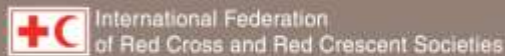


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Information bulletin

Maldives/South Asia: Water crisis



Information bulletin n°2

Date of issue: 6 December 2014

This bulletin is being issued for further information as well as setting the basis for a DREF request to fund continued humanitarian assistance required in the coming days. It reflects the current situation, gaps and response operation required for the affected population. The Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC), with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has principally decided to make a DREF request to provide and scale up assistance to the population affected by the disaster.

The situation

A fire broke out on Thursday, 4 December 2014 at 13:40 hr inside the Maldives Water and Sewerage Company (MWSC)'s Generator Unit and has disrupted Male' City's water supply. Due to lack of technical expertise, spare parts is not available in the country and have to be sourced from other countries, the resume of water supplies is likely to take at least one week.

The government of Maldives has officially requested Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) for safe drinking water supplies, jerry cans or water containers and desalination units. Two delegates from IFRC delegation in Sri Lanka will be deployed to Maldives to support the MRC response operation.

Although the population of Male' is estimated at 153,000, secondary information sources indicate that due to large scale migrant population, this figure is estimated at around 300,000. Water has been distributed to the people with appropriate documentation and ID cards. The expatriate population especially migrant workers, mostly illegal, have not been given sufficient quantity of water and are deemed to be more vulnerable in the coming days.

About 150 MRC volunteers are working tirelessly round the clock, in rotation, to support the government for water distribution.

India, Sri Lanka, the USA and China have pledged support with water supplies which started arriving since yesterday, 5 December with more supplies arriving in the coming days.

There were reports of people and business establishments using water from contaminated sources (wells). The water – not properly stored or treated – which is used for their daily needs heightens potential health risk.

The following actions have been taken by different government and non-governmental agencies:

Government of Maldives:

Emergency Task Force lead by Defence Minister was formed to lead the operation. The Task Force has assigned Maldives National Defence Force to execute the Operation.

Maldives Police Service (MPS):

MPS is providing human resources to ensure security at the distribution points.

Maldives Customs Services:

Aside from the 70 tons distributed on 5 December, Customs have reserved 200 tons of water.

The Scout Association of Maldives and Guide Association of Maldives:

Scouts and Guides are providing human resources to the water distributions sites.

Health Protection Agency (HPA):

The HPA is monitoring the situation closely for potential health hazards. They are preparing information, education and communication (IEC) materials in different locally spoken languages - Dhivehi, English, etc. - to generate awareness on health hazards. HPA has requested MRC to assist in awareness promotion activities.

United Nations Maldives:

In-country UN agencies are distributing 180 tons of reserve rain water from the UN building.

Government of India:

Water supplies by air craft and ships have arrived at Male' from the Indian government with more supplies expected to arrive in the coming days.

Government of Sri Lanka:

Sri Lankan government has provided 5.6 tons of water via air shipments.

Government of China:

Chinese government is sending a ship loaded with 90,000 tons of water to Maldives.

Government of Singapore:

Singapore Government has provided technical experts to resolve the concerns at the water treatment plant due to the fire accident.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

About 150 volunteers of Male' branch National Emergency Response Team (NERT) and Emergency Response Team (ERT) volunteers are assisting the government at the water distribution points. MRC is monitoring the situation and is working in close coordination with the government and IFRC in response and relief efforts. DREF is expected to be launched soon.

Technical options of the appropriate water treatment suitable for Male' context are being explored. Human resources such as Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) have been informed. The WatSan RDRT members are on standby for deployment. Technical expertise from IFRC delegation in Sri Lanka will be deployed to Maldives to provide support to MRC in the operation.

IFRC South Asia Regional Delegation and the Asia Pacific Zone Office are working with MRC to support the relief and response efforts. DREF request is presently being considered.



Maldivian Red Crescent volunteers mobilized for the response operation. (Photo by MRC)

Contact information

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, **encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives.
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**
and a culture of
non-violence and **peace.**