

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Botswana Floods

DREF operation n° MDRBW001
GLIDE n° FL-2009-000120-BWA
11 September 2009

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:

01 July to 30 August, 2009.

Summary: CHF 153,978 (USD 143,061 or EUR 101,837) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Botswana Red Cross Society (BRCS) in delivering immediate assistance to 620 families affected by floods and to replenish pre-positioned stock used by the National Society in assisting another 200 families. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

The Netherlands Red Cross contributed CHF 53,386 to the DREF in replenishment of the allocation made for this operation.

The major donors to the DREF are the Irish, Italian, Netherlands and Norwegian governments, and ECHO. Details of all donors can be found on <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/responding/drs/tools/dref/donors.asp>

The occurrence of heavy rains in the central provinces of Botswana in June 2009 caused flooding in seven districts affecting an estimated 620 families or 3,100 individuals. Rapid assessments undertaken by BRCS and social welfare officers to determine the extent of the damage and vulnerability of those affected, however, reduced the number of people who needed relief intervention to 604 families, or 2,820 individuals.

The unseasonal June rains were compounded by the unavailability of relief stock which was exhausted in response to the flash floods experienced in the north-west provinces of Botswana in March 2009. Approximately 3,789 persons were affected in the flood-ravaged Ngamiland district. BRCS responded by distributing emergency relief items from its pre-positioned stock to approximately 200 families affected by the March floods, thereby depleting its stock of readily available relief items. Hence, DREF funding was used to procure and distribute relief items in the form of jerry cans, soap, cooking sets, blankets and foods items (5kg flour, maize meal, sorghum meal and 750ml cooking oil), to 604 households affected by the June flooding.



One of the damaged houses in Kweneng district

Although the operation was to have been completed by 30 September 2009, a no-cost timeframe extension of one month has been requested due to the shelter needs of flood victims. Support will be provided to beneficiaries affected by the June floods in the Letlhakeng sub-district and the March floods in Ngamiland district, who are in need of shelter due to the impending recall of government-supplied tents. The operation will now be completed by 30 October 2009, with the final report available three months after the end of the operation (31 January 2010).

The situation

Between 7 and 10 June 2009, heavy rains flooded the seven districts of Serowe/Palapye, Kweneng, Tutume, Boteti, North West, Mahalapye and Bobirwa in central Botswana. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Remote Sensing Unit confirms that the Department of Meteorology registered rainfall figures of more than 100mm in 24 hours in this area. The average annual rainfall for most of Botswana is less than 50mm.

Table 1: List of affected districts and households as estimated in June 2009

District	No. affected households
Serowe/Palapye	381
Kweneng	122
Tutume	32
Boteti	27
North West	20
Mahalapye	58
Bobirwa	17
Total	657

It is common practice for farmers to sun-dry their harvests during the usually dry winter season. The rains, however, surprised the farmers and affected the crop yield, especially sorghum, which is the staple food of Botswana. Moreover, the mud dwellings (commonly used in rural areas) were destroyed by the floods, necessitating the immediate provision of emergency relief in the form of shelter, blankets and food.

Table 2: Relief items distributed by the National Society in March

Number of Beneficiaries	698
Tarpaulins	300
Mosquito nets	310
Kitchen sets	103
Blankets	318
Water purification tablets	16,000
Soap bars	5,000
Jerry cans	207

The flash floods experienced in the North West provinces of Botswana in March 2009 affected 3,789 people in Ngamiland, located at the beginning of the Okavango Delta close to Namibia and Angola. BRCS assisted ten villages, with a total population of 698 individuals (200 families), in carrying out damage assessments and distributing emergency relief items from its pre-positioned stock. The regional disaster response team (RDRT) demonstrated the building of shelters using the tarpaulins and wooden poles distributed by the government.

According to the BRCS programme manager, the National Society depleted its pre-positioned stock in response to the victims of the flash floods in March. Relief supplies were therefore required for distribution to the 604 families assessed by BRCS and social welfare officers to be currently affected. A portion of the families that had made up the initial estimation of 620 families are remote area dwellers (RADs) who benefit directly from the RAD programme financed by the government and are mostly found in the Serowe/Palapye sub-district.

Coordination and Partnerships

BRCS coordinates disaster response activities with national and district disaster management committees, which are made up of governmental and non-governmental agencies that provide direct assistance to disaster victims. As part of these district disaster management committees, the BRCS also provides training in relief distribution, service delivery and disaster management to committee staff and community leaders, in order to improve early warning systems. The national disaster management office, situated in the office of the president, provided for the transport of relief items, while district officials provided for storage prior to distribution and government social welfare officers assisted with distribution during this operation.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

BRCS, with support from the IFRC, made an appeal for assistance for the June flood victims. Arrangements were made to obtain relief stock through IFRC. To further the relief plan, BRCS and district disaster management committee members visited the Ngamiland evacuation camps to monitor and assess current needs. The assessments were then used to prepare a detailed relief distribution plan in line with SPHERE standards, which was used to guide the National Society in implementing activities, while BRCS staff carried out awareness campaigns along with the monitoring and evaluation of the operation.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: Provide 3,100 flood-affected people with appropriate food and non-food relief items in seven districts namely Serowe/Palapye, Kweneng, Tutume, Boteti, North West, Mahalapye, Bobirwa for a period of three months.

Activities planned:

- Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system.
- Mobilise volunteers to support rapid assessments and relief distributions.
- Distribute food and non-food relief items.
- Monitor and evaluate relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.
- Ensure distributions are carried out according to assessments and selection criteria that identify actual needs and vulnerable groups.

Progress and impact:

Assessments were carried out during the intervention to determine the most vulnerable households and their needs. Affected households received relief items in the form of jerry cans, soap, cooking sets, blankets and foods items. Table 3 below indicates the actual distribution per village, from which a total of 604 households benefited.

Table 3: Relief items distributed per village.

District	Number of households	Kitchen sets	Blankets	Bar soap	Jerry cans	Food items
Lethakane	64	64	192	320	128	64 x 5kg of flour, samp, sorghum meal and 750ml cooking oil
Palapye	42	42	126	210	84	42 x 5kg of flour, samp, sorghum meal and 750ml cooking oil
Tonota	50	50	150	250	100	50 x 5kg of flour, samp, sorghum meal and 750ml cooking oil
Mahalapye	43	43	129	215	84	43 x 5kg of flour, samp, sorghum meal and 750ml cooking oil
Molepolole (sojwe)	160	160	423	800	322	160 x 5kg of flour, samp, sorghum meal and 750ml cooking oil
Lethakeng (Leologane)	245	245	735	1,225	490	245 x 5kg of flour, samp, sorghum meal and 750ml cooking oil
Total	604	604	1,755	3,020	1,208	604 x 5kg of flour, samp, sorghum meal and 750ml cooking oil

Challenges:

- There were serious delays in the delivery of relief items to the National Society.
- The shortage of haulage capacity and the lack of adequate warehousing presented an impediment to the procurement and distribution of relief items.
- A poor volunteer base, vulnerable volunteers and a culture of dependence among victims contributed to challenges of distribution.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Objective: Reduce the risk of water-borne and water-related diseases through the provision of safe water and adequate sanitation to 3,100 beneficiaries in seven affected districts.

Activities planned:

- Distribute water purification tablets.
- Distribute jerry cans to 620 households.
- Carry out hygiene promotion activities in affected districts.

Progress and impact:

The distribution of 1,208 jerry cans to 604 families permitted a less cumbersome and safer method of water supply and storage. Since purification tablets were not distributed to the seven districts as water sources were not polluted, the 150,000 purification tablets received from IFRC/ICRC will be used to replace the prepositioned stock that was used for the March floods in Ngamiland. The National Society also disseminated hygiene promotion information to the beneficiaries to guard against water-related diseases that had erupted in some parts of the country.

Emergency shelter

Objective: A total of 620 most vulnerable flood-affected families in seven districts are living in a safe and healthy environment within three months of the beginning of the operation.

Activities planned:

- Assess the extent of the shelter needs and preferred solutions.
- Develop a beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver the intended assistance.
- Distribute two tarpaulins per family to facilitate the construction of safe and adequate locally appropriate shelter.
- Provide National Society staff, volunteers and each household with technical assistance and guidance in the construction of the agreed shelter design.
- Provide households with support on safe sanitation.

Progress and impact:

As the National Society's stock of tents was depleted during the March 2009 floods, BRCS was unable to provide households affected by the June floods with shelter needs, leaving the government to provide tents for shelter. The government was able to provide only a single tent per family for a period of three months ending 30 September 2009, the assumption being that beneficiaries would have rehabilitated their building structures in that time. However, during relief distributions BRCS ascertained that the beneficiaries had not begun rehabilitating their shelters. Given the looming withdrawal of tents by government, BRCS plans to distribute a portion of the tents procured using DREF funding to cover the shelter needs of affected households. The rest of the procured tents will be used to replenish prepositioned stock.

Challenges:

The unavailability of prepositioned stock and delay in the arrival of tents and mosquito nets, coupled with a weak volunteer base caused severe restrictions in the implementation of activities

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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