

MOZAMBIQUE: CHOLERA

28 April 1998

appeal no. 05/98

situation report no. 1

period covered: February-April 1998

Mozambique Red Cross Society, supported by the International Federation, is providing health education, Oral Rehydration treatment and door-to-door health visits to counter the spread of cholera, which has affected all but three of the country's provinces.

The context

A cholera epidemic broke out in Maputo in August 1997 and the Mozambique Red Cross Society (MRCS) started operations immediately. Up to January 1998, preventive activities and assistance to cholera victims were funded by a Finnish Red Cross grant of CHF 77,000 to the ongoing health programme. In February, as the epidemic worsened, the International Federation, on behalf of MRCS, launched an appeal for CHF 298,000 to cover the eight provinces of Maputo City, Maputo Province, Gaza, Sofala, Manica, Tete, Zambezia and Nampula.

Latest events

According to the Ministry of Health's Department of Epidemiology the epidemic is stabilising in some areas. However, it still spreading — though at different rates — in the provinces of Maputo, Gaza, Sofala, Manica and Zambezia. In the latter, 150 new cases are being registered each day. The number of cumulative cases is 31,893 with 719 casualties up to 20 April. The mortality rate nationwide is 2.3%.

Cholera is now reported in the northern provinces of Cabo Delgado and Niassa, as well as in Inhambane Province in the south. For this reason the budget of Appeal 05/98 is being revised, although the total is not expected to increase.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

MRCS has been working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health since the start of the epidemic in August 1997. Its main objective is to inform, educate and mobilise the community through door to door campaigns on preventive measures, water treatment and the correct use of latrines.

From August 1997 to January 1998 some 1,500 sick people were cared for in oral rehydration clinics, over 90,000 people benefited from health education and 22,179 home visits were made.

During the compilation of the appeal, which was prepared jointly by MRCS and the Federation's Regional Delegation in Harare, the Regional Health Delegate made an assessment to Beira to assess the needs there. MRCS' efforts have also been supported by the country delegation in Maputo.

In each of the nine affected provinces, MRCS has created a team of activists (194 volunteers, plus one health technician from each province and four technicians in a supervisory role at the NS' Headquarters.) In February and March 14 training sessions for 51 activists were held in Sofala, Manica, Tete, Zambezia and Nampula.

These teams meet with community and religious leaders, teachers and the community itself to discuss cholera prevention, individual and collective hygiene, and administration of Oral Rehydration Salts. Between February and March the teams activists made 27,888 home visits, reaching 91,056 beneficiaries.

Eleven oral rehydration points were established, at which 7,497 people received treatment.

Over 1,000 sick people were brought to hospitals run by the Ministry of Health or to MSF cholera treatment tents between February and April.

A water source was disinfected in Nampula in April and 6 VIP latrines were built in Sofala.

In Manica 123 water sources were chlorinated, assisting over 2,000 people. Red Cross workers also disinfected drinking water for 324 families in Zambezia and drainage ditches were disinfected by activists in Maputo during February and March.

The appeal has allowed MRCS to purchase 18 additional tents, three basic medical kits, four boxes of sodium hypochlorite, hygienic material, office equipment and fuel for vehicles.

Outstanding needs

In order to reflect minor changes in needs and geographical distribution, the cholera appeal budget will be modified. As less than half of the amount requested in the appeal has been received to date, donors are asked to contact the Southern Africa Desk on ++4122 7304316 to contribute and allow the operation to continue.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The Ministry of Health provides ORS to MRCS Oral Rehydration Centres and to activists for door to door campaigns. MRCS attends weekly co-ordination meetings chaired by the Ministry of Health in all Provinces. In Maputo the Ministry of Health paid incentives to 15 activists and provided fuel to support patient transfer operations in Sofala. It gives additional support through supervision of activities in the field, training of activists and the provision of educational materials.

MSF Spain, Belgium and Switzerland have assisted in supervising sentry points, oral rehydration activities and training of volunteers.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Since the epidemic broke out in Maputo last August, MRCS has gained valuable experience and when the disease was reported in other provinces it was able to react promptly and efficiently. Provision will be made in next year's disaster preparedness planning for the development of the logistical capacity of MRCS so that it can immediately respond, not only to outbreaks of cholera, but also to other disasters and epidemics.

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