

# **CHINA: EARTHQUAKE IN HEBEI PROVINCE**

**appeal no: 03/98**  
*20 January 1998*

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS  
CHF 2,000,000 IN CASH TO ASSIST  
110,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 8 MONTHS***

## ***Summary***

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies launched Appeal No. 3/98 in a preliminary form on 13 January 1998 to support the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) in providing emergency assistance to victims of a devastating earthquake in Hebei Province. Following additional assessments by a team composed of RCSC, Federation Secretariat, and Japanese Red Cross staff, a plan of action has been developed, leading to the present modification of the preliminary appeal.

## ***The Disaster***

A powerful earthquake struck Zhangjiakou Prefecture in Hebei Province just before noon local time (0350 GMT) on 10 January. The 6.2 Richter magnitude quake was strongly felt in Beijing, approximately 200km (124 miles) to the Southeast. The mountainous tableland in the northern half of the province is dotted with townships and villages. This difficult terrain and the wintry weather has hampered relief operations.

Hebei Province has a population of approximately 53 million people, more than half of whom live in the industrialised south. The earthquake occurred in the more remote and rugged north where many of the villagers farm and raise livestock. Food stocks are buried in collapsed rubble, although it is expected that much of these stocks will be recoverable. Although livestock losses have yet to be assessed, they are expected to be low since many animals were outside when the earthquake occurred.

Victims are now vulnerable to the extreme cold weather and freezing winds that blow down from the Mongolian steppes. A cold spell beginning 16 January sent temperatures down to about minus 27° centigrade (-1° F). Another cold wave was expected shortly.

Extensive damage occurred in four of the five counties affected: Zhangbei, Shangyi, Kangbao and Wanquan Counties, with Zhangbei and Shangyi the hardest hit. A total of 1,824 villages in 37 townships suffered varying degrees of damage, 696 seriously.

The assessment team confirmed the following figures:

- { At least 50 dead;
- { Nearly 12,000 injured, more than 1,200 seriously;
- { 471,000 people affected in four counties, 240,000 seriously;
- { 284,000 rooms seriously damaged;
- { 140,000 rooms destroyed;
- { Over 44,000 remain homeless.

## *The Response so far*

### **Government Action**

Local and provincial government workers, rapidly mobilised, are providing emergency shelter, food, and warm clothing, following extensive search and rescue operations. A few schools and other public buildings deemed structurally safe are being used as shelters for the homeless. Structural engineers are surveying buildings. The government is assisting the RCSC in transportation of personnel and relief goods.

The Hebei Provincial Government granted exceptional access to the disaster area to Federation representatives. (To avoid complicating relief efforts, access is being controlled due to the extreme conditions and the type of disaster).

The government ordered the urgent construction of temporary shelters of 12 square metres. The ground is frozen hard, reconstruction will be impossible until the spring thaw that usually begins in late April. The situation is further complicated by heavy snowfall and low temperatures. Many of the tents that have been providing emergency shelter cannot withstand the weight of the heavy snow or maintain adequate heat.

A large number of military personnel with equipment and materials have moved into the area. Construction of temporary dwellings was well underway by 15 January. Stoves and coal fuel were being distributed. Large numbers of quilts and heavy cotton padded coats have been distributed from military stock. Convoys of trucks hauling timber, straw mats, stoves and coal were seen moving into the area. Emergency rations and medical aid are being provided.

### **Red Cross/Red Crescent Action**

#### **Red Cross Society of China**

Working with local public health staff, Red Cross medical teams were speedily deployed to administer first aid, set up field hospitals, transport victims to hospitals, assess the status of victims and help to reunite families. Local Red Cross branches continue to distribute their stocks of warm winter clothing, blankets and medicine, and are also assisting in decontamination of water supplies and disease control.

The RCSC has an extensive nation-wide network of 156,000 grassroots units, 2,562 county and district branches, 347 prefecture and city branches and 30 provincial branches. Response to the RCSC National appeal from branches and the public throughout China has been good. In-kind contributions of tents, quilts, clothing, medicine, and food (valued at CHF 876,280) have been sent to the disaster area by 3 Red Cross Disaster Preparedness Centres and 13 provincial branches. Cash contributions, raised by 9

provincial branches, amount to CHF 2.56 million for extensive RCSC activities outside the scope of this appeal. Hong Kong has raised approximately CHF 2.2 million and is assisting the operation with personnel. Senior staff from Hebei Provincial Red Cross and RCSC headquarters delivered 2,700 cartons of instant noodles.

The RCSC operations outside this appeal are being planned as complementary to this appeal and extend into areas of the disaster not covered by it. The RCSC is using its own resources to cover much of the initial emergency stages by providing warm clothing, quilts, medicine, medical aid, and food.

The RCSC International Department is co-ordinating international inquiries. Photographs and reports from the RCSC Information Department have been posted on the Federation homepage ([www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)), and on its own homepage ([www.chineseredcross.org.cn](http://www.chineseredcross.org.cn)). These are being regularly updated

The RCSC will identify damaged Red Cross first aid stations, branch offices and hospitals and propose repairs, reconstruction and equipment needs. It will take several weeks to develop a comprehensive plan of action.

### **International Federation**

The International Federation released CHF 500,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to allow the RCSC to begin the operation. A Secretariat Media Service Officer arrived in Beijing on 13 January, followed the next day by the Head of Operational Support of the Secretariat's Disaster Response Support Service. A needs assessment was done which resulted in the plan of action described in this appeal.

A Federation Representative will be posted in Beijing very shortly. During the interim, delegates assigned to the DPRK operation, and the Japanese Red Cross delegate are assisting. A Construction Delegate working in the region will be reassigned to assist in the rehabilitation phase of this operation.

Technical support for all aspects of this operation is being provided by the Federation and RCSC support services. Implementation is being done by the local RCSC branches with support from RCSC Provincial Branches and National Headquarters, and the Federation Delegates. Federation activities in China will be managed by the Federation Representative.

### **Other Agencies' Action w**

Other international organisations have not been allowed access to the disaster area. UNDHA issued Situation report No. 1 on 12 January .

### **Co-ordination w**

The RCSC Headquarters is co-ordinating the relief efforts of its branches with those of the provincial and local governments, the military and the Ministry of Civil Affairs, including its public health department. The RCSC will take the lead for needs assessment, procurement and distribution of relief goods funded through the International Federation. For local procurement of relief supplies the Society will work closely with the Federation Logistics Delegate who is in Beijing for DPRK operation support.

## ***The Intended Operation***

### **Assessment of Needs •**

After initial assessments by local, provincial, and national RCSC staff, a second round was conducted on 15 January. The assessment team was made up of:

Senior Officer - RCSC Relief Department  
Deputy Director and Programme Officer - RCSC International Department  
Deputy Director and Programme Officer - RCSC Information Department  
Assistant Director General, Assistant Secretary General, Head of International Relief Service - RCSC Hong Kong  
Officer - Japanese Red Cross International Relief Division  
Head Operational Support Services, and Officer Media Service - Federation Secretariat.

Departing Beijing on 14 January, the assessment team took over 12 hours for a journey that usually takes five, due to snow and icy conditions that caused delays for all traffic in and out of the disaster area - much of it carrying relief supplies to the stricken communities.

The team toured Zhanghei Prefecture and Dahe, Danjinghe, and Hailiutu Townships to conduct damage assessments and interview disaster victims. In meetings with local and provincial RCSC and government personnel, the proposed RCSC/Federation action was examined to ensure a co-ordinated and complementary plan. Copies of the *Federation Network* brochure, recently translated by the RCSC into Mandarin, were distributed.

Back in Beijing, the Federation Media Officer supplied digital video and still imagery to the international media pool. It was also transmitted electronically to the Federation Secretariat for use in *direct from the field* ([www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)). This information is available to the public world-wide, and can be downloaded for informational purposes. The RCSC also distributed prints and narrative to local media. Additional prints and are being processed for use on its homepage specially set up for this operation.

### **Observations of the assessment team**

- | Casualty figures have not changed, but cold-related health complications have been reported and are expected to increase
- | most of the houses observed by the team were destroyed or damaged beyond repair
- | around 300 after-shocks measuring up to 4.2 Richter magnitude have been recorded
- | many buildings are too dangerous to enter and, fearful of aftershocks, most people are camping outside in make-shift shelters using loose straw and mats for insulation
- | safe water is available from deep wells
- | most earthquake victims are farmers and experienced in dealing with the elements, hence are more self-reliant in such a situation.

### **Conclusions of assessment team**

- | Victims have been unable to salvage belongings and food stocks, making provision of shelter, quilts, warm clothing, and food a priority
- | in addition to government efforts, the RCSC branches are providing quilts and coats collected from the public; they have enough to meet current needs, and will distribute more as the winter continues

- | since many of the tents have been unable to provide adequate shelter due to the extreme cold and heavy snow, additional tents will not be procured for the time being
- | medicine and medical aid is required as temperatures remain very low (down to -27° C) and another cold wave is expected soon
- | RCSC centres are urgently required to be able to provide community first aid and medical services, housing and distribution of relief goods, and shelter for RC personnel
- | initial emergency food stocks are essential and are being provided by the government and RCSC

Item	Quantity	Number of Beneficiaries
Cotton quilts	5,000	5,000
Heavy coats	10,000	10,000
Rice and flour	1.125 mt	50,000
Medicines and medical supplies	assorted	51,600
Multipurpose generators	10	50,000
Red Cross Posts	5	50,000
Repair/reconstruction of RC First Aid stations/hospitals	5	50,000
Building supplies	350 families	1,750
<i>Action steps and timeline attached as annex 2</i>		

**Anticipated Later Needs •**

A bad drought in 1996 had a near disastrous effect on the harvest, leaving families with barely enough food stocks to last the winter. With the loss of some of these stocks in the earthquake and in view of the winter weather, food assistance will be necessary to help the people make it to the next harvest.

Under normal conditions, the topography, harsh climate, and economic base of the residents mean they live on the edge of vulnerability. After the bad drought of 1996, this earthquake has left hundreds of thousands vulnerable to exposure during the harsh winter. The longer term impact of these combined factors will mean a longer and more fragile recovery. Expanding the RCSC network to the most vulnerable communities will provide residents with urgently needed health services. These multipurpose RCSC posts will serve as distribution centres, and workspace and shelter for volunteers during the emergency relief activities. They will also provide various services and a focal point to encourage villagers during the rebuilding process. Over the long term, they will remain available for emergency response, and to establish traditional RC services in these communities.

**Financial operations**

The Secretariat will transfer funds to the RCSC on a timely and as needed basis. The RCSC Finance Department will process transactions and provide monthly financial reports to the Secretariat. The Regional Finance Unit in the Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur will provide technical assistance to the RCSC along with the developmental support already being provided. All financial aspects are subject to both external and internal audits.

**Procurement**

The Federation's *Principles and Rules for Disaster Relief* are in effect. Procurement is being done by the RCSC with technical support from the Federation Secretariat's Logistics Service and the Federation Logistics Delegate stationed in Beijing with the DPRK relief operation. All relief items are available locally which allows more of the contributions to be applied directly to needed relief supplies.

### **Capital equipment**

Due to the number of villages affected, and the rugged travel between them, the RCSC requires immediately two 4-wheel drive vehicles. Non-standard Federation equipment will be purchased locally as maintenance facilities for the make are adequate in the region. These two vehicles will remain with the local branches after the operation. A third vehicle will be procured for use by the Federation Representative who will be required to make numerous trips to the sites. This vehicle will be handed over to RCSC Headquarters, which will determine its future use.

A digital camera that provides the ability to immediately transmit still photographs electronically has been purchased and is in use. Images are available on both the Federation and RCSC homepages.

A laptop computer with a built-in modem and portable printer (for mobile reporting), two desk top computers, a printer, and modem are required for record keeping, collection of data, and narrative and financial reporting of this operation.

Mobile telephones, to improve communications and provide a safety net during travel and while on site, will be provided for use by local branches in the disaster area.

Technical assistance in the selection of computer, photographic, and telecommunications equipment is being provided by the Telecommunications and Field Support Services of the Federation Secretariat. All equipment procured will be compatible with the overall Federation supported communications project currently underway.

### **Red Cross Objectives •**

- { To help victims maintain their health throughout the winter, provide 50,000 people with supplementary food rations for 3 months;
- { To establish 5 permanent multipurpose RCSC posts in this remote and disaster prone area of China that will provide a base for relief and rehabilitation operations, including first aid, and subsequently allow the RCSC to give traditional services to these communities;
- { To restore health care facilities in 5 of the most severely impacted communities by repairing or reconstructing damaged RCSC First Aid Stations or affiliated hospitals;
- { To provide reconstruction assistance to 350 of the most vulnerable families by supplying building materials;

## ***National Society/Federation Plan of Action***

### **Emergency Phase: 13 January - 12 February 1998 •**

Purchase and distribution of blankets, quilts, winter coats, generators, medicine.

Procurement of prefabricated buildings that provide space for offices, dormitory, storage, and a dispensary. Establishment of multipurpose RSCS posts is urgent due to the severe weather conditions. Each post will be supplied with basic furniture and equipment, medicine, and medical supplies. One bicycle per post will provide local transportation consistent with community norms.

### **Phase Two: 13 January - 12 July 1998 •**

Provide building materials to 350 families (timber, tar paper, bricks, nails). Construction cannot start before late April, but identification of beneficiaries and tendering will begin in February.

Repair/reconstruct and replenish 5 township hospitals. Sites will be identified in February and March. The selection of these townships will be done by the local RCSC in consultation with the public health authorities to ensure the integration of the project into the post disaster rehabilitation plan.

Provide supplementary food to 50,000 people (frequency to be decided later) at 7.5 kg per person per month for 3 months.

**Capacity of the National Society •**

The RCSC has the capacity to procure locally, provide personnel, arrange and conduct transportation and distribution, work with local media, liaise with government, and conduct needs assessments. The RCSC provides humanitarian aid in the many disaster situations occurring in a country the size of China. In addition to this earthquake disaster, it currently has a relief operation going on in Xinzang (Tibet) to help victims of the severe winter weather.

**Present Capacity of the Federation in China •**

Technical support will be provided by a Federation Representative, Construction Delegate, and Logistics Delegate. Additional support will be provided by the Federation Secretariat, and its Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur.

**Evaluation •**

An evaluation of the relief and rehabilitation operation will be carried out, looking at both quantity of aid provided, and quality of the operation.

## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

Hundreds of thousands of earthquake victims have experienced both physical losses and the emotional trauma such an event causes. In addition to the 44,000 homeless, tens of thousands are afraid to sleep in their homes because of numerous aftershocks. As time goes by, the effects of the bitter cold, lack of adequate clothing, food and shelter will add to their misery. Cash contributions are urgently needed to help these people keep their health and strength so they can begin the long process of rebuilding their homes and their lives.

A list of contribution to date is included.

Margareta Wahlström  
Under Secretary General,  
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

George Weber  
Secretary General

**BUDGET SUMMARY****APPEAL No. 3/98-  
IN CHF**

ANNEX 1

**NEEDS IN KIND (OR CASH)****Relief supplies**

Quilts (10,000 pieces x CHF 12)	120,000.00	
Winter coats (5,000 pieces x CHF 13)	65,000.00	
Rice and wheat flour (1.125 T x CHF 450 delivered)	506,250.00	
Assorted medicines	135,000.00	
Vehicles: 3 x 4WD (maintenance/spare parts)	105,000.00	
Generators (10 units x CHF 5,200)	52,000.00	
Mobile telephones (5 sets x CHF 200)	120,000.00	
Camera with digital capacity	1,000.00	
<b>TOTAL NEEDS IN KIND (OR CASH)</b>		<b>1,103,250.00</b>

**NEEDS IN CASH**

Transport	20,000.00	
Capital expenditures (computer equipment)	20,000.00	
Personnel (1 technical support delegate / 6 months)	60,000	
Personnel (1 technical support delegate / 3 months)	30,000	
Travel & communications	30,000.00	
Monitoring/Evaluation	30,000.00	
Information	35,000.00	
Administrative, office & general expenses	40,000.00	
Installation and equipment for 5 RCSC centres	100,000.00	
Building materials for most affected & vulnerable families	350,000.00	
Reconstruction and outfitting of 5 township hospitals	185,000.00	
Secretariat operational support	80,000.00	
<b>TOTAL NEEDS IN CASH</b>		<b>890,000.00</b>

**TOTAL APPEAL CASH & KIND****1,993,250.00****LESS CASH ON HAND****0.00****NET REQUEST CASH & KIND****1,993,250.00**

NB: all procurement will be done locally

Rehabilitation phase: assessment in progress for RCSC First Aid Centres and Hospitals (construction/medical equipment)

