

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Paraguay: Dengue outbreak

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The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent emergency response. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of National Societies to respond to disasters.

Period covered by this update: 12 April to 8 May 2011.

Summary: 99,593 Swiss francs were allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 12 April 2011 to support the Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC) in delivering assistance to some 6,000 families.

In an effort to reinforce the contingency plan established to combat the dengue outbreak, the PRC started a communication campaign using television and radio spots, completed two trainings on epidemic control for volunteers, printed and distributed some 25,000 informative brochures, and started to organize the community-based groups that will be working on cleaning campaigns to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds. All the work of the National Society is being carried out in close coordination with several government institutions with which they have signed working agreements.



Community-based working group working in the municipality of San Antonio. Source: PRC.

This operation is expected to be implemented in three months and completed by 11 July 2011. In line with Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 11 October 2011).

The Canadian Red Cross and Canadian government contributed 10,753 Swiss francs to DREF in replenishment of the allocation made for this operation. The major donors to the DREF are the Irish, Italian, Netherlands and Norwegian governments and ECHO. Details of all donors can be found on: <http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/responding/drs/tools/dref/donors.asp>
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The situation

Weather conditions in Paraguay continue to be favourable to the proliferation of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito, the carrier of dengue.

Epidemiological Bulletin No. 16 of the General Directorate of Health Surveillance (Dirección General de Vigilancia de la Salud) stated that 18 weeks into the epidemic, there were 36,689 reported cases of dengue, of which 16,264 cases have been confirmed. About 17.5 per cent of the registered cases are patients under the age of fifteen.

Department	Reported cases	Confirmed cases	Rejected cases	Deaths
Concepción	1,279	674	52	1
Amambay	485	172	265	
San Pedro	289	47	10	
Cordillera	855	106	22	1
Paraguari	543	175	64	1
Central (Centro occidental)	1,357	400	49	
Guaira	562	42	2	1
Caazapa	47	4	1	
Caaguazu	797	397	40	
Alto Parana	11,041	8,039	2	19
Canindeyu	95	7	6	
Itapua	405	95	195	
Neembuco	239	21	43	
Misiones	112	15	16	
Presidente Hayes	625	272	97	
Alto Paraguay	10	1		
Boqueron	200	122	12	1
Asuncion	8,476	1,594	56	7
Central (metropolitan area)	9,272	4,081	123	13
TOTAL	36,689	16,264	1,055	44

The national incidence rate is 447.9 for every 100,000 inhabitants, with the department of Alto Parana having the highest rate at 1,044.4 for every 100,000 inhabitants. However, there has been a recent decrease of 38 per cent of new cases reported.

A total of 102 deaths occurred during the epidemiological alert, with 44 confirmed as having been caused by the disease and 16 eliminated.

Coordination and partnerships

The actions of the National Society are carried within the framework of the national contingency plan, the goal of which is to reduce disease propagation through the elimination of mosquito breeding grounds, health and sanitation promotion and case detection.

To carry out the contingency plan, a travelling Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) has been installed. The EOC is moved to the municipality where activities are being currently completed. Each of the organizations

that make up an EOC has a specific function in addition to contributing human resources, vehicles and equipment. Some of the responsibilities are distributed as follows:

Institution	Function/Responsibility
National Emergency Secretariat (Secretaría de Emergencia Nacional-SEN)	Logistic and operational field support for the community-based working groups (<i>mingas</i>); equipment for the installation of the EOC and for the cleaning campaign
National Arm Forces	Support with administrative and field personnel as well as vehicles
National Service for the Eradication of Malaria (Servicio Nacional de Erradicación de Paludismo—SENEPA)	Detection and eradication of breeding grounds; detection of fever cases to report to health centres; implementation of LIRA-a (rapid <i>Aedes Aegypti</i> index survey).
Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare (Ministerio de Salud Pública y Bienestar Social)	In situ assistance to detected fever cases and mobilization of patients to hospitals when needed; provision of basic medical equipment.
Municipalities	Waste collection; support with administrative and operative personnel to coordinate deployed working groups
Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC)	Support in the installation of the EOC, including logistic support, information gathering and management of daily visits
Environmental Secretariat (Secretaría de Ambiente -SEAM)	Monitoring of the environmental impact of activities; supporting the verification of possible breeding grounds
National Police, Ministry of Public Works and Communications (Ministerio de Obras Públicas y Comunicación-MOPC) and Ministry of Justice and Labour (Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo).	Biweekly cleaning ups in schools, social assistance centres and streets in close proximity

The following table summarizes the results of the coordinated work of the “Operation Fighting Dengue” in 11 municipalities in the department of Alto Parana and the Metropolitan Area, regions with the highest levels of reported dengue. Between 850 to 1,500 people and 45 vehicles were mobilized daily during the campaign.

Municipalities	Working days	City blocks	Homes visited	Closed homes	Unwilling homes	Empty lots	Total visits	Fever cases
11	30	20,599	104,953	38,335	5,226	22,484	170,998	491

Within the Movement, the PRC has been in contact with the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) from the start of the operation, receiving technical support in the development of the plan of action and the launch of DREF. In addition, other Partner National Societies are supporting the response plan, including the American Red Cross, the Swiss Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross-Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID).

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The National Disaster Response Unit has been activated, in particular the member specialized in health in emergencies and epidemic outbreaks. They are monitoring the situation and gathering information at the local level to report to the National EOC.

The PRC plan of action concentrates most of its efforts on the communities covered by five sub-branches of the central department and by the branches of Alto Paraná, Concepción and Guaira, always in coordination with the municipalities and health centres. The goal of the DREF-supported operation is to complement and reinforce some of the work carried out by the national contingency plan.

Progress towards outcomes

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Outcome: Community-based groups detect and eliminate breeding grounds following a collaborative strategy between the National Society, the municipality, the region's health authority and SENEPA.

Outputs:

- Nine municipalities in four departments (Central, Alto Paraná, Concepción, and Guaira) coordinate with the branches of the national society.
- At least 38 communities in nine municipalities are aware and working on the prevention of dengue.
- Three branches and six sub-branches have the equipment and tools needed to carry out cleaning campaigns.

Activities planned:

- Coordinate with the municipal office, SENEPA and health authorities to elaborate a regional plan of action.
- Complete community mappings to determine areas of risk for dengue infection.
- Complete meetings with community members to explain the working methodology.
- Procure cleaning materials and personal protective equipment to use during cleaning campaigns.
- Complete cleaning campaigns targeting mosquito-breeding grounds with the participation of the community-based groups (*mingas*).
- Distribute informative brochures in the communities.

Progress:

The first output of the operation has been reached. As mentioned in the Coordination and Partnership section, the PRC is working alongside several government institutions and is part of the local and national EOCs that are organizing the community-based groups. The National Society has signed cooperation agreements with all of these institutions at both the national and local level, including the municipal offices, SENEPA and the regional health centres. All sub-branches have completed the planning phase of the cleaning and fumigation activities as well as on the distribution of information.

The volunteers trained in epidemic control (more details in the Emergency Health section) are now supporting the community mappings of areas at risk of dengue infection. At the moment, the branches and sub-branches are registering and organizing the volunteers to be involved in the areas with the highest level of larvae infestation, while also identifying the community groups that will be reached with the DREF-supported operation.

In order to complete the cleaning campaigns targeting mosquito breeding grounds, the PRC has already bought nine sets of fumigation equipment, weed-cutters and cleaning tools consisting of rakes, hoes, machetes, and wheelbarrows, as well as distributed informative brochures to its branches and sub-branches. Thus, the third output of the operation has been fulfilled.

Emergency health

Outcome: Dengue-related morbidity and mortality is reduced through a comprehensive approach to preventive health and increased awareness

Outputs:

- At least 6,000 families (30,000 people) are reached with a preventive health campaign.
- Thirty per cent of the population in nine municipalities receive information through popular radio stations and television on the prevention of dengue.

Activities planned:

- Train volunteers on epidemic control.
- Print informative material.
- Complete educational campaigns in public spaces.
- Launch a communication campaign with radio and television spots.
- Carry out educational talks in schools and foment the formation of cleaning brigades on school grounds.

Progress:

Two out of three workshops on epidemic control have been completed, and 48 volunteers (from eight branches and six sub-branches) have been trained. The last workshop will be completed on 20-21 May in the branch of Concepción. With the support of the IFRC, each branch and sub-branch of the National Society has now received two Epidemic Control Manuals and two Epidemic Control Toolkits for Volunteers. The trained volunteers are now supporting the community mappings of areas at risk of dengue infection.

Regarding the awareness campaign, the National Society has printed and distributed 25,000 brochures and is looking for further support to print 50,000 more to reinforce the message in certain areas. These brochures have been distributed during house visits and in public spaces with large concentrations of people. In addition, the web page (www.cruzroja.org.py) developed a section on dengue that includes two flyers.

The PRC also developed a 30-second radio spot and a 35-second television spot and has successful agreements with different media businesses, particularly community radios. The spots are currently being broadcast on both public and private (cable) television channels and from radio stations in Asunción and Alto Paraná. Agreements are being completed to air the radio spot in Concepción and Guaira.¹

To complete the activity of carrying out educational talks and foment the creation of cleaning brigades within schools, the National Society is using the community mappings to start the identification and planning process of selected schools.

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 \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster 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:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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¹ The AM radio stations are: Ñanduti, 1ero de marzo, Chaco Boreal, Emisoras Paraguay, Radio 1000, Radio Uno, Nacional de Paraguay, Caritas, Libre. The FM radio stations are: Radio Farra, Megacadena de Comunicación, Cardinal, Radio Popular, Radio Corazón, Obedira, Radio Vida Comunitaria, Venus, Holding la Radio Rock and Pop, Urbana, Montecarlo, La Estación, Monumental, and Latina. The TV channels are Sistema Nacional Canal 9, Teledifusora Paraguaya Canal 13, Telefuturo Canal 4, Red Guarani Canal 2, Canal 5, La Tele Canal 11, Unicanal, and Mi Cable.