

# ***Federated States of Micronesia: Cholera Outbreak***

**Appeal no:16/2000**  
16 June 2000

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 383,421 IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 32,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 3 MONTHS***

## ***Summary***

A State of emergency exists in the Federated States of Micronesia due to an outbreak of cholera. The Micronesia Red Cross, a Society in formation, is responding to the emergency to the best of its abilities.

The Society has primary responsibility for community and public education regarding prevention, early detection and early treatment of, cholera. In addition, they are committed to distributing water containers to every household on the main island of Pohnpei to ensure safe water supplies.

The actions and activities of the Red Cross are paramount to reducing the spread of the disease and reducing the fatalities.

Without further injection of funds and other resources, the Society will be unable to respond to the emergency to its fullest potential.

## ***The Disaster***

The Governor of the State of Pohnpei in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) declared a state of emergency on 10 May after 29 cholera cases were hospitalised in less than a week. At the same time, an outbreak of intestinal flu in the island affected 100 people.

As of 1 June 2000, over 600 cases had been reported, of which 207 required hospital admission. There have been 5 recorded deaths due to cholera of which 3 could have been prevented if the patient had understood the importance of early rehydration or had attended a health facility for treatment.

In one 24 hour period (5 June) 36 people went to the hospital, of whom 15 required admission - the largest figure in 24 hours since the start of the outbreak.

The total population of Pohnpei, one of the four main islands of the FSM and the site of its capital, is approximately 36,500. The suspected area of original contamination is the municipality of Kitti. Cholera has been recorded in all the municipalities on the island and some cases have now been confirmed on the outer islands. This represents a threatened population of approximately 32,000.

The Pohnpei State authorities have been conducting tests on water supplies on the island. There are a total of 24 water systems, only 2 of which the Environment Protection Agency, USA (EPA) considers to be 'safe'. The remainder are fed from rivers and streams into water reservoirs and then forwarded to houses, often via a cracked and broken piping system. These pipes often pass by pit latrines and pig pens.

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

The Federation has released CHF 25,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to for the purchase of a cholera kit which is now in transit to FSM, as well as to refund the MRCS for funds and resources utilised to date.

The Suva Regional Delegation is working closely with the Society providing technical assistance. The Regional Health Delegate has been assisting the trained community first aiders in preparing a health education campaign.

An Australian Red Cross Health Delegate, seconded to the Federation, is working with the Society; together they have carried out a needs assessment on which this appeal is based.

The Micronesia Red Cross Society (MRCS) is a member of the Governor's Task Force on Cholera which was established to oversee and direct the implementation of processes to contain and prevent the spread of the disease. It is also a member of the Hospital Task Force.

## ***The Response so far***

### **Government Action w**

The Governor declared a State of Emergency on 19 May 2000, establishing a task force charged with preventing and containing the spread of cholera. A number of actions have been taken by the Government including the closure of all 'Sakau' bars (a traditional drink similar to Kava from Fiji); the closure of schools until they are able to meet sanitation requirements and the prohibition of all non-licensed food vendors.

The Hospital is utilising one section of its medical ward as an isolation ward for all people admitted with cholera. The EPA is conducting a survey of water systems, household water systems and toilet facilities.

As schools have been closed, teachers are being trained to assist with house to house teaching sessions by the MRCS.

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

As a member of the Task Force, MRCS has assisted the State by:

- training MRCS volunteers on the prevention and early treatment of cholera so that they can disseminate this information to the general public. Training takes place three times per week;
- organising daily house to house visits by teams. Usually two teams, consisting of one team leader and five team members, go out each day. So far 500 houses have been visited, concentrating on the municipalities of Kitti and Sokehs. Briefing and debriefing sessions occur each day to ensure that the volunteers are kept up to date and can clarify issues that may have surfaced;

- carrying out community education sessions following requests by Traditional Leaders. Five have been held so far and many more are planned;
- gathering information for the EPA on households' toilet facilities, to assist with future planning. So far 650 households have been identified as requiring new toilets.
- distributing water containers to households that have no facility to store clean water. Thus far 22 have been distributed, but it is planned to do a general distribution to all households. These water containers were taken from the MRCS disaster preparedness container funded by the Japanese Red Cross;
- distributing 780 (one litre) bottles of lactated ringers and 300 (10 ml) containers of potassium chloride to the local hospital to assist with the treatment of severely dehydrated patients;
- distributing bleach to schools, households and the hospital (190 gallons distributed from the 350 purchased thus far);
- demonstrating to communities and households how to set up the '3 bucket system' for hand-washing and how to make ORS;
- the cholera kit purchased through the Federation DREF fund has been shipped and is currently in use; and
- producing a poster, banner and billboard to be place in relevant sites regarding cholera prevention and treatment.

An Australian Red Cross Health Delegate arrived on 26 May to assist the National Society in assessing the current situation and future needs. An initial assessment has taken place and the delegate is now working closely with the Society and all appropriate authorities on implementing and increasing activities;

Two vehicles are used by the teams running community education programs. One of these vehicles has been donated by the Kanagawa Chapter, Japanese Red Cross and the other is hired on a daily basis.

#### **Other Agencies' Action w**

The EPA has undertaken, with assistance from the MRCS, a survey households and their water and sewerage systems. The hospital is treating and admitting affected people. An Emergency Response Team from the USA set up a fully operational hospital, for approximately one week with 24 staff. WHO Regional Office Suva, is investigating the possibility of technical assistance, in co-ordination with the Ministry of Health.

#### **Co-ordination w**

The overall co-ordination is undertaken by the task force created by the State Governor, which meets daily. The meetings bring together the MRCS, the Department of Health, Environmental Protection Authority, Public Utilities Corporation, Attorney General, US Embassy, Department of Education, Construction Management Department, College of Micronesia-FSM and the Port Authority.

## ***The Intended Operation***

#### **Assessment of Needs •**

A full scale assessment will be undertaken by the authorities in the near future. However at present, the Federation Health Delegate has undertaken an assessment of the MRCS's lead role in community and public education.

**Immediate Needs •**

The immediate needs are to:

- formalise and extend the community education sessions;
- distribute 5 gallon water containers to all households on the island of Pohnpei; undertake a media campaign to inform the community that the MRCS has vehicles available to transport people with symptoms of cholera to health facilities; and
- extend the contract of the Health Delegate a further three months.

**Anticipated Later Needs •**

It is anticipated that later needs will be to ensure that all water sources are adequate and safe (the EPA is working on this). DP containers needs to be restocked as their contents are being distributed now.

**Red Cross Objectives •**

To immediately extend and continue community and public education sessions on the prevention and early treatment of cholera.

To immediately distribute 5 gallon water containers to each household on the main island.

To assist the Government Hospital with medical supplies where and when necessary.

## ***National Society/Federation Plan of Action***

***Activities******The MRCS will:***

- broaden and increase public and community education efforts to reach specific targets. For example, specific and culturally acceptable teaching sessions are planned for the traditional leaders and church groups to ensure that all levels of the community are reached and the prevention campaign is reinforced;
- continue to liaise and work in close collaboration with the Task Force and the communities to establish community needs in regard to the cholera outbreak;
- purchase and distribute water containers, and if necessary buckets, to ensure that houses have access to clean and safe water for drinking and daily activities such as food preparation, hand and dish washing;
- distribute posters, banners and billboards to increase the knowledge in the community of the prevention and early treatment of cholera;

**Capacity of the National Society**

The Micronesia Red Cross Society is a Society in formation with its headquarters in Kolonia, Pohnpei. It has three employees. Chapters with interim committees have been established in Kosrae and Pohnpei. Work is underway to establish Chapters in both Yaap and Chuuk States (thus covering the four main islands). The Society has an active volunteer base of some 40 volunteers. Institutional Development so far has been funded by the Kanagawa Chapter of the Japanese Red Cross. The Society is very much in its infancy and requires substantial financial and resources assistance.

**Present Capacity of the Federation in Suva**

The Regional Delegation in Suva has at present 6 expatriate staff: HoRD, Health Delegate, Institutional Development Delegate, Resource Development Delegate, Disaster Preparedness (trainee) Delegate and Logistics Delegate. It also has 3 National staff: a finance officer, administration officer and secretary.

**Evaluation**

A survey and assessment tool has been developed by the Federation Delegate and this will enable close monitoring of the programme by the Delegate, MRCS staff and the Regional Delegation. A review will be completed once the outbreak is contained.

***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

***Conclusion***

The MRCS is the only organisation with stocks of relief supplies and human and other resources that can be mobilised rapidly. Moreover, as an active participant and contributor to the Government's taskforce, the Society is in a position to effectively and efficiently undertake community and public education on prevention and early treatment of cholera. Donors are urged to provide immediate support so that efforts already underway can continue and be expanded, as outlined above.

Jean Ayoub  
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**This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>**

<b>RELIEF NEEDS</b>	<b>IN CHF</b>	
Clothing & textiles	23,559	
Food & seeds	680	
Water	1,020	
Medical & first aid (Medicine & cholera kits)	25,000	
Utensils & tools (jerry cans - buckets)	118,320	
Other relief supplies	3,842	
Transport storage & vehicle costs	39,105	
<b>TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS</b>		<b>211,526</b>
<b>CAPITAL EQUIPMENT</b>		
Telecom equipment	24,290	
<b>PROGRAMME SUPPORT</b>		
Programme management (automatic calculation)	25,854	
Technical support (automatic calculation)	7,739	
Professional services (automatic calculation)	8,583	
<b>PERSONNEL</b>		
Expatriate staff (1 delegate / 3 months)	30,000	
National staff	29,862	
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; GENERAL SERVICES</b>		
Travel & related expenses	18,282	
Information expenses	20,400	
Administrative & general expenses	6,885	
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS</b>		<b>171,895</b>
<b>TOTAL APPEAL CASH, KIND, SERVICES</b>		<b>383,421</b>
<b>LESS AVAILABLE RESOURCES (-)</b>		<b>0</b>
<b>NET REQUEST</b>		<b>383,421</b>