were provided with two week food parcels while buckets and jerry cans will be delivered once the second shipment arrives. Distributions are expected to continue throughout the first two weeks of July, with a targeted completion of having reached 3,000 families by 14 July, 2008.

### Challenges:

- The Suriname Red Cross is waiting for the arrival of the remaining NFI in order to complete distributions to beneficiaries.
- The operation has been unable to proceed with the procurement of contingency stocks due to lack of funding for the appeal (currently at 0 percent).

### Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

| <b>Objective: The risk of waterborne and water related diseases has been reduced through the provision of safe water, adequate sanitation as well as hygiene promotion to 3,000 families (15,000 people) in the affected areas for 6 months.</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Expected results</b>  | <b>Activities planned</b>   |
| The health status of the population is improved through behaviour change and hygiene promotion activities.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the basic water, sanitation and hygiene promotion practices and likelihood of water and sanitation related diseases in the affected population.</li> <li>Initiate a hygiene promotion campaign within the affected population focusing on behaviour change and targeting 15,000 people in the affected areas. (The focus of the campaign will be identified according to the needs and assessment.)</li> <li>Provide supplies to be used in the health promotion campaign.</li> <li>Supplies and visibility material should be directly related to the hygiene promotion campaign. Those can include printed materials (posters, flyers, etc), manuals, educational materials, etc).</li> <li>Distributing 6,000 household level water storage (i.e. 10-liter collapsible) jerry cans to 3,000 families.</li> </ul> |

**Progress:**

In conjunction with detailed assessments, the SRC conducted hygiene promotion in the following communities:

Dritabiki - 417 families reached;  
 Langatabiki - 1000 families reached;  
 Tepu - 135 families reached;  
 Kwamalasamuto - 226 families reached;  
 Alalapadu – 24 families reached;  
 Stoelmanseila 750 families reached;  
 Amatopo – 13 families reached.

These families will receive additional hygiene promotion education in conjunction with future distributions.

**Challenges:**

- A partial distribution of jerry cans has taken place, as noted in the objective above, and will be completed once the second shipment of NFI's is received, expected 8 July, 2008.

### National Society Capacity Building

| <b>Objective: The capacity of the Suriname Red Cross to respond to disasters and ability to communicate during emergencies will be enhanced by capacity building workshops on Water and Sanitation and PSP and trainings on the use of the IT equipment.</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Expected results</b>  | <b>Activities planned</b>  |
| The SRC enhances its Water and Sanitation and Psychosocial Support Programme (PSP) capacity.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct 1 training on Water and Sanitation for 15 volunteers and staff;</li> <li>• Conduct 1 PSP training in-country to train 15 volunteers and staff:</li> </ul> <p>In both cases, the following steps will be followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identification of the participants</li> <li>- Selection of the topics to be addressed</li> <li>- Preparation of the workshop</li> <li>- Reporting on the workshop</li> </ul> |
| SRC staff and volunteers are trained on the use of IT equipment, to ensure effective communication in the future.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of IT equipment previously purchased by the National Society.</li> <li>• Conduct trainings on the use of IT equipment by IT Consultant and RIT member.</li> </ul>  |

**Progress:**

Volunteers conducting hygiene promotion were provided a brief orientation by Suriname Red Cross RIT members, specialized in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

**Challenges:**

- The Operation has been unable to proceed with the capacity building objective activities due to lack of funding from the appeal (currently at 0 percent).

### Communications – Advocacy and Public Information

The Suriname Red Cross held a press conference with media including Suriname television, radio, and newspaper on 2 July 2008 in order to promote the mission of the Suriname Red Cross and activities the Red Cross is undertaking in response to the floods. Additional information will be shared with media going forward in order to create awareness of the Red Cross response, as little visibility highlighting the size of the disaster has been visible in the media.

The International Federation and the Suriname Red Cross seek to promote the Fundamental Principles in all activities, and subsequently facilitate additional visibility of the Movement as a whole. The National Society and the Federation will ensure coverage of the emergency operation and news articles and photographs will be published on the Federation's public web site.

## 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

**For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

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