

UGANDA: FLOODS

26 November 1997

The Disaster

Heavy rains and flooding in Eastern Africa have spread to Uganda's eastern region of Mbale. At least 500 people have been displaced and 35 have died. Bridges have been washed away and communication with the district is difficult. Police and residents are still searching for the missing, many of whom are feared to have drowned. Many more have lost their homes as flood waters rise.

Ironically, the Federation and the Uganda Red Cross Society (URCS) in co-operation with the European Union and World Food Programme recently initiated a programme to assist 156,000 people in North-eastern Uganda affected by drought earlier in the year. Be it drought or floods (perhaps caused by the much heralded El Niño Effect) the end result is similar: food shortages and hardship for the population of Eastern Uganda.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The URCS Mbale Branch activated itself over the weekend and has been involved in search and rescue, damage assessment and health monitoring of the flooded area.

On Monday URCS/Federation held an emergency meeting in response to the flooding. The National Society's Disaster Preparedness and Relief Department has dispatched two emergency teams to the area, who will further assess the situation and will make the following supplies available for initial relief efforts: 400 blankets, 250 pots, five cartons of soap, five rolls of plastic sheeting, tarpaulins, two large tents; first aid supplies and 50 jerry cans.

The team will dispatch its report as soon as possible to the URCS Headquarters in Kampala. A full eyewitness account from the scene is expected today). The assessment will provide vital information as to the needs in the affected area and the extent of the damages. Any response to this disaster will be part of a co-ordinated effort, and may be included in a Regional Flood Appeal later in the week.

For more information, please contact Mark Willis, Desk Officer on ++4122 7304260 (Email: willis@ifrc.org)

Ann Naef
Acting Head
Appeals & Reports Service

Bekele Geleta
Director
Africa Department