

# ***MOZAMBIQUE: FLOODS***

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## ***Information Bulletin N° 1***

### ***The Disaster***

Flash floods wrecked havoc in Mozambique after the river Umbeluzi burst its banks the night of Friday 5 February, killing 20 people, destroying two bridges between the towns of Boane and Moamba and cutting roads to the borders with South Africa and Swaziland. Railway services between Maputo and Zimbabwe have also been damaged by heavy flood waters. Homes and thousands of acres of land have also been destroyed rendering some 100,000 people homeless. The most affected areas are in Maputo province (Matutuine, Manhica, Magude and Marracuene) and Gaza province (Chibuto, Chokwe and Mabalane). Most of these areas, including a string of Mpumalanga towns along the Crocodile river in South Africa, are without drinking water after pumps and water purification plants were swept away by floods. Health authorities are on alert for potential cholera and diarrhoea outbreaks. This is the rainy season in Southern Africa, and it is anticipated that more rains will continue unabated in the coming days. The Government of Mozambique has requested technical assistance from their counterparts in South Africa.

The Central Government chaired a coordination meeting today (Wednesday, 9 February) comprised of key Government line ministries (Health and Transport), NGOs and key donors. The aim was to coordinate the delivery of relief aid to the affected persons. The Government will declare a national disaster in the flood-devastated areas. The Secretary General of the Mozambique Red Cross Society (MRCS) is participating in the Coordination Meeting, and an update of the situation is expected to be released in the evening.

Flooding has also been reported in South Africa's Northern Province killing at least 16 people after houses and bridges were destroyed by flood waters. It is estimated that some 200 people have been left homeless as a result.

### ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

CHF 100,000 has been released today from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) in support of this operation. Red Cross branches in Maputo city and Maputo province were actively involved from the onset. It has been difficult, however, to gather Red Cross volunteers as most of them are also flood victims and do not have means of getting out of the affected areas. With support from the Federation Delegation in Mozambique, emergency coordination meetings have been held in MRCS Headquarters comprising of health, social, disaster and finance sectors.

The main areas of Red Cross intervention will be: mobilisation of the population from high risk areas to safer zones, carrying out public health education campaigns, provision of emergency first-aid treatment,

water treatment and purification, supply and distribution of relief items, provision of tracing services, and offering psychological support to the affected persons. Training of Red Cross staff and volunteers in the areas of disaster preparedness will continue. The Regional WATSAN Delegate is now in the country. The Regional Delegation in Harare will continue to provide technical assistance to both the MRCS and the Federation Country Delegation in Mozambique.

It is expected that the MRCS will participate in a joint assessment mission to various sites in Maputo and Gaza provinces, comprising WHO, FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture, USAID as well as other donors.

## *Needs*

It is anticipated that with Federation support at both the regional and country level, the immediate needs of the affected population will be met by the locally available resources. However, an Appeal is expected to be launched in the coming days once a clearer assessment of needs are known.

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