

# 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

## CHINA: FLOODS

17 March 2004

Appeal No. 18/2003; Operations Update no. 9

Appeal launched on 22 July 2003 for CHF 7,932,000 (USD 5,770,000 or EUR 5,120,000) in cash, kind or services to assist 440,000 beneficiaries for 9 months.

Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 300,000

Period covered: 23 February - 17 March 2004

*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 over 180 countries.*

*For more information: [www.ifrc.org](http://www.ifrc.org)*

### In Brief

Appeal coverage : 73.2 %; See the Contributions List attached to this report.

Outstanding needs: CHF 553,130

Related Annual Appeals: China Annual (Appeal /2004)

**Operational Summary: The Red Cross Society of China and the International Federation are currently in the process of finishing the final cycle of the distribution of relief items comprising a family package namely: one mosquito net, one quilt and 75 kg of rice or wheat flour. The food component of the package is funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). Although it was initially estimated at the time the appeal was launched in July that 2003 flood relief activities would be completed by 22 March, the contract with ECHO which commenced in November 2003 runs through 30 April. The operational period is therefore being extended until 31 May to allow for the completion of relief activities.**

### Operational developments

As reported in detail in the previous operations update, the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) provincial branches in Anhui, Jiangsu, Henan, Hunan, Guangxi, Chongqing, Sichuan, Hubei and Shaanxi have distributed a total of 136,000 mosquito nets and 114,604 quilts to families and elderly or disabled individuals who lost their crops, or had their homes and belongings destroyed or severely damaged, during flooding which commenced in May 2003 and affected provinces throughout China in October. The RCSC branches are currently in the process of distributing the food component of the "family package", 75 kg of rice or wheat flour, funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). The precise figures and locations regarding these distributions will be made available in future reports.

Flooding in China is distinctive in that it is not limited to a single incident in a limited area. Rather, the flooding can be regarded as a series of individual flood disasters occurring over a large number of provinces, with each province measuring the size of a European country. Additionally, funding for relief activities has arrived in phases, over a period of months, affecting the capacity of the RCSC and the Federation to purchase all three items comprising the family package at once. Relief items comprising a "family package" were therefore purchased based on the immediate needs of the beneficiaries for the item. Thus as the prevalence of mosquitoes in the

summer months created an immediate demand for nets, these were the first items purchased, followed by quilts with the arrival of cold temperatures, and finally food. The food component, 75 kg of rice or wheat flour, is being supported by a substantial contribution from ECHO. The operational period for ECHO funded activities was from 1 November 2003 to 30 April 2004, therefore the original nine-month timeframe for relief activities which was expected to have been completed by 22 March has been extended until 31 May 2004.



The joint RCSC/Federation flood relief operation has provided opportunities for the RCSC and the Federation to improve upon current operating systems and incorporate suggestions made in March 2003 following a comprehensive review of the 2002-2003 flood relief operation. Lessons learned during the current relief operation and improvements made based on the incorporation of suggestions from the 2003 review document were the focus of a discussion about disaster management in China, which was part of the East Asia Partnership Meeting that took place during the first week of March in Beijing.

Whereas previous operations updates have concentrated mainly on detailing the movement of relief items, this update aims to provide some insight into the impact being made on the RCSC, the Federation and the beneficiaries.

*Food aid for farmer from Sichuan province*

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action - objectives, progress, impact**

### **Emergency relief**

**Objective: To provide recovery assistance in the form of rice, quilts and mosquito nets to 110,000 families in eight provinces and one municipality most affected by this year's floods.**

### **Focus on Impact**

#### **The East Asia Partnership Meeting: Disaster Management in China**

In March 2003, an independent review team was commissioned by the Federation to evaluate the 2002-2003 joint RCSC/Federation flood relief operation. Following the evaluation a series of recommendations were made with the goal of improving the efficiency of future relief activities. Within months of receiving the recommendations, severe flooding in 2003 and the launch of this Appeal (18/2003) provided the opportunity to transform the recommendations into action. The review of 2002 flood relief activities was translated into the Chinese language to make it more accessible to the RCSC and allow the national society to engage in the review process. The RCSC has taken an active role in both implementing and carrying recommendations made by the evaluation team which engaged the RCSC in the process from the start through extensive discussions.

Over the course of the past nine months there has been improved cooperation between the Federation's East Asia regional delegation and the RCSC. This is in part due to the establishment of bi-weekly "Floods Operation Task Force Meetings" held between representatives of the RCSC relief, finance, logistics, external relations and information divisions and delegates from the Federation's 2003 flood relief team. These meetings were an excellent opportunity to resolve issues that arose while implementing the operation's activities. The weekly meetings which have taken place in 2003-2004 are in sharp contrast to how communications were carried out in 1999, when only one person from RCSC was regularly engaged in the process.

The fact that the Federation's relief coordinator was a native Chinese language (Mandarin) speaker was an asset for both sides. The relief coordinator, who is the Canadian Red Cross regional desk officer has been managing projects in China for the past few years and was a member of the 2002 flood review team, and therefore entered into the role of relief coordinator with a solid understanding of the RCSC operating systems.

## **China: Floods; Appeal no. 18/2003; Operations Update no. 9**

The RCSC payment procedures in relation to the procurement of relief items also were improved upon. The national society's process for changing procedures commenced prior to the launch of July's appeal as the Society was also managing relief activities funded through donations from the National Lottery Fund (RMB 28.3 million.)

The Federation's flood relief team was given office space in the RCSC headquarters in Beijing. Sharing the same office space greatly contributed to the improved understanding between the RCSC and the Federation as communications were extended beyond the limitations of formal, sporadic meetings into working on a daily basis as one team.

The national society, through discussions about reporting with the Federation and a meeting held with the regional representative from ECHO has a better understanding about the importance of narrative reporting.

The Federation has also made efforts to better understand the RCSC's existing procurement procedures and look for ways of working that would strike a balance between the demands of Federation's standards, the requirements of donors and the national society's operational realities.

An offsite mid-term review of the progress of the 2003 floods operation was held in November in Beijing. The meeting included members from the Federation the RCSC national office and, notably, representatives from three provincial branches implementing flood relief activities. This was the first time that the RCSC ever engaged in this type of review exercise with the Federation while an operation was still in progress. The meeting was very productive. Problems addressed and identified during the meeting, namely the initial decision to distribute 100 kg of rice to beneficiaries which would have caused a shortfall during the distribution of the item, were acted upon and changed in time to reduce the ration by 25 per cent, to 75 kg.

The mid-term review meeting was also an excellent forum to jointly address continuing challenges regarding distributions. An example of this was the discussions held concerning the matter of "family packages". The fact that both the flooding and the funding occurred in a cyclical manner resulted in relief items being procured in seven phases, extending from July through March. Due to a variety of factors, including fluctuating exchange rates, not all beneficiaries were able to receive all three relief items. The branches were also unable to deliver items simultaneously due to the staggered purchasing process. Feedback from representatives of the provincial branches and the national office resulted in recommendation that if the family package concept is to be used in China in future then the family package must arrive as a "package" - with all items being delivered to the beneficiaries at once. Delivering several items at once, however, poses certain logistical challenges as it is quite difficult to coordinate the delivery dates of three separate suppliers, especially if in the future the timeframe for international support mirrors the arrival of support in 2003/2004. This would mean having to use trading companies which could coordinate delivery of several items at once, but this would incur extra costs as the companies would need to see a profit, in addition to that of the suppliers. These issues and questions were discussed at the meeting and were open to input from all of the participants.

### **Challenges Presented during the 2003 Floods Operation**

The flooding in China arrived in phases between May and October 2003, affecting a diverse group of provinces that varied in climate and geographic makeup. This type of disaster requires a very different response as compared to disasters which strike once in a single centralised location during an isolated timeframe, such as an earthquake.

The challenge of responding to the various floods had to be balanced against varying requirements attached to the donations (earmarked donations). Cash flow also presented a challenge to implementing relief activities. In essence the China floods 2003 operation could be classified as a series of seven small operations within the framework of the appeal. Funding arrived from July to November, and with the arrival of each donation a plan of action for the purchase of one the commodities was developed by the RCSC and the Federation. In total seven plans of action were developed related the expenditure of funds received requiring seven rounds of procurement, distribution and administrative duties for the RCSC national office and the branches.

Finally, more work needs to be done to balance procurement procedures demanded by the Federation and donors against existing RCSC procedures, to ensure that logistics procedures imposed by the Federation are consistent with China's legal system and standard business practices.

## **Field Monitoring Visits to Guangxi and Sichuan Provinces**

Monitoring visits made to Guangxi and Sichuan provinces during the first two weeks of March confirmed the need for relief assistance to subsistence farmers and their families who lost their crops during the floods. Although, the government has provided some beneficiaries with support for rebuilding their homes, or with rations of rice, the beneficiaries' needs extended beyond the amount of assistance available. Many of the beneficiaries who were interviewed received no other assistance besides that provided to them by the RCSC. The items were confirmed to be quite useful and are commonly used items. Discussions have been held with provincial and prefecture branch representatives as to what they think might be useful to distribute in the future. The RCSC branch representatives confirmed the usefulness of water purification materials and tents during the emergency phase followed by a need for rice and quilts. Additionally, quilted cotton winter coats of the type which are typically used by the beneficiaries could also be quite useful.

### ***For further information please contact:***

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

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

# China - floods

ANNEX 1

APPEAL No. 18/2003

## PLEDGES RECEIVED

17/03/2004

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
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### CASH

REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				7,932,000	TOTAL COVERAGE 73.2%	
AMERICAN - GOVT		100,000	USD	141,400	05.09.03	SH'ANXI PROVINCE
AUSTRALIAN - GOVT/RC		516,447	AUD	467,385	04.09.03	
AUSTRIAN - RC		40,000	EUR	61,960	05.08.03	
CANADIAN - RC		205,978	CAD	208,141	11.09.03	
CANADIAN - RC		38,478	CAD	39,055	14.11.03	
CANADIAN - RC		49,827	CAD	47,510	07.01.04	
DANISH - RC		277,500	DKK	57,581	23.07.03	
DANISH - GOVT		30,000	USD	40,530	25.07.03	DIRECTLY TO DELEGATION
DANISH - GOVT				6,688	03.11.03	PROGRAMME SUPPORT
ECHO (01001)		2,000,000	EUR	3,107,000	03.11.03	
ESTEC NDF/ESA		10,000	EUR	15,490	24.07.03	
FINNISH - RC		50,000	EUR	77,150	24.07.03	
GERMAN - GOVT		225,241	EUR	346,646	22.08.03	PURCHASE, TRANSPORT, DISTRIBUTION OF 30'000 QUILTS
JAPANESE - RC		249,543	USD	337,133	25.07.03	
LIECHTENSTEIN - RC				10,000	29.08.03	
MALAYSIAN - PRIVATE DONORS				231	01.10.03	
MONACO RC		7,500	EUR	11,543	07.10.03	
NORWEGIAN - RC		350,000	NOK	64,925	16.09.03	RELIEF OPERATION IN SHAANXI PROVINCE
PRIVATE DONORS				6,687	15.01.04	
SWEDISH - GOVT		700,000	SEK	117,600	25.07.03	
SWISS - GOVT(SDC)				400,000	17.10.03	
TURKISH - RC				30,000	22.07.03	
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				5,594,655	CHF	70.5%

### KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CANADA	DELEGATE(S)			30,226		
DENMARK	DELEGATE(S)			35,647		
SWEDEN	DELEGATE(S)			40,082		
DANISH - GOVT				102,894	03.11.03	11'500 QUILTS
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				208,849	CHF	2.6%

### ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET

DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	