

NIGER: FLOODS

8 December 1998

Information Bulletin N° 02 (final)

The Disaster

During the first week of August, 1998, torrential rains fell in several localities in Niger, particularly affecting the capital Niamey, as well as Kantché (located more than 900 kilometres from the capital). Over the course of two days, two hundred millimetres of rain fell in Niamey, causing widespread damage to the infrastructure. Roads, public buildings, and housing in the outlying areas were seriously damaged. Water pipes were destroyed in some districts, disrupting the provision of drinking water for the population. In all 3,971 families (over 20,000 people), more than 67% of whom live in Niamey, lost their homes. The stagnating waters have provided a fertile area for mosquitos, increasing the threat of malaria and diarrhoeal diseases among the stricken population.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

Following a preliminary evaluation, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies requested contributions to enable the Red Cross of Niger to help 330 families, comprising 2,000 persons (i.e. 10% of the total number of disaster victims).

The Netherlands Red Cross responded to most of the needs, and the German and the Danish Red Cross contributed 290 tents. The European Union and the French Red Cross plan to provide ECU 60,000 to purchase medicine to combat malaria, and to provide the population with health education for a period of one month focusing on malarial prevention and treatment.

The Red Cross of Niger initially mobilized 15 volunteers in Niamey and Zinder, and subsequently recruited 50 more to strengthen the team.

Each family received:

- { 100 kilos of millet;
- { 6 blankets;
- { 6 mosquito nets;
- { tools and reconstruction materials;

Government Action

The government of Niger launched an appeal for international assistance in order to cope with the disaster. Victims were sheltered in classrooms, but other solutions had to be sought when school resumed

in October. In Niamey, communal governments opted for various solutions. In some areas, for example, officials chose to house the victims on the site of the disaster where family and neighbours could play a major supportive role. In other communes, victims were sheltered in "Maison des Samaria" reception centres.

Needs

All needs detailed in Information Bulletin No.1 were met. The planned contribution of 60,000 ECU from ECHO/French Red Cross will allow for an additional assistance programme for victims of malaria, consisting of both curative and preventive measures.

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and
Reporting Department

Bekele Geleta
Director
Africa Department