

CHINA: FLOODS

**preliminary appeal no:
10/96**

***THIS PRELIMINARY APPEAL SEEKS
CHF 3,090,000 IN CASH***

1. THE DISASTER

Devastating storms and torrential rains throughout China caused death and destruction beginning in late May. The first week of July brought exceptionally heavy rain, resulting in massive flooding in at least 9 provinces. More than 230 people are dead. Thousands have been injured. And more rain is forecast.

The type of floods that plague China during the summer months are an on-going process and not something with a clear beginning and clear end. Many of the provinces hit by this disaster experienced heavy flooding last year. July marks the beginning of the 2 month period when the rains are heaviest. Because of this phenomenon, it is difficult to predict the impact on other provinces as flood waters move and rains continue. Casualty and damage assessment is subsequently an on-going process as well. Therefore other areas may need to be added to the growing list of affected provinces resulting in the need to amend the Plan of Action as the relief operation continues. The scale of the disaster can be gauged by the most recent statistics provided by the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) for 4 of the worst affected provinces:

Summation of data from Anhui, Jiangxi, Guizhou , Zhejiang Provinces (5.7.96)	
Population affected	20,690,000
Deaths	237
Injured	3708
Rooms damaged	510,000
Rooms destroyed	211,000
Croplands affected in hectares	1,350,000
People relocated to safe areas	560,000
People surrounded by water	1,264,000
Direct economic loss in RMB	10,000,000,000+

2. THE RESPONSE

Because of the nature of the flooding, access to many areas was difficult. Co-ordinating closely with the Ministry of Civil Affairs, RCSC staff and volunteers were able to gain access quickly. Branches who had the resources, despatched Medical Teams to provide first aid. Provincial and local branches swiftly mobilised to conduct damage and needs assessments in the flooded areas. Resources were mobilised to be ready to provide aid as soon as access was possible. Information was relayed to the RCSC Headquarters who compiled reports for the Federation Secretariat.

Many branches initiated fund-raising campaigns. Community awareness was increased through media interviews. A number of local RCSC statements were picked up by the international news services.

Two assessment teams from the RCSC went to the disaster area on 5 July 1996. In Zhejiang Province, the team headed by Dr. Sun Baiqiu, Vice President of the RCSC, travelled by boat to view the disaster areas around Hangzhou City. The second team, headed by Mr. Liu Dewang, Director of the RCSC Relief Department is still in Anhui, meeting with Provincial RCSC staff and volunteers at the Anhui Disaster Preparedness Centre. Disaster Preparedness Centre staff in other regions, such as Hangzhou, will also be contacted.

RCSC Headquarters released RMB 400,000 for emergency relief. A coordination meeting with representatives of all RCSC Headquarters Departments was held 8 July. Headquarters has been working closely with their branches, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the Federation Secretariat.

3. NEEDS TO BE MET

The findings of the assessment teams are being consolidated and a Plan of Action is being prepared. Based upon their extensive experience in flood disasters and from their preliminary reports, four principal requirements have been identified:

- ◆ Food
- ◆ Medicine and medical supplies for treatment of water-borne diseases and first aid
- ◆ Disinfectants for sanitation and decontamination of water sources
- Clothing

This preliminary appeal will be followed by subsequent Plans of Action.

4. RED CROSS PRELIMINARY OBJECTIVES

- ◆ Provide basic food rations
- Provide medicine and first aid for treatment of flood victims
- Provide potable drinking water and sanitary living conditions
- Provide appropriate clothing and bedding

5. RED CROSS SOCIETY OF CHINA/FEDERATION PLAN OF ACTION

A comprehensive report and detailed Plan of Action is expected from the RCSC within the next few days. The RCSC has considerable experience in assessing disasters of this proportion and conducting such wide-scale operations, as they demonstrated during the floods of 1995. They are able to provide the Federation Secretariat with sound narrative and financial reports that meet Federation requirements.

The RCSC will be responsible for carrying out the flood relief operation. This includes local procurement, transportation and distribution of relief goods, providing human resources, local media relations, narrative and financial reporting. Relief supplies are available in China.

The Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur will provide technical assistance and support as will applicable technical departments at the Secretariat. The Telecommunications Department at the Secretariat is already looking into ways to reinforce the RCSC national telecommunications network during the operation.

The Federation Secretariat will co-ordinate with the Participating National Societies in the raising of resources. It will also co-ordinate international media relations and monitor the operation through assignment of personnel. Media interviews have already been held with Sky News, AFP, and Radio Netherlands.

CHF 500,000 from the Disaster Response Emergency Fund has been transferred to the RCSC. The Appeal will be issued in a few days, as soon as comprehensive needs assessments can be completed.

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George Weber
Secretary General

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