

# ***CENTRAL AMERICA: HURRICANE MITCH***

appeal no: 02/99  
23 December 1998

## ***TRANSITIONAL RELIEF AND FIRST PHASE REHABILITATION***

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 31,965,000  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 264,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 6 MONTHS***

### ***Summary***

*Federation appeal No.33/98, which has funded emergency aid to victims of Hurricane Mitch in the immediate post-disaster period, will be closed on 31 December. It is replaced by this appeal, which seeks funding for six months of transitional support, prior to the launching of a major rehabilitation plan. Covering operations in the first half of 1999, this is the first individual appeal of the new year; it is being released in advance to encourage immediate support and a prompt start to assistance in January.*

### ***The Disaster***

Hurricane Mitch, Central America's worst storm this century, affected more than 6.5 million people and left at least 2.5 million temporarily dependent on aid. The hurricane aggravated the chronic poverty in the four worst-affected countries -- Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador -- and as usual, the most vulnerable sectors of the population are bearing the brunt of the disaster's effects, which include increased unemployment, fewer and higher priced foodstuffs, and reduced access to health care.

The social and economic consequences, although still being assessed, will be felt for years. A Federation assessment team, just back from the region, states in its report: "The situation is likely to get worse, not better". Response to the emergency is beyond the capacity of the countries involved and all have appealed to the international community for assistance in the recovery process.

The consultative group for reconstruction set up by the Inter American Development Bank, at its meeting in Washington 10-11 December, evaluated the cost of the destruction of infrastructure and economic production losses for the four countries at US\$ 5.4 billion -- equivalent to a 26 per cent loss of annual income for every man, woman and child. Although individual countries and international financial bodies have already agreed to debt cancellation or relief, and large-scale financial aid has been promised, it will be some time before the effects of these measures trickle down to those whose homes and livelihoods have been wiped out by the disaster.

The Federation has analysed the post-Mitch recovery requirements of the most disadvantaged people in Central America, drawing on a compilation of field assessments by local and international Red Cross personnel of the needs of the most vulnerable, in particular those in rural areas. Its conclusions:

- { The acute emergency phase is over.
- { Vulnerable groups need transitional assistance from January to June 1999, to tide them over until the next harvests.
- { Long term rehabilitation will be required for a period that could be as long as five years.
- { The worst affected country is Honduras, followed by Nicaragua.

This new appeal seeks financing for a six-month transitional operation covering needs until mid-1999. The first Federation appeal, issued 30 October and revised 4 November, sought CHF12, 570,000 for emergency aid and was entirely covered three weeks after its launching.

A long-term rehabilitation plan is being prepared and will be issued in early 1999. Donors will be invited to participate actively in the design of this plan. A planning meeting will be held in Geneva in January and will be followed by a meeting with operating Societies to be held in Central America in February.

## ***The Response so far***

### ***Acute Emergency Phase***

Immediately after the disaster, the National Societies of Central America mobilised more than 6,000 volunteers who provided basic survival services -- rescue, evacuation, first aid, shelter, clothing, food, water and tracing services -- to at least 180,000 people. They were assisted by personnel, cash and goods from sister Societies, including those of Great Britain, Germany, Spain and the USA, often channelled through and/or directly co-ordinated by the Federation. The four Operating National Societies also undertook emergency preventive health measures, including the distribution of 450,000 leaflets explaining precautions for avoiding malaria, dengue fever and cholera and for protecting water sources.

The Federation appeal provided support to many of the services described above.

**Operation Highlights**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Distribution highlights</b>	<b>Beneficiaries*</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Red Cross Presence</b>
<b>Honduras</b>	food parcels 13 WHO kits 2 cholera kits basic relief items  roofing material water	210,000	Water ERUs assisting over 50,000 in Choluteca 300 - 400,000 litres/day Telecom ERU. 21,000 mt food made available by Amcross	Federation Spanish RC German RC American RC Austrian RC Swedish RC
<b>Nicaragua</b>	food parcels 10 WHO kits 2 cholera kits basic relief items water	338,675	Water ERU assisting over 15,000 in Chinandega 120,000 litres/day Public health campaign	Federation Spanish RC French RC American RC German RC Peruvian RC
<b>Guatemala</b>	food parcels 4 WHO kits 2 cholera kits basic relief items water	67,500	Medical brigades in field, concern over cholera rate Public health campaign	Federation Spanish RC

	3 WHO kits 1 cholera kit basic relief items		Public health campaign	Spanish RC
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\*The Federation has deployed 30 WHO New Emergency Health Kits with a potential for reaching some 300,000 people over three months, and eight Cholera Kits, sufficient for a population of one million people. 450,000 leaflets are being distributed in support of public health and fumigation activities.

***Co-ordination***

Because of the scale of this disaster, its multi-country impact and the immense outpouring of aid, the co-ordination of efforts has been and still is a key issue. To ensure that assistance from National Societies is rapid, effective, and well-targeted, the Federation has set up a regional relief management team, based in Guatemala, to co-ordinate operations and provide logistical, monitoring, reporting and other support. This team will play a key role in ensuring the implementation of this revised appeal.

Secondly, in view of the many international efforts in aid of Central America, the Federation has worked closely with other international organisations -- notably PAHO (WHO), WFP, and FAO -- and has taken their projects and programmes into account when designing this appeal. Finally, plans have been checked carefully with the central and local governments of the four affected countries.

***The Intended Operation***

- { The operation will provide supplementary food, seeds, agricultural tools, and health support to over a quarter million people in the four worst affected countries, to tide them over the transitional period until the next harvest and promote their return to normal life. Assistance will go to family units: a total of 44,060 families (264,360 individuals) have been selected in the course of assessment missions carried out in the past month.
- { The health component will contribute towards the maintenance of safe water supplies; provide vector control materials for dengue and malaria eradication and ensure specific medical support for the treatment of malaria and acute respiratory diseases and for trauma counselling.
- { Wherever possible, goods will be provided on a "for work" basis, to reduce dependency.
- { The operation will begin in January and end in June 1999.
- { Linking into the longer-term rehabilitation phase, a pilot project will be undertaken in Honduras carrying out repairs to 2,000 homes and rebuilding 200 homes.
- { The operation will provide support to the affected National Societies, to assist them in recovering from the physical damage to their facilities and their loss of income sources, and to restore their full operational capacity

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

**Beneficiary Numbers Per Country**

<b>Country</b>	<b><i>Honduras</i></b>	<b><i>Nicaragua</i></b>	<b><i>Guatemala</i></b>	<b><i>El Salvador</i></b>
<b>Families</b>	13,500	21,230	3,930	5,400
<b>Individuals</b>	81,000	127,380	23,580	32,400

The figures in the table above reflect the number of beneficiaries to be covered by this appeal. In Honduras, another 125,000 people are being assisted by the Spanish and German Red Cross Societies, bringing

the total number of Red Cross beneficiaries in Honduras to approximately 206,000. Similarly, in Nicaragua, 10,000 families are being assisted by the Spanish Red Cross, bringing the total number of Red Cross beneficiaries to approximately 187,000 individuals.

Family parcels will be distributed on a monthly basis. Distributions will begin in January and are scheduled to end in June. Once beneficiary surveys have been rechecked, ration cards will be handed out and warehouses and distribution points will be identified.

National Societies will co-ordinate with the competent authorities on land ownership issues before rehabilitation and reconstruction of housing begins.

Tools and seeds will be distributed to rural families identified as having their own land.

## **Honduras** (population 4.9 million)

**Family Parcels** consisting of supplementary food (rice, beans, corn flour, sugar, butter and salt), hygienic kits, kitchen sets, water containers and chlorine tablets will be distributed to 13,500 families (81,000 persons) in the departments of Choluteca, Olanche, Paraíso Centro, Valle Oeste and Franco Morazán.

**Seeds** (beans, rice, maize and sorghum) and **tools** (spades, hoes and machetes) will be distributed to 13,500 families who are totally dependent on the crops they grow and who lost all their produce during the disaster. These items will be distributed at the end of February, after the first distribution of family parcels.

**Construction materials** will be distributed to 5,000 families at the end of January for the rehabilitation and/or reconstruction of their homes. Of the total, 2,000 houses need repairs, while the remaining 3,000 will have to be rebuilt. This project will be implemented on the basis of "food for work" which foresees that beneficiaries will work directly on the construction of homes and rehabilitation of their communities.

**A 2,000 square metre temporary shelter** will be constructed to house the 3,000 families who lost their homes until their houses are rebuilt.

**Potable water** will continue to be provided until the end of February in the province of Choluteca where two ERUs (a Mass Water ERU from the Swedish Red Cross, and a Specialised Water ERU from the Austrian Red Cross) are operational, producing 300,000 to 400,000 litres daily for 50,000 beneficiaries. The Austrian team will review needs elsewhere and if necessary respond by producing up to 120,000 litres daily

## **Nicaragua** (population 4.6 million)

**Family Parcels** consisting of supplementary food (rice, beans, corn flour, sugar, salt and oil), kitchen sets and hygiene kits will be distributed to 21,230 of the worst affected families (127,380 persons) in the departments of Managua, León, Chinandega, Estelí, Madriz, Nueva Segovia, Jinotega, Matagalpa, Granada and Rivas.

**Seeds** (beans, rice, maize and sorghum) and **tools** (spades, hoes and machetes) will be distributed to 2,800 families (14,000 persons) who are totally dependent on the produce they grow and who lost all their crops during the disaster.

**Potable water** will continue to be supplied until the end of February in the region of Chinandega by an ERU team which has been operational since 30 November. The Specialised Water Unit, jointly operated

by the Peruvian and German National Societies, produces 140,000 litres a day, sufficient for 13,000 people.

### **El Salvador** (population 5.3 million)

*Family Parcels* consisting of supplementary food (rice, beans, corn flour, sugar, oil and salt), kitchen sets and hygiene kits will be distributed to 5,400 families (32,400 persons) in the provinces of Ahuachapán, Sonsonate, La Libertad, La Paz and Santa Ana.

*Seeds* (beans, rice, maize and sorghum) and *tools* (spades, hoes and machetes) will be distributed to 5,100 families (30,600 persons) who are totally dependent on the produce they grow and who lost all their crops during the disaster.

### **Guatemala** (population 10.9 million)

*Family Parcels* consisting of supplementary food (rice, beans, corn flour, sugar, oil, cereal and salt) and kitchen sets will be distributed to 3,930 families (23,580 persons) in the provinces of Guatemala, Alta Verapaz, Izabal, Escuintla, Zacapa, Sacatepequez, Suchitepequez and Jalapa.

*Seeds* (beans, rice, maize and sorghum) and *tools* (spades, hoes and machetes) will be distributed to 2,000 families (12,000 persons) who are totally dependent on the produce they grow and who lost all their crops during the disaster.

## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

The loss of arable land has been one of the most dramatic consequences of this disaster. The distribution of food, seeds and agricultural tools is intended to help victims through the difficult transitional period and enable them to find new livelihoods. It is the first step towards long term development in hundreds of communities which were left in a disastrous state by Hurricane Mitch. Donors are thanked for their support to the first appeal and are urged to respond rapidly to this appeal, so that an immediate start can be made in January on this new phase of assistance.

For further information please contact Americas Department Director Santiago Gil at phone (41 22) 730 4391 (email: [gil@ifrc.org](mailto:gil@ifrc.org)) or Desk Officer Denis MacClean at phone (41 22) 730 4428.

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