

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: TIDAL WAVE

17 December 1998

appeal no. 22/98

situation report no. 5

period covered: 22 October - 1 December 1998

Resettlement of displaced villagers is moving ahead and, in parallel, Red Cross medium term projects are taking shape. A nutrition survey is being acted on, disability and trauma assessments have taken place and a number of community based health initiatives are close to realisation.

The context

The tsunami which struck the area around the Sissano Lagoon near Aitape, Sandaun Province, on 17 July 1998 created total devastation. The official death toll was 2,182, and 9,199 people were left homeless.

The response from the community, the rest of the country and the world at large, was rapid and overwhelming. The PNGRCS, supported by the International Federation, immediately provided emergency assistance, before moving on to the current phase of the operation, which is providing medium to long term assistance to those affected by the disaster and to optimise the utilisation of the substantial donor funds available through the Federation Appeal and PNGRCS.

Latest events

Security ●

The State of Emergency has ended and the Aitape/Lumi District Administration has assumed responsibility for rehabilitation activities. Management of the central warehouse and distribution of relief supplies is now being carried out by local personnel.

Aitape district disaster committee ●

The Aitape District Disaster Committee has been recognised by the National Disaster Committee and has held three meetings during the reporting period. Red Cross is a member of the committee and has been represented on each occasion. The committee now meets weekly. On 3 November, it reviewed the Rehabilitation Plan previously presented to the Aitape Tsunami Disaster Donors meeting in Port Moresby on 23 October.

Health ●

The 12 suspected cases of dysentery previously reported were not confirmed by diagnostic analysis. All responded to treatment and did not involve hospitalisation. There have been reports of increased diarrhoea in children from some of the resettlement villages.

Disaster affected communities ●

The Care Centres in the host villages of Pou and Ramo have closed, with the affected persons relocating to Barapu, Wairoin and Arop 1. The number of resettlements stands at nine, with one, Malol, being

further divided into four hamlets. A recent census has put the total displaced population at 10,483. Use of the term Care Centre is being phased out as the new settlements take on a degree of permanence.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Water & Sanitation •

Following the arrival of the new Water and Sanitation Delegate, further assessments of water and sanitation needs have been carried out in three newly settled villages and two former host villages. Access to water supplies is being improved through the design and construction of rainwater catchment facilities and through monitoring the installation and use of shallow wells. Materials sufficient for eight rainwater facilities at two of the new settlements have been delivered and work is progressing well through the use of volunteer local village labour.

Options for pit latrine designs are being evaluated by village residents, and drainage system designs are also under study in water-logged villages.

A ban on fishing in the Sissano lagoon imposed by the Provincial Health authorities remains in effect following an Analyst's report that water samples from lagoon contained high levels of faecal contamination. Further sampling, involving fish and shellfish, is proposed.

Community health ●

The community based health team has been responsible for the preparation and presentation to PNG Red Cross/Federation of seven mini-projects based on identified needs. These include utilisation of radio as part of the warning system, conducting community based health workshops and distributions of additional tarpaulins, treated mosquito nets, fishing materials, canoe axes, and sago beaters.

Included in the community based health programme is basic health education on the prevention of diarrhoea, malaria and skin diseases, the improvement of children's nutrition, and HIV/AIDs awareness. Environmental factors have been discussed in relation to the Sissano lagoon, trees, drainage, potential river/lagoon pollution from the washing of mosquito nets. The programme also includes practical instruction on bread making over an open fire place, nutritious cooking, sewing machine maintenance and basic consumer education.

Nutrition ●

The long awaited Nutritional Survey was concluded on 29 October and the data contained in the questionnaires is currently being evaluated by the Department of Health in Port Moresby. In the meantime, the Aitape District Disaster Committee proposes that there will be one last food distribution for this year and nothing further until January. A follow up survey proposed for early in the New Year would be helpful in determining any change in the nutritional status.

The nutrition assessment identified at least three constraints preventing people from using traditional means of gathering/harvesting food and following agreement on strategies to address these constraints, a number of mini-projects have been initiated.

Disability services ●

The Outreach Disabilities Services Co-ordinator arrived in Aitape on 9 November and in addition to meetings with representatives of the Fr. Antonine Centre for Persons with Disabilities (FACPD) has consulted with the affected people in the resettlement areas. Apart from 12 amputees, a number of persons suffering with secondary pain, restricted limb movement and hearing impairment have been identified. A two day workshop on disability awareness run in conjunction with the FACPD is proposed for early next year.

Psycho-social needs ●

The Social Worker arrived in Aitape on 18 November and has met key personnel involved in welfare and counselling activities including District officials, NGOs and the Diocese. Visits to the resettlement villages to meet affected persons and assess their psycho-social needs commenced on 23 November and was scheduled to last about one week.

Distributions ●

Sago beaters have been procured and production of the beaters is underway. The first consignment of mosquito nets (500) arrived on 13 November. Distribution of these items has commenced in Rainbrum and Olbrum.

Transportation ●

Where possible, road transport is used, but the decision depends on accessibility by road, weather conditions and the state of the river crossings. Fortunately, recent heavy rain has not caused too many disruptions. Helicopter transport is still available to Red Cross personnel at no cost for those settlements where road access is not available. Some villages can be reached by boat, depending on the seas.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The Federation and the PNG Red Cross continue to enjoy good relations with the Government authorities both at national and local level.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The operation is proceeding satisfactorily. Red Cross has been made welcome at all levels of the community. It expects to have a higher profile as its projects move forward and it maintains a continuing presence after the departure of other agencies.

Peter Rees-Gildea
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**PAPUA NEW GUINEA -
 TIDAL WAVE**

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 22/98

**PLEDGES
 RECEIVED**

17/12/98

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL		907,000	
AUSTRALIAN - RC	250,000 AUD	220,700	28/07/98
BRAZILIAN - RC	500.00 USD	750.00	24/07/98
BRITISH - RC/GOVT	75,000 GBP	184,035	23/07/98 VILLAGE REHAB. KITS
CANADIAN - RC	2,000 CAD	2,049	22/07/98
CANADIAN - GOVT	100,000 CAD	102,460	24/07/98
COOK ISLANDS RC		11,880	07/08/98 USD 3.886 + NZD 7.628
GERMANY - RC/PRIVATE	1,000 DEM	826.00	09/10/98
ICELANDIC - RC	200,000 ISK	4,164	22/07/98
ITALIAN GOVT/Emergency Fund	100,000 USD	150,000	21/07/98
JAPANESE - RC	10,000,000 JPY	107,760	13/08/08
MONACO -RC	30,000 FRF	7,389	23/09/98
NORWEGIAN RC/GOVT	1,298,701 NOK	254,000	22/07/98 Refurbishment of DREF
NEW ZEALAND - RC	817,661 NZD	609,566	25/07/98 PUBLIC DONATIONS
PALAU - RC		809.00	01/09/98
POLISH - RC	1,000 USD	1,500	22/07/98
AMERICAN - RC	75,000 USD	112,500	24/07/98
REP. OF KOREA - RC	20,000 USD	30,000	28/07/98
WESTERN SAMOA	87,050 SAT	40,200	07/08/98
WESTERN SAMOA		1,499	27/08/98
PRIVATE DONOR	250.00 CHF	250.00	28/07/98
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH		1,842,337 CHF	

**KIND AND SERVICES
(INCL. PERSONNEL)**

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
JAPANESE - RC	1 DEL X 1 MONTH			5,000		
NEW ZEALAND - RC	2 DEL X 2 MONTHS			20,000		

IN KIND/SERVICES

**NOT REQUESTED IN
APPEAL**

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
JAPANESE - RC	PLASTIC SHEETING			175,000	31/07/98	INCLUDING TRANSPORT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				175,000 CHF		