

15 May 2000

CHINA: FLOODS

appeal no. 17/99

situation report no. 8

period covered: 1 February - 30 April 2000

The sixth and final Plan of Action to distribute rice, winter clothing and quilts to 1999 flood victims will end shortly, bringing the operation to a close. Despite a 68% response to the appeal, distributions have achieved between 80% (rice) and over 100% (quilts) of the original objectives. Disaster preparedness is now underway, in anticipation of this year's seasonal Yangtze flooding, likely to start shortly.

The context

Sustained rainfall from the middle of June until late September last year caused extensive flooding along the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze river in China. Though the floods in 1999 were less severe than those that affected the country in 1998, nevertheless the disaster was far more serious than for any average year.

The International Federation and the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) responded by identifying target communities within the four worst affected provinces of Hunan, Hubei, Anhui and Jiangxi, and the Federation issued an international Appeal on 24 August seeking CHF 10.2 million in order to give more than one million people access to clean water and sanitation materials for two months, to provide food to approximately 250,000 people over a three-month period as well as to supply 20,000 winter coats and 20,000 quilts to those badly affected by the floods.

Latest events

Now that the 1999 floodwaters have receded in the affected areas, the planting of crops such as vegetables, oil seed rape, rice and some wheat has taken place. The distribution of food is still seen as a priority, particularly as people are now 'in between' harvests.

Those who have been badly affected by the floods continue to take out loans or to borrow rice from their relatives to bridge the period until the next harvest. In Yiyang county, Hunan province, the planting of winter crops was affected as many of the lower lying areas of agricultural land were still covered with water.

Reconstruction and renovation of damaged houses and public buildings is part of the ongoing rehabilitation process in all of the flood affected provinces. Although it varies between the different provinces, some government grants have been made available to people to assist with the reconstruction. In some areas, villages have been moved from very low lying areas to newly established housing on higher ground. For example in Huanggang prefecture, Hubei province, the local authorities have relocated 6 villages out of a planned 10 villages. Despite this, some people are still living in temporary and home made shelters.

The 1999 joint Federation\RCSC China Floods Operation is now drawing to a close. Five of the six plans of action have been implemented and the final plan has nearly been completed. However, since the slow transfer of funds, due to the holiday season, has caused a slight delay in the very last stages of the operation, the final operational report will be issued by the end of July instead of May 2000 as originally planned.

With the imminent start of this year’s flooding season along the Yangtze river, the RCSC and its Branches are already on alert and the Delegation and the RCSC headquarters are currently discussing a disaster preparedness plan and the replenishment of stocks to ensure that the Red Cross is in a position to respond to the annual flooding cycle.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Plan of Action 5 (PoA 5)

The focus of PoA 5 was the procurement and distribution of rice, winter coats and quilts and funds for the Plan arrived in Beijing in December 1999. As with previous PoAs, funds were transferred to the provinces for the purchase and transportation of rice, while the sanitation materials, coats, quilts and vehicles were purchased centrally by the RCSC headquarters.

Sanitation materials

As Anhui was identified as being one of the worst affected provinces, 405 boxes of sanitation materials were allocated to the following counties in Anhui as part of PoA 5:

County	Number of boxes
Wangjiang	71.00
Susong	77.00
Dongzhi	47.00
Guichi	50.00
Langxi	73.00
Xuanzhou	87.00
TOTAL	405.00

This was the final distribution of sanitation materials for the 1999 China floods operation. A total of 2,394 boxes have been distributed to the four provinces. As the need for sanitation materials in the early phases of the operation had already been met and in view of the onset of winter, funds were reallocated for the purchase of food.

Rice

Rice has continued to be identified as a priority in the Red Cross target villages and, with the exception of PoA 2, it has formed the major component of all the six plans of action. As with previous PoAs, funding was allocated to each of the provinces as per the percentage support agreed upon by the

Federation/RCSC (detailed in the table below) and each provincial Branch has been responsible for the procurement of rice for its province and for submitting the distribution plan to the RCSC headquarters for approval.

	Anhui	Hubei	Hunan	Jiangxi	Total
Percentage of support to the provinces	30%	20%	20%	30%	100%
Number of villages	53.00	73.00	37.00	46.00	209.00
Number of beneficiaries	76,397.00	50,569.00	50,624.00	75,167.00	252,757.00

Differences in the prices of rice between the provinces explains why there are differences in the amounts purchased. A total of 1,940.49 metric tons of rice were purchased and distributed to 129,340 beneficiaries in 132 target villages during January and February 2000. Details of the PoA 5 rice distribution are included in the table below:

Province	Prefecture	No: of targeted villages	Beneficiaries	Quantity of rice (Metric tons)
Anhui	Xuan Cheng	16.00	19,096.00	286.44
	Chizhou	12.00	11,425.00	171.38
	Anqing	20.00	17,527.00	262.90
	<i>Sub total</i>	<i>48.00</i>	<i>48,048.00</i>	<i>720.72</i>
Hubei	Huanggang	12.00	4,007.00	60.10
	Xianning	8.00	8,045.00	121.22
	Huangshi	10.00	6,488.00	97.32
	Ezhou	6.00	2,242.00	33.62
	Xiantao	7.00	1,632.00	24.48
	<i>Sub total</i>	<i>43.00</i>	<i>22,414.00</i>	<i>336.74</i>
Hunan	Yiyang	10.00	16,990.00	254.70
	Chenzhou	5.00	5,422.00	81.33
	<i>Sub total</i>	<i>15.00</i>	<i>22,412.00</i>	<i>336.03</i>
Jiangxi	Shang Rao	8.00	12,466.00	187.00
	Juijiang	14.00	16,667.00	250.00
	Jing de Zhen	4.00	7,333.00	110.00
	<i>Sub total</i>	<i>26.00</i>	<i>36,466.00</i>	<i>547.00</i>
Grand Total		132.00	129,340.00	1,940.49

By the end of PoA 5, the Federation/RCSC had distributed a total of 7,162.28 metric tons of rice or 477,404 one month rations (1x 15 kg bag of rice). Using planning figures for PoA 6, it is likely that a total of 9,577.28 metric tons of rice will have been distributed, or approximately 638,404 one month rations (1 x 15 kg bag of rice).

Based on the original objective of providing a three month ration to 250,000 people plus an additional one month distribution to 10,000 people, it is likely that the Federation will have achieved an 84%

coverage by the end of PoA 6. As the Appeal is only 68% covered by funding, the Federation would in any case not have been able to achieve 100% coverage of all of the objectives.

Quilts and clothes

After lengthy discussions, the RCSC decided to purchase and distribute two sorts of quilts. Although natural cotton quilts are popular, they cost RMB 62 (or approximately CHF 12) whereas synthetic fibre quilts cost RMB 49 (approximately CHF 9) and are more durable and easier to wash and dry. A total of 15,228 synthetic quilts were purchased and 12,420 natural cotton quilts for onward distribution to the provinces as detailed in the table below.

Province	Winter coats	Quilts (synthetic fibre)	Quilts (natural cotton)
Anhui	5,406.00	4,569.00	3,726.00
Hubei	3,604.00	3,045.00	2,484.00
Hunan	3,604.00	3,045.00	2,484.00
Jiangxi	5,406.00	4,569.00	3,726.00
Total	18,020.00	15,228.00	12,420.00

Procurement of winter jackets and quilts for PoA 5 has been undertaken centrally by the RCSC headquarters. Each winter coat costs RMB 71 (or approximately CHF 13). Feedback from the beneficiaries during field visits has shown that shorter coats would be preferred as they allow for greater movement when carrying out agricultural activities and this will be taken into consideration for future distributions. Both the coats and quilts were distributed to beneficiaries in the target villages during February.

By the end of PoA 5, a total of 18,020 winter coats had been distributed resulting in a 90% coverage of the original objective to provide 20,000 winter coats. Coats were also included in PoA 6 and using the planning figure of 12,775, it is likely that the Federation/RCSC will have distributed 30,795 coats and exceeded the original objective. A total of 27,648 quilts were distributed as part of PoA 5, which exceeds the objective of providing 20,000 quilts.

As both winter coats and quilts were identified as a priority for the winter months, funds earmarked for water purification and sanitation materials were reallocated (with donor authorisation) to enable the Federation/RCSC to meet this need. Due to various delays in the implementation of the programme, the winter coats and quilts were distributed later than originally planned.

Monitoring of the distribution of rice and quilts/clothes for PoA 5 was carried out by the Federation’s Field delegate in close co-operation with the RCSC relief department and the Provincial Branches.

Disaster Preparedness stocks

Now that the programme is drawing to a close, the Delegation and the RCSC relief department are planning the replenishment of DP stocks. This is seen as a priority since the annual cycle of flooding is about to start.

Financial reporting system

One of the objectives of the 1999 Floods operation was to initiate the development of a comprehensive financial reporting system for the RCSC. The Finance/Development Delegate, who spent 10 months in China in 1999 working with the RCSC on this project, has returned to the Delegation on a four-month mission. The main purpose of this mission is to assist with the financial reporting of the 1999 floods operation and to continue work on the development of the provincial branches' quarterly financial reporting system. A replacement Finance/Development delegate has now been identified and is due to arrive in country in July 2000.

Vehicles

Three out of the four vehicles included in the Emergency Appeal budget have been purchased and allocated to Hunan, Hubei and Jiangxi provinces. Each Provincial Branch will be responsible for identifying one Prefecture Branch to receive the car.

Plan of Action 6 (PoA 6)

This is the final PoA for the China 1999 floods operation and includes further distributions of both food and winter coats. It is in the final stages of completion and field reports should be returned to the RCSC headquarters and the Delegation very shortly.

Review of the 1999 China Floods Operation

A three-person review team spent three weeks in China in March, carrying out an evaluation of the operation. Extensive meetings were held with various departments of the RCSC headquarters, the Delegation in Beijing, representatives from the relevant Ministries and the UN agencies.

A member of the RCSC relief department and the Federation's Field Delegate accompanied the team on a field visit to three of the provinces involved in the programme. A comprehensive report has been produced. This review, as with previous assessments and evaluations, is seen as part of the ongoing learning process for both the Federation and the RCSC.

Red Cross Society of China

The first of two one-week relief seminars was held in Southern China and was attended by representatives from 15 RCSC Branches, and members from the Hong Kong and Macau Branches. Its purpose was to update the RCSC rules and regulations with regard to relief operations and to discuss the targeting and selection of beneficiaries. The second seminar will be held in Inner Mongolia in June for the remainder of the RCSC Branches.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

The 16th February marked the official opening of the East Asia Regional Office in Beijing. This was preceded by a meeting for the Secretary Generals from the five National Societies in the region: China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea. Both the meeting and the official opening were attended by the Federation's Secretary General, Mr Didier Cherpitel. An official reception for the opening of the new office was attended by representatives from the Chinese Government, Embassies, NGOs and UN Agencies in Beijing, the five National Societies included in the region, representatives from the ICRC Bangkok Delegation, the Regional Information Delegate in Kuala Lumpur and the Head of the Secretariat's Asia\Pacific Department. A new Head of Regional Office will arrive in Beijing in mid May.

The East Asia Regional Office in Beijing and the Regional Information Delegate in Kuala Lumpur have worked closely together on the translation of the Red Cross 'Insight' publication on the 1999 China Floods. Four thousand copies are now available in Mandarin and will be distributed shortly.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>