

SRI LANKA: FLOODS

14 January 1999

Information Bulletin N° 02

The Disaster

The heavy rain subsided over the past several days, bringing a drop in flooding levels through run-off and evaporation. In total, nine districts experienced significant flooding. Governmental authorities estimate the number of families displaced by the flooding at 30,000 (approximately 107,000 people). While thousands remain in emergency shelters set up in schools and other public buildings, many have begun repairing their damaged houses and returning home.

Damage to crops is still estimated to be significant but it is too early to know what the longer term impact will be on the affected population. Irrigation systems, including water storage tanks must be examined once water levels reach a point that makes a thorough inspection feasible.

| DISTRICT | DIVISIONS | SLRCS BENEFICIARIES | IDENTIFIED NEEDS |
|--|--|--|---|
| AMPARA Affected families 4,125 SLRCS beneficiaries 400* | Akkarapathuwa Dehiaththakandiya Lahugala Padiyathalawa Panama Pothuwil | 12 115 150 123 | mats kitchen utensils bedsheets |
| BATTICALOA Affected families 9,324 SLRCS beneficiaries 611 | Eravurpattuwa Kaththankudi Koralepathu Koralepathu West Manmurai East Manmurai North Manmurai West displaced camp | 340 69 152 50 | mats kitchen utensils bed sheets soap milk powder |
| BADULLA Affected families 350 | Mahiyangana | <i>no request received from branch or government authorities</i> | |
| MANNAR Affected families 3,000** SLRCS beneficiaries 500* | not yet determined | not yet determined | not yet determined |
| POLONNARUWA Affected families 2,000 SLRCS beneficiaries*** 600 | Dimbulagala Lankapura Thamankaduwa | 400 100 100 | mats kitchen utensils bedsheets |

| | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------|--|
| Affected families 9,786 | Ichilampathai Kadawathsathara Kanthale | 125 | kitchen utensils bedsheets |
| SLRCS beneficiaries 460 | Kinnya Muthur Padavi SriPura Seruwavila Thambalagamuwa Trincomalee | 82 75 78 100 | |
| VAVUNIYA**** Affected families 2,312 | Vavuniya Vavuniya North Vavuniya South (Sinhala) | 300 235 | tarpaulins mats kitchen utensils soap |
| SLRCS beneficiaries 1000 | Vanuniya South (Tamil) Vengalchettikuum | 240 225 | milk, food bed sheets |

**estimated - assessment on-going*

***estimated - no data available from branch or Social Services*

**** estimated by District Secretary - no active SLRCS branch*

*****includes cleared and uncleared areas*

Sri Lanka Red Cross Action

The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) has completed preliminary assessments in most areas and is distributing emergency aid. More in-depth assessments are under way. The SLRCS headquarters has gathered statistics from its branches, the District Secretaries, and Social Services. At the district and local level, as part of the selection of beneficiaries, SLRCS paid staff and volunteers will go door to door to assess damage to homes and will interview those still living in the shelters. One of the main determining factors is the financial and physical ability of the family to recover from the flooding. Only the most seriously affected areas are being targeted for aid. To date, the SLRCS has identified 1,671 families that meet the criteria. It estimates at least 1,900 more will be added to the rolls (total approximately 12,700 people).

Procurement is underway. Branches with trucks have been requested to pick up relief stocks in Colombo. Additional trucks are being hired for branches without this type of transportation. In addition, instructions have gone out for distributions: they include certification of signed distribution lists (by beneficiaries) by the branches and by Divisional Secretaries who will be invited to attend distribution ceremonies in keeping with cultural norms.

ICRC has contributed 2000 roles of plastic sheeting of which 1000 are being distributed in the Trincomalee District.

Needs

SLRCS has identified the following needs:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|
| Plastic mats | | 7142 |
| Kitchen utensil sets | 3089 | |
| Bedsheets - sets | | 6581 |
| Bathing soap - bars | | 3122 |
| Milk powder - 400 gm packets | 1196 | |
| Tarpaulins/plastic sheeting rolls | | 1000 |

CHF 65,000 has been transferred to the SLRCS from the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), allowing the operation to move forward. A further CHF 35,000 has been made available. National Societies however are encourage to assist the SLRCS with this operation estimated to cost CHF 180,000. The Society is working diligently to improve its institutional capacity and to provide better services to its beneficiaries but funds are needed to support this operation. In its 1999 Emergency Appeal, the Federation has outlined its requirements for critical development of the capacity of the SLRCS to respond to such disasters.

A number of the SLRCS staff working in the flood operation have attended disaster preparedness workshops facilitated by the Federation. This type of disaster highlights the need to continue supporting SLRCS efforts to increase the disaster preparedness skills of its staff. In addition to support for the relief operation, the Federation Representative for Sri Lanka and the Federation's South Asia Regional Delegation will provide additional training in disaster preparedness and response, financial management and reporting, and information services. The flood relief operation will provide a real life scenario on which to build the workshops.

For further information please contact the Desk Officer, Kris Hurlburt at 41.22.730.42.69 or hurlburt@ifrc.org

Peter Rees-Gildea
Director
Operations Funding and Reporting Department

Hiroshi Higashiura
Director
Asia & Pacific Department