

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Disaster Preparedness & Response and Capacity Building

17 March 1999

appeal no. 01.35/99

situation report no. 1

period covered: 1 January - 1 March

The Federation's operational support to the Papua New Guinea Red Cross for the Bougainville operation, the drought on the mainland and, more recently, the Aitape Tidal Wave Operation (July 1998) has played a key role not only in the delivery of short-term relief assistance but also in the process of increasing the Society's operational capacity. Opportunities for moving from relief to development activities are promising, but remain dependent on political and security developments. The health and education sector services still require financial and technical support.

The Context

The Federation has been supporting the Papua New Guinea Red Cross (PNG Red Cross) since 1993, specifically in relief operations on the conflict-ridden island of Bougainville and more recently during the drought on the mainland and the Aitape Tidal Wave Operation in July 1998.

In September 1998 the Federation increased its presence in PNG in order to provide more comprehensive support to the National Society. The Aitape post-disaster programme is an important part of the process of increasing the Society's operational capacity, which is also being enhanced through a continuation of last year's institutional development process.

The Federation / PNG Red Cross activities on Bougainville remain dependent on the political and security situation on the island. The planned projects and activities presume ongoing progress towards a lasting peace, and a steady reduction of emergency operations as carried out in 1996 and 1997, and to a lesser degree in 1998. With the peace process well advanced, opportunities for moving from relief to development activities are promising. The health and education sector services still require financial and technical support. This is a suitable area for Red Cross involvement in the coming year and projects have been designed accordingly.

Latest events

All registered branches of the PNG Red Cross Society have been conducting their Annual General Meetings during February and March. A representative of the National Executive committee as well as the Secretary General and one Federation delegate is attending every meeting to answer questions and provide support.

Bougainville

While the announcement of the formation of the Bougainville Constituent Assembly on 15 January was well received, significant political differences between Buka Island and mainland Bougainville have resurfaced, with some leadership elements now seeking the formation of an independent Buka. It is unclear how this impasse will be resolved, but it is unlikely to impact on present Red Cross activities, which are mainly in the central and southern districts of Bougainville.

Planning for the proposed elections in March 1999 of the Bougainville Reconciliation Government is underway, even though elections are not expected before July this year. The Peace Monitoring Group has announced that scaling down of its operations is likely to be effected from July 1999, in line with projected election dates.

Investigations into a possible influx of returnees to Bougainville from the Solomon Islands were conducted between 21 and 23 January. No support requirements were identified in PNG.

The security situation remains calm in Arawa, but there are considerable tensions between BRA factions in Telei and Siwai Districts which may impact on Village Resettlement Packs distributions to Buin area.

Aitape

The Aitape District Disaster Committee has been restructured following meetings with representatives of the National Disaster & Emergency Services (NDES) and the Prime Minister's Fund. The local magistrate has replaced the District Administrator as convenor and a secretariat has been established. Fortnightly meetings have been scheduled.

Heavy rain in the Aitape area has resulted in a consistent water supply in the resettled villages through the recently installed rainwater catchments.

The initial stages of the health and activity project were concluded with the conduct of the final health awareness workshop at the Pes Vocational Centre.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

COUNTRY WIDE PROGRAMME

Institutional & Programme Development and Capacity Building

The PNG Red Cross situation analysis was carried out from 22 January to 6 February (with the technical support of the Federation Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur) in order to assist in needs identification and the mapping of a medium to long term institutional development and capacity building

process. The outcome of the analysis was presented to the Executive Committee on 20 February 1999 and accepted by the Governing Council.

Strengthening PNG Red Cross Disaster Preparedness Capacity

With ongoing training in personnel management, increased first aid training, consolidation and concentration of all relief goods in the new warehouse in Lae and the establishment of a new storage and training facility in Port Moresby, the PNG Red Cross is moving towards a strengthening of its disaster capacity.

Community Based Self Reliance (CBSR)

As a prelude to the Community Based Self Reliance project, seven key National Society personnel completed a week long course in basic First Aid. These persons will be progressively trained to instructor level prior to implementation of the project within the target villages.

Disaster Response and Relief Centre (Lae)

The Red Cross Logistics Base in Lae is now operational in terms of administrative support, including sourcing, procurement and shipment of items. The PNG Red Cross/Federation got access to the new premises and have started some minor repairs and installation of utilities. It is planned that the Lae Logistics base will be fully operational towards the end of March.

Relief goods were transferred to Aitape (3,500 mosquito nets and 500 axes as well as water and sanitation equipment). 300 adzes for canoe-making are expected to arrive end March.

National Headquarters Office Space and Storage Facilities

The plans and designs for the renovation of the PNG Red Cross Headquarters were finalised and invitations to tender sent out. All the necessary government permits have been secured and the quantity survey has been completed. Construction works have thus commenced and should be completed by end July 1999.

BOUGAINVILLE ISLAND PROGRAMME

The health projects are continuing unimpeded, with the emphasis currently on training of aid post staff and procurement of aid post dressing equipment .

Community first aid training has commenced, with the first course being successfully run in Arawa and comprising of 28 students from 5 other districts. Basic assessment of water supply issues for Aid Posts is continuing, while the Trauma Counselling Project assessment forums were held in Arawa and Tonu.

Primary Health Care

The PHC project is proceeding well, with 14 medical kits distributed to nine Health Care Centres (HCC) and four Health Field visits made during the period to aid posts and health centres. The focus for the period has been on training development, with courses to upgrade levels of aid post staff competence scheduled for Wakunai, and Siwai in February and March respectively.

Village Resettlement Packs (VRP)

Distributions of the Village Resettlement Packs are currently underway in Siwai, and distribution plans have been finalised for Telei. The Wisai distribution details will be finalised in early March. Fulfilment of these distributions will see the completion of the main part of the project. Distribution to the Atolls, scheduled for April, and those few areas which were missed out in earlier planning will then complete the project.

In January 20 packs were distributed and 12 village assemblies supported. In February 10 packs were distributed to Telei, Central and Bana districts and 5 village assemblies were supported.

Community First Aid Training

Basic first aid training was successfully conducted in late January, in Arawa. Students from five districts on Bougainville participated in the course. All future courses will be run regionally with training staff drawn from the national society. The long term aim is the establishment of a trainers network in each district.

Obstetric Revision for Nurses & Traditional Birth Attendants Training

Identification of appropriately qualified staff is the current focus. Training is scheduled to begin later in the year.

Medical Equipment / Minor Equipment Maintenance

Equipment orders under the 1998 budget are virtually completed, but lead-times needed by suppliers may slightly delay finalisation of this element. The 1999 minor equipment maintenance project is in the preliminary planning stage. The project will provide ancillary support and training in servicing and repair of minor medical equipment, such as: generators, sterilisers, suction pumps, wheel chairs, theatre equipment, small motors and refrigerators.

Tuberculosis & Leprosy Officer Training

Initial planning discussions were held with the Department of Health regarding operational concepts for this project.

Mental Health

Planning for the 1998 component of this project is complete; the assessment phase began in early February with forums held in Arawa and Tonu. Development of the training manual and general programme resources has commenced, with the first training session scheduled for May 1999, subject to Education Department approval of the manual.

HIV/AIDS awareness project

This new programme aims to increase the dissemination of awareness and preventive strategies for HIV/AIDS in Bougainville region. The plan is to work in close consultation with relevant PNG Government departments, and use the existing government health and community infrastructure.

Safe Village Water Supplies

The assessment of water supplies needs of village aid posts is continuing to establish numbers and in anticipation of the arrival of the Federation Water and Sanitation delegate. Work on the 1998 project is likely to commence initially in the Telei and Siwai areas in south Bougainville, subject to security considerations and depending on how many sites are identified.

Production & Sale of Bougainville Crafts

This project has been abandoned in favour of the new HIV/AIDS project.

AITAPE TSUNAMI POST DISASTER PROGRAMME

Water & Sanitation

Drier than normal weather beginning in early January interrupted the rainy season, forcing residents to rely at times on water from open shallow wells when rain catchment supplies were not available. The situation was closely monitored and it was recommended that water intended for potable purposes be

boiled. This break in the wet season has however improved land and garden drainage in Barupu and Arop villages, producing a more hygienic environment.

The main water project, the installation of six rainwater collection tanks required for the remaining five months of the rainy season, is complete and plans are being formulated to install protected water wells during the dry season.

Assessments of possible water projects have been completed in Milne Bay, as a follow up to assessments carried out after the drought in 1998, and a plan of action is currently under consideration. To date, 310 latrines have been constructed in the Barupu and Arop 1 villages and fourteen 9,000L rain water catchment tanks have been installed in Barupu, Arop 1, Ramu and Pou villages.

Community Health Promotion and Awareness

Those persons identified during assessments last year as having on-going pain, infected injuries, restricted movement and disabilities requiring physiotherapy have been followed up as part of efforts to establish a Disability Outreach Service. On the job training was carried out for those health team members who will be responsible for continuing the service, as well as giving demonstrations for patients' family members and neighbours, aid post workers and others.

At the same time, the team continued with Community Health Promotion and Awareness activities, prepared for the remaining training workshops and attempted to carry out ongoing distribution of sago beaters and canoe scrapers. Visits to Rainbrum, Wipom, Rowoi and Wauroin by boat were postponed for safety reasons because of reports of high seas at the entrance to the Sissano lagoon.

The community based health workshops which commenced on 11 November 1998 were concluded on 25 February 1999. Representatives from eleven out of the twelve resettled villages participated and subjects included basic health education on the prevention of diarrhoea, malaria, skin diseases; improving children's nutrition; awareness of the need to identify a healthy, culturally accepted village location for women during menstruation, rather than using the unhealthy swamps; HIV/Aids and village birth awareness. Environmental factors in relation to the Sissano lagoon, trees, drainage, and potential river/lagoon pollution from the washing of mosquito nets were discussed. Also included was practical instruction on bread making over an open fire place, nutritious cooking, sewing machine maintenance and basic consumer education.

Nutrition Assessment

The report of the Nutritional Needs Assessment has been presented to the National Society and a follow up survey will be undertaken during March.

The ban on fishing in the Sissano lagoon imposed by the Provincial Health authorities remains in effect. Recent samples of marine life taken from the lagoon indicate heavy bacterial contamination and there are no plans to lift the ban in the near future. The situation will continue to be monitored by the authorities, but in the meantime concerns continue regarding protein sources, currently being covered through the distribution of tinned meat and fish.

There has been no decision as to when the food distribution will cease but it is expected to occur within the next 1-2 months. The Aitape District Disaster Committee has requested that the proposed follow-up

nutrition assessment be carried out after the distributions cease and has given an undertaking to provide advance notice of the date of the last distribution.

Outstanding needs

During 1998, it proved difficult to start a number of programmes for Bougainville because of the late arrival of funds and delegates. The Tidal Wave disaster in July 1998 contributed to a change of focus in the operations and thus to a delay in the implementation of the 1998 emergency appeal programme.

Slow logistics procedures have been experienced in the field to obtain the right goods and have them shipped to the targeted areas. The fragile security situation has also hampered operations.

All the groundwork to find solutions has now been done and a number of delegates have arrived to provide additional support. Steady progress in the implementation of several projects is now evident, but due to the above mentioned reasons 1998 programmes are only just ending and most 1999 commitments are behind schedule.

Planning for the 1999 Bougainville programme has commenced, but requires a more detailed study before final implementation processes can be determined. Cuts to the original appeal budget are foreseen and a budget revision for this particular programme is under way.

The Aitape post-disaster programme on the contrary is proceeding well and on schedule, thanks to funds carried over from the previous appeal no. 22/98. Additional cash contributions are still required to support the new programme.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

Countrywide

The New Zealand ODA have introduced new programme staff for Bougainville on several occasions, and the PNGRCS Bougainville operation is being used as the focal point for standardisation and co-ordination of services.

In Bougainville

Extensive liaison with political parties, government departments and other NGOs has taken place to facilitate implementation of programmes, particularly in the area of aid post support and trauma counselling for teachers. This has primarily involved the BTG and BIG health and education administrators. Detailed discussions have also been held with the Bougainville Trauma Counselling Institute and Caritas concerning the trauma counselling project.

Contacts with the principal District Health personnel on matters of community health, water and sanitation are being maintained. MSF ceased operations at the end of December, so that currently only Red Cross and Community Aid Abroad remain actively engaged in water and sanitation projects.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for list of contributions.

In Aitape, MSF donated four concrete well liners, one concrete lid, and a hand-pump for use in the Red Cross water project upon its departure. Ten tarpaulins were donated by Global Care and are currently being stored at the Red Cross office.

Conclusion

All projects are now in full swing, and with the arrival of the Water and Sanitation delegate for Bougainville there will be a full complement of delegates for the first time ever to support the PNG Red Cross activities and projects.

With the general improvement in security in the Central District of Bougainville, the programme is proceeding largely unimpeded. The 1998 VRP project is nearing completion and the training and equipment support to aid posts staff is having an impact.

In spite of the general lull in activities at the year's end, the operation in Aitape is proceeding satisfactorily with continued progress in both water and sanitation and community health. The outreach disability service is now capable of continuing as a component of the community based health project. The extent of the nutritional problems in Aitape will be assessed during a follow up survey in March and the distribution of fishing equipment and canoe building tools, currently being procured, will enable people to resume their traditional means of harvesting protein.

The production of a Plan of Action following the assessments of water and sanitation needs in Milne Bay will lead to the implementation of long awaited projects.

Peter Rees-Gildea
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PAPUA NEW GUINEA

**ANNEX
1**

APPEAL No. 01.35/99

**PLEDGES
RECEIVED**

03/17/99

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL				4,807,775	01/01/99	9.33%
AMERICAN - RC		200,000	USD	283,300	02/09/99	Aitape program
HONG KONG - RC				7,210	01/18/99	Aitape program
NEW ZEALAND - RC				89,848	01/28/99	Aitape program
SINGAPORE - RC		10,488	SIND	8,442	02/02/99	Aitape program
JAPAN - RC		5,000,000	JPY	60,000	02/25/99	Aitape program
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				448,800 CHF		9.33%

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

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				0.00 CHF		0.00%

**NOT REQUESTED IN
APPEAL**

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0.00 CHF		