

# INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies  
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge  
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja  
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعية الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

## ZAMBIA: CHOLERA

25 November 2004

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.

### In Brief

This Information Bulletin (no. 1/2004) is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. CHF 50,000 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The Federation does not anticipate further needs. Un-earmarked funds to repay DREF are needed. This operation will be reported on through the DREF update.

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### The Situation

With the onset of the rainy season, two confirmed and 20 suspected cases of cholera have occurred in Lusaka and have been admitted to two cholera centres. In Sinazongwe, the Buleya Malima health centre has confirmed 13 cases of cholera; of these, two patients have died. There have been unconfirmed reports of cholera cases in Kabwe and Choma districts.

The outbreak of cholera is associated with the onset of the rainy season in Zambia. With the continuing rains it is likely that, without an effective and rapid response, the outbreak will become an epidemic. The Lusaka District Health Management Team (DHMT) has opened five cholera centres and is appealing for a coordinated response from the Red Cross and other partners to control the outbreak before it reaches epidemic levels. In Sinazongwe the DHMT has established two cholera centres. At the central level, the government has put the National Epidemic Preparedness Committee on alert; the Zambia Red Cross Society<sup>1</sup> is a member of this committee.

<sup>1</sup> Zambia Red Cross Society – <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=12>

The outbreaks have occurred in poor, high-density, peri-urban areas with unsafe water supplies, inadequate sanitation and poor hygienic conditions. These are the underlying causes of the outbreak; the rains exacerbated these conditions and sparked the outbreak.

### **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

- The national society cholera taskforce has been convened and is managing the response in coordination with the Ministry of Health and other partners. The Red Cross has implemented successful cholera prevention and control activities in the past and is using its experience in this action.
- An assessment to determine the needs and an appropriate Red Cross response has been carried out in Lusaka and Sinazongwe, in those areas where there have been cases.
- 100 volunteers have been mobilized in the areas affected by the outbreak (Lusaka and Sinazongwe) and in areas that were previously prone to outbreaks (Kabwe, Mpulungu, Nchelenge, Kaputa and Choma).
- 20 volunteers have been trained in cholera prevention and control activities and they are using their skills to train the other volunteers.
- The volunteers are involved in cholera prevention and control activities. These include: promoting proper hygiene and sanitation; promoting the use of safe water and the disinfection of water at the household level; actively identifying cases and referring them to health centres; and preventing dehydration.
- The Red Cross is working with Ministry of Health community-based health neighbourhood committees in this response.

### **Cooperation**

The Zambia Red Cross is working with the following organizations as part of the coordinated effort to combat the spread of cholera.

- District Health Management Board (DHMT) is establishing latrines in affected areas, procuring drugs, improving hygiene at food and drink vendor outlets, providing health education to families affected, and coordinating the cholera response of all agencies.
- Japanese International Cooperation Agency is putting up latrines and water points. They are providing transport, a public address system and chlorine to the Ministry of Health.
- Médecins sans Frontières are providing drugs and medical personnel to complement government efforts.
- Lusaka city council is inspecting public places such as schools and markets, and carrying out environmental cleaning, and disinfection in the community and enforcing the public health act.
- Zambia Police are supporting the council to enforce the public health act.

### **Needs**

- A continuation of the activities detailed above is required. To do this effectively supplies of, for example disinfectant, oral rehydration salts, hygiene promotion materials and soap are required.
- Additional volunteer training and support to the volunteers' response.
- Red Cross staff needs to continue to monitor the situation and to manage and coordinate the response.
- The Ministry of Health has put out request for cholera kits and assistance with logistics to control the outbreak. The situation will be monitored and assistance provided by the Red Cross if not forthcoming from other sources.

To continue and expand this cholera prevention and control response as detailed above, emergency funds are required for supplies, logistics and the management and coordination of the response. A DREF contribution of CHF 50,000 has been allocated to address these immediate needs.

### **Impact**

The expected impact of the action is the prevention and control of cholera to the extent that there is no epidemic. Additionally the Red Cross will build its capacity to respond to disease outbreak and the community will receive education on how to prevent similar outbreaks in the future.

**Zambia: Cholera; Information Bulletin no. 1/2004**

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*For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeals for Zambia:*

- 2004 Annual Appeal no. 01.19/2004 - [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?annual04/011904.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual04/011904.pdf)
- 2005 Annual Appeal no. 05AA016 - [http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf\\_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA016.pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA016.pdf)

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