

SUDAN: FLOODS

12 October 1998

appeal no. 24/97

situation report no. 2 (final report)

period covered: November 1997 - May 1998

Widespread property damage as a result of heavy rain and floods in the Red Sea State of Sudan in October-November 1997 left thousands without adequate shelter. The destruction of water systems combined with crowded living conditions caused the spread of water related diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea among the flood victims. The Sudanese Red Crescent Society, supported by the International Federation targeted the most vulnerable - female-headed households, elderly people and children - with health education, primary health care, relief and water sanitation assistance.

The Disaster

The coastal area of Sudan's Red Sea State experienced heavy rains and floods between 20 October and 4 November 1997, causing eight deaths and leaving thousands of people homeless in Port Sudan, Sudan's second largest town (population 700,000). The town's water systems were damaged, large pools of water spread across open spaces and water related diseases such as malaria became a problem. The affected population was estimated at 100,000 people, of whom the Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS) targeted 25,000 for assistance.

The Appeal

After a joint assessment carried out 4-6 November by the Federation Head of Delegation and SRCS Head of Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Department, with the SRCS branch in Red Sea State, an appeal was launched on 14 November. It sought CHF 800,000 to assist 25,000 vulnerable people with health and shelter materials, food and cooking utensils over a three month period.

The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Khartoum responded to the appeal by immediately donating the equivalent of USD 25,000 for medicines, blankets and temporary staff support.

The Operation

The plan of action had the following primary objectives:

- to provide material assistance to 5,000 vulnerable families
- to provide health education to as many people as possible in the affected areas
- to participate in sanitation activities

Immediately after the floods, the Sudanese Red Crescent Red Sea Branch mobilised volunteers to provide first aid and health services. Collaborating with the local authorities, volunteers sprayed pools of standing water with chemicals to prevent the spread of disease in Port Sudan.

Volunteers received intensive training including refresher courses on the control of diarrhoea diseases which were put into practice at the field level. Volunteers visited homes to monitor the health situation and promote the use of oral rehydration salt. A preventive health care course was conducted for 60 volunteers who went on to carry out lectures and home visits. The vehicle donated for this programme was invaluable to ensuring the success of the programme.

Medicines were distributed to the six health centres in the affected areas including two SRCS-managed health centres. Drug distribution was supervised by the SRCS medical department.

The number of families targeted for shelter assistance far exceeded the funding received and thus a reallocation plan was drawn up to focus assistance on the most vulnerable. SRCS volunteers handled distribution and setting up of tents in the targeted areas.

The repair of 24 septic tanks was made possible by the supply of cement and skilled volunteers from the SRCS, while the community provided sand and water for the effort.

The operation also included distribution of 2500 blankets and 500 tents from the German Red Cross to flood victims in the River Nile and Red Sea States.

BENEFICIARIES OF ASSISTANCE (BY AREA):

No.	Area	Target Group (no. of families)	Tents	Blankets (2 per family)	PHC Families visited	Renovation of septic tanks
1	Salalab	240	-	265	40	5
2	El-Wehda	183	14	50	15	-
3	Um El-Gura	800	-	220	-	-
4	Shagar	185	63	240	15	7
5	Suakin	172	90	180	10	-
6	Dar El Salam	150	34	50	-	4
7	Dar El Naeem	245	15	70	20	1 (public)
8	Arbaat	185	75	234	45	-
9	Kelanayeb	175	48	105	30	-
10	Hoshiri	233	58	76	20	-
TOTAL		2568 families	397	1,490	195	17 Tanks

Analysis of the Operation

The plan of action was based on the first assessment carried out by the local SRCS branch, followed by the joint assessment. The response to the emergency was limited, both in-country and through the Regional Appeal launched by the Federation prompting a review of planned activities. Health education and health care services became the main focus of SRCS activities as well as the repair of septic tanks in schools and water tanks serving communities. Assistance was re-targeted to give priority to female-headed households, elderly people and families with many children.

The distribution of food and non-food items was made in co-ordination and collaboration with the emergency committee and heads of the localities in Port Sudan. Food distribution covered 800 families (4,800 individuals) while medicines were distributed through the six Health Centres including health centres in El-Ingaz and Diem El-Arab, managed by the National Society. Tents and blankets were distributed using the same network.

Contributions/Financial Reports

See Annex 1 and Annex 2 for details.

Conclusion

The operation was a further opportunity for the SRCS Red Sea State branch to show its high standards in relief and emergency management. The SRCS had no emergency stock on hand, thus its response to the situation depended largely on the funding of the Appeal launched by the Secretariat. In spite of the slight delay in delivery, the assistance was of great support to the victims. In-country donations were more suitable and enabled a faster response. The provision of various types of assistance from different donors complemented each other and successfully met the needs of the affected people.

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