

# ***CAMBODIA: FLOODS***

*19 August 1999*

*appeal no. 18/99*

*situation report no.1*

*period covered: 12 August - 18 August 1999*

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*Initial emergency relief supplies have been distributed in the flooded areas. However, stocks are now depleted and further emergency household kits are needed. Assessments of the rural water supply and the training of Red Cross volunteers for clean up campaigns are scheduled. Further flooding is anticipated.*

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## ***The context***

Continuous monsoon rains since late July along the southwest coast of Cambodia have caused serious flooding in the two adjacent provinces of Kampot and Koh Kong. Flash floods on 3 August swept through Kampot Town and surrounding communes, forcing thousands to leave their homes. In the two hardest hit districts of Kampot and Kampong Bay, waters were up to two metres deep, covering thousands of hectares of newly seeded crops.

A detailed assessment by the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) and the Royal Cambodian Government indicates at least 7,000 families were seriously affected and many thousands more will require some form of assistance. Community infrastructure was damaged or destroyed and water supplies polluted. Many communities were cut off: communication with and travel to these areas is still very difficult, due to washed out roads and paths and swollen rivers and streams.

Although the waters have receded in the past few days, weather forecasts indicate that the monsoon rains in the area will continue.

## ***Latest events***

The Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) has completed the initial distribution of emergency assistance to over 3,000 families in the Kampot District of Kampot Province. This distribution was co-ordinated with the

government after a CRC needs assessment of the five worst affected communes, as indicated in the Federation's appeal.

Now that the flood waters have receded, communities are in the process of cleaning up, repairing and rebuilding. However, it seems likely that the land will remain saturated for some time and that transportation and communication to more remote communes and villages will be difficult. The potential for serious outbreaks of waterborne disease is very real.

The Royal Cambodian Government has pledged USD 290,000 for direct assistance to flood victims and the repair of infrastructure. These activities are being coordinated through the provincial government.

### **Government action**

- { On 5 August, at an inter-ministerial meeting that included all members of the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) five working groups were established to coordinate damage assessment and deal with emergency relief. On 6 August, the Provincial governor of Kampot convened a meeting of government officials, CRC and NGOs to share flood damage information from the district chiefs and to coordinate and plan assessment activities.
- { On 7 August, Government assistance in the form of food and water was issued to 115 families in Kampong Bay and Kampot Districts in Kampot Province. On 10 August, mosquito nets and medicine were airlifted to isolated villages in Chhouk District, Kampot Province. Further supplies were transported by bullock cart to assist an additional 1500 families. The NCDM issued assistance (food and clothing) on 13 August to 2000 families from four affected districts in Koh Kong Province. On 15 August, 1500 families in Kampot and Kampong Bay Districts of Kampot Province received rice, fish, noodles and clothes.
- { To date the government has assisted 5,165 families, in 7 districts of Kampot and Koh Kong Provinces.

### **Other organisations' action**

- { UCC Development Foundation, a small Kampot based NGO, supplied 25 MT of rice, used clothes, mosquito nets, and other relief supplies to 2,047 families in a very remote area of Koh Sla, Chhouk District, Kampot Province. MEMISA, a small health oriented NGO operating in Kampot Town, has distributed rice to Stung Keo Commune in Kampot.
- { The WFP will carry out an assessment of food security and longer term needs in areas in Kampot where rice fields were damaged or washed away. Food-For-Work activities will be implemented as needed.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent action***

The CRC has been working with the Royal Cambodian Government to ensure the emergency needs of all victims are addressed. The CRC has been specifically requested to focus assistance efforts in the Kampot District of Kampot Province, one of the most heavily impacted areas. The following action has been taken by Red Cross in consultation and close co-operation with the NCDM and the RCG:

- { The Kampot Provincial Red Cross and Red Cross Volunteers (RCVs) coordinated with the provincial authorities and assisted in evacuating people at the beginning of the flood.
- { On 4 August, CRC senior level management and department heads drew up a plan of action to assist flood victims.
- { The First Vice-President of the Cambodian Red Cross accompanied by the Federation DP Delegate participated in a ministerial level meeting on 5 August, to organize and plan assessment and relief activities with other government ministries.
- { The CRC/Federation team went to Kampot on 6 August to plan and assist with its Provincial staff the Society's co-operation and co-ordination with NCDM assessment and relief activities.
- { On 6 August, the CRC took part in the Governor's meeting Kampot Province to share information and develop assessment plans and assistance strategies.
- { On 7 August, CRC sent a team from its HQ to assist the local branch and support assessment/relief activities in Kampot Province.
- { On 8 August, the CRC/Federation conducted a preliminary water and sanitation assessment in Kampot Town and nearby communities. On 10 August, CRC/Federation representatives accompanied the airlift to isolated Chhouk district village, conducted an aerial assessment of the flooding and collected information on health, water and sanitation issues.
- { The exchange of information and coordination with NCDM was maintained at HQ and Provincial level.
- { The CRC distributed relief supplies to 3,080 families in five communes of Kampot District, Kampot Province, on 12 August.
- { The CRC chaired an Emergency Response Group meeting for information exchange and planning initiatives on 13 August. Both NCDM and all major disaster response related organizations and agencies participated in the meeting (e.g. ECHO, USAID, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, OXFAM, PACT, ZOA, ADRA, ACF, LWS, JRCS, UCC).

## *Outstanding needs*

So far over 3,000 families have received CRC assistance to sustain them through the emergency. Follow up aid, including house repair materials as well as household goods, is now needed. Additionally, the flooding has damaged the basic infrastructure of community water supplies which will require repair or replacement.

Whilst pledges of funds have been received from the Japanese, Korean and Canadian Red Cross Societies, applications in relation to the Federation appeal have been submitted to ECHO, USAID and Italian Government. Some in-kind contributions (rice and clothing) have also been received in Phnom Penh.

The Cambodia Red Cross has drawn up the following plan:

- { Meeting in Kampot Town of government, NGOs and CRC to plan and coordinate recovery efforts today, 19 August.
- { Technical water and sanitation assessment in Kampot Districts by the Federation Water-Sanitation Delegate, in cooperation with CRC and district authorities from 18 to 21 August.
- { Post recovery assessment of additional needs.

- { Identification and training of Red Cross volunteers to initiate clean up campaigns.
- { Planning and coordination meeting with NCDM.
- { Assessment and distribution of donated relief supplies to additional identified victims.
- { Assessment of additional staff needs to assist Red Cross branch staff.

## ***External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media***

Cooperation and information sharing has been maintained with the Royal Cambodian Government and especially with the NCDM and provincial authorities, the Mekong River Commission, USAID, WFP, UCC, Memisa and others active in Kampot Province. The Emergency Response Group Meeting on 13 August provided a good forum for information sharing between the disaster response organizations.

The media has covered the floods in the coastal area extensively: the first Cambodian Red Cross distribution in Kampot District was on the TV news on all channels the same evening. Many articles also appeared in the local newspapers.

## ***Contributions***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

While floods in the worst affected areas have begun to recede, the continuous rain is keeping water levels dangerously high, threatening land that is already saturated. Furthermore, many of those affected still require very basic support. The government, a number of NGOs and the Cambodian Red Cross have responded with immediate relief assistance. However, the CRC stock of emergency kits is now depleted, and the distribution of further kits, the more detailed water and sanitation assessment and the dissemination of health messages still remains to be done. Further funding is therefore urgently sought, to ensure that the necessary assistance can be provided within the next few days.

For further information please consult the Asia and Pacific region website: [www.redcross-ap.ifrc.org](http://www.redcross-ap.ifrc.org)

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