

OPERATIONS UPDATE



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 لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CUBA: HURRICANES ISIDORE AND LILI

31 March 2003

This Ops Update is intended for reporting on emergency appeals.

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 178 countries. For more information: www.ifrc.org

Appeal No. 29/2002

Launched on 8 October for CHF 597,000 for 6 months for 10,000 beneficiaries

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: N/A

Beneficiaries: 10,000

Operations Update No. 1;

Period covered: 9 October - 30 November 2002

Next Update no. 2 expected: March 2003

IN BRIEF

Appeal coverage: 75.2%

Related Appeals: 01.49/2003: Caribbean regional programmes; 01.47/2003 Pan American Disaster Response Unit

Outstanding needs: CHF 148,056

Summary: The Cuban Red Cross (CRC), in close cooperation with the state authorities, has ensured rapid and effective response to the disaster in the wake of hurricanes Isidore and Lili, which hit the island in late September and early October 2002 respectively. Thorough needs assessments have taken place and distributions of mattresses and relief items initiated. A major component of the appeal is related to shelter, whereby affected vulnerable families will be provided with zinc roofing sheets to repair or rebuild damaged housing, with the assistance of the communities and Red Cross volunteers. To date, 1,700 zinc sheets have been distributed in the municipality of Minas de Matahambre in the province of Pinar del Río, one of the regions most affected. Appeal funds will also facilitate the strengthening of the response capacity of the Pinar del Río branch through the purchase of radio communications equipment. The operation is progressing according to schedule, with the exception of delays incurred as a result of the fact that the appeal target has yet to be met.

Operational Developments w

In a period of ten days in late September and early October 2002, Cuba was hit by two major hurricanes - Isidore and Lili - causing heavy rain and winds of over 100 mph (175 kph), with stronger gusts. Thanks to prompt and well organized evacuation procedures and shelter management, no deaths or injuries were reported as a result of the hurricanes. Nevertheless, in the province of Pinar del Río, 75,276 houses were damaged, of which 14,790 were totally destroyed and the roofing of 35,499 was ripped away. The western provinces and the Isle of Youth were also affected with damage to infrastructure and over 4,000 houses. Many families lost all their belongings as well as their houses, whilst others have now been able to return to their homes. Damage to agriculture is considerable, as well as to basic potable water and electricity services. The recovery phase is on-going and consists of a process whereby the Cuban authorities implement reconstruction activities and provide support to those affected through the distribution of food for people who are housed by host families. The Cuban Red Cross is a major partner of the government, accelerating the reconstruction process and assisting the families which were most affected by the disaster.

Humanitarian assistance in the framework of this appeal is being provided by the Cuban Red Cross municipal branches with the support of the provincial offices and the supervision of the headquarters. To date, the Cuban Red Cross has focused on the purchase of relief goods. The National Society is also working with government organizations to carry out evaluations of damage to houses and other buildings and in the compilation of beneficiary lists. Psychological support has also been a significant part of the National Society's work, together with ensuring hygienic conditions in shelters and streets in San Juan, San Luis, Guane and Pinar del Río. Support to the hospital system has consisted essentially in the loan of two generators, one for the hospital which is caring for AIDS patients and a second which was allocated to the inter municipal hospital of Guane. These generators were purchased with funds from the Spanish Red Cross, given that some 251 kilometres of electricity lines were destroyed by the hurricanes.

The operation focuses on the provision of assistance to 10,000 of the most vulnerable disaster victims (2,000 families) in the western province of Pinar del Río, which was the major point of impact of both Isidore and Lili, and the eastern provinces of Granma, Santiago and Guantanamo, all of which suffered from torrential rainfall and flooding as both hurricanes passed along the south coast of Cuba.

Coordination w

The Cuban Red Cross ensures constant coordination with the country's civil defence system which is responsible for response in the event of a disaster. The Cuban Red Cross role in this response covers any unmet needs, thus avoiding duplication in the provision of relief assistance.

The Cuban Red Cross and the Federation are working in close cooperation through the regional delegation in Santo Domingo (a sub regional office as of January 2003) and the regional disaster preparedness delegate based in Trinidad and Tobago, with a view to ensuring the implementation of the agreed plan of action. In the same way, the Cuban Red Cross is liaising with the French and German Red Cross Societies which have representatives in Cuba. The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), through the regional logistics unit, provided invaluable support through the provision of the initial 1,700 zinc sheets which reached Cuba only two weeks after the disaster occurred. A disaster management delegate also provided essential support for the response activities and in ensuring liaison with PADRU for the supply of relief items.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action w

The capacity of the Cuban Red Cross in emergency response is proven; the Federation, through its regional delegation, is therefore providing support and follow up for the plan of action put forward by the National Society for the relief operation. PNS which have traditionally supported the Cuban Red Cross: the American, Canadian, Norwegian and Spanish Red Cross Societies, are also providing assistance to ensure the success of operation managed by the Cuban Red Cross. The Federation Secretariat in Geneva contacted the Japanese

Red Cross Society (JRCS) which, several days before hurricane Lili struck, had been advised by the regional delegation of the arrival in Cuba of two containers of relief supplies funded by the JRCS. The container programme, in effect in the Caribbean through the Japanese Red Cross Society since 1998, proved its effectiveness, in that relief goods were immediately available in country, following the impact of the hurricanes.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Society w

The response and reconstruction system in Cuba seeks to ensure that, in the shortest possible time, those affected by a disaster may return to normalcy through a programme of safe housing. Whilst houses are repaired or rebuilt, persons affected by a disaster are housed with families until they are able to return home. Food rations are distributed by the government through committees set up for this purpose. As a result, the efforts of the Red Cross are focused on supporting the reconstruction of housing through the delivery of roof materials and household items, whilst Red Cross volunteers work together with the community. Red Cross volunteers assist the authorities in the reconstruction of roofs, the distribution of relief goods and the dissemination of health messages in affected areas.

The National Society also provides psychological support, first aid, community discussions on preventive health measures and lessons to be learned from natural disasters, tracing services and essential hygiene in shelters.

Objectives, activities and results w

Relief distribution of food and basic non-food items w

Objective 1: *To ensure rapid return to normal life for 500 families affected by the disaster, through the distribution of basic relief items and household goods.*

The number of beneficiaries to receive household goods currently stands at 530 families, and will continue to be increased in line with additional funding. Provision of these items will take place as families return to their homes. Given the difficulty in accessing kerosene stoves and the need for additional mattresses, the Cuban Red Cross requested the Federation to purchase an additional quantity of mattresses and to reduce numbers of kerosene stoves which will instead be supplied by the government. The first batch of mattresses were supplied to the Cuban Red Cross on 22 December, and given major needs in the province of Pinar del Río, estimated at approximately 14,090 mattresses, the province will benefit from the initial distribution. Kitchen sets and other household articles were purchased at the same time by PADRU.

Water and Sanitation w

Objective 1: *To ensure adequate water storage and hygienic water use for 500 families affected by the disaster and dissemination of basic community health and hygiene information to prevent the outbreak of infectious diseases.*

The Cuban Red Cross has concentrated on dissemination of preventive health messages, given that the state authorities were able to cover all needs relating to water in the most affected areas. Given the coverage provided by the Cuban state, the National Society will be able to increase its distribution of household relief items.

In the municipalities of Guane, San Juan, San Luis and Pinar del Río cleaning activities have focused on shelters and streets.

Shelter w

Objective 1: *To provide adequate housing for 1,000 families affected by the disaster through the reconstruction of partially or totally destroyed houses.*

To date, a total of 17,000 zinc sheets have been delivered to the Pinar del Río area, of which 1,700 were distributed in the municipality of Minas de Matahambre, for the benefit of a total of 92 families (approximately 317 people) on the north coast. Six tonnes of nails (4" for wood and 2.5" for zinc) were also delivered. 15,300 zinc sheets were provided by the German Red Cross in support of the Federation appeal.

With the in-kind contribution of zinc sheets from the German Red Cross, together with the sheets provided by the Federation in the first weeks of the emergency, it was agreed with the Cuban Red Cross that the sheeting which would assist some 530 families would be complemented with household relief items, in order that the most affected families benefit from both roofing material and relief items.

The zinc roofing sheets provided by the Federation and part of the household items: kitchen sets, sheets and articles for personal hygiene are being purchased and forwarded by PADRU. Other articles, principally the mattresses, have been procured in Cuba.

Capacity Building of the National Society w

Objective 1: *To reinforce the capacity of the Cuban Red Cross, and of the Pinar del Río branch in particular, to respond to future disasters.*

Given the importance of radio communication, the purchase of HF and VHF radios, together with some of the required material for the rescue unit within the Pinar del Río branch, has been prioritized. Other items are also required to strengthen the response capacity of the branch and will be provided as further donations to the appeal are made.

Representatives of the regions affected by the hurricanes, together with members of other branches throughout the country, took part in training focusing on strategic planning in the context of the work towards the formulation of the national development plan.

Thanks to the relief operation, the CRC has seen an increase in the number of Red Cross volunteers in the Pinar del Río province - which has risen from 449 to 483, and the numbers are expected to continue increasing.

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement -- Principles and Initiatives w

The Cuban Red Cross, in coordination with the government authorities, carried out the identification of families affected by the disaster, ensuring that Red Cross assistance is provided to those most in need. In addition, this process enabled the National Society to identify families which did not lose their homes, but lost all their household goods. Thus, the needs assessment will ensure that thousands of beneficiaries are assisted in relation to their needs without discrimination of any kind. The Cuban Red Cross has also loaned a generator to the provincial health centre for persons living with HIV/AIDS in Pinar del Río which cares for 58 patients.

Federation Delegation w

The Federation regional delegation in Santo Domingo (the current sub regional office), the Pan American Disaster Response Unit and the regional disaster preparedness delegate in Trinidad and Tobago, are providing support to the operation for the benefit of disaster victims in Cuba.

Advocacy/Public Information w

As hurricanes Isidore and Lili approached and impacted Cuba, the Federation's regional delegation produced and posted a series of stories on the Federation website - three on hurricane Isidore and one on hurricane Lili. Several information bulletins were also produced and posted, and all reliable information received by the Federation from various sources was posted in real time on the disaster management information system (DMIS) web page. One of the two delegates from the regional delegation who travelled to Cuba on 3 October was the regional information and reporting delegate who plans a further mission to Cuba in mid December. The Cuban Red Cross has an active information department which over the last two years has been significantly strengthened by inputs and training from the regional delegation. The Cuban Red Cross is also currently implementing the long-distance education programme in communications, piloted with success in Central America.

Outstanding needs w

An additional 24.8 per cent of funding is required in order to be in a position to fulfil all the objectives outlined in the plan of action for the hurricane response operation. Full funding would ensure the provision of assistance to 10,000 beneficiaries and strengthen the response capacity of the Cuban Red Cross in the western region of the country, and in particular in Pinar del Río province.

For further details please contact: Luis Luna, Phone : 41 22 730 42 74; Fax: 41 22 733 03 95; email: luis.luna@ifrc.org

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

This operation seeks to administer to the immediate requirements of the victims of this disaster. Subsequent operations to promote sustainable development or longer-term capacity building will require additional support, and these programmes are outlined on the Federation's website.

For further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.

John Horekens
Director
External Relations

Santiago Gil
Head
Americas Department

Cuba - hurricanes Isidore and Lili						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 29/2002		PLEDGES RECEIVED				31.03.2003
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				597'000		TOTAL COVERAGE 75.2%
AMERICAN - RC		10'000	USD	14'962	15.10.2002	
AMERICAN - PRIVATE DONOR		300	USD	446	25.11.2002	
BRITISH - RC		210	GBP	485	14.11.2002	
CANADIAN - RC		74'250	CAD	68'882	26.11.2002	
GERMAN - RC		90'000	USD	133'740	29.10.2002	BILATERAL
JAPANESE - RC		13'100	USD	19'467	24.10.2002	
MONACO - RC		3'000	EUR	4'404	15.10.2002	
NORWAY - RC/GOVT		555'556	NOK	111'372	11.12.2002	
SWEDISH - GOVT		600'000	SEK	95'400	15.10.2002	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				449'158	CHF	75.2%