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DREF final report

Russian Federation: Forest Fire Imminent Crisis

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRRU011
GLIDE n° WF-2011-000065-RUS
9th September 2011

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 Red Crescent response to emergencies. 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.

CHF 33,015 has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Russian Red Cross (RRC) in performing assessments in the high risk areas where the forest wild fires threaten the population's livelihoods.

Summary: Since April 2011, the Russian Government has been implementing an emergency forest fire assistance contingency plan. **142 hotbeds of wildfires with a total area of 5,139.85 hectares were registered in the Russian Federation mainly in Siberia and the Far East and seemed to rapidly spread to the Urals and the European regions. 127 hotbeds within the area of 3,855.05 hectares have been extinguished. 185 hotbeds, including those that emerged earlier and 16 large ones continue burning. The area of active burning is 342.43 hectares.**

According to the authorities, approximately seven million residents live in the areas prone to extreme forest fire conditions that can impact not only their livelihoods but can severely affect their health conditions as well. This DREF allocation aimed at supporting the Russian Red Cross to assess the necessary preparedness activities and reinforce their capacity to develop an early action in an imminent crisis.

The International Federation of the Red Cross / Red Crescent, Europe Zone Office, decided to deploy an assessment team whose role it was to work closely with the Russian Red Cross in assessment, analysis and strategic planning process, focusing on emergency response and early/medium term recovery needs of the population which might be affected by forest fire in the Russian Federation.

This assessment mission was realized within one month and based on the recommendations the DREF has been extended by one further month because a round table meeting has been organised related to preparedness of the Russian Red Cross (RRC) branches for possible forest fires.

The Canadian Red Cross contributed CHF 8,635 to the DREF in replenishment of the allocation made for this operation. The major donors to the DREF are the Irish, the Italian, the Netherlands and the 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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Round table meeting has been organised related to preparedness of the Russian Red Cross (RRC) branches
Photo: IFRC

The situation

The wildfires season in 2011 started earlier than usual and is imposing an even greater danger than last year when around 56,000 people were estimated to have died from the effects of the smog and heat wave¹. During the summer of 2011, 69 hotbeds of wildfires with the total area 275.35 hectares have been registered in the Russian Federation within twenty four hours. 47 hotbeds with the area of 146.52 ha have been extinguished. 50 hotbeds including those emerged earlier and one large one continues burning, the area of active burning is 27.28 ha, 270.32 ha have been contained. At the end of August, 47 hotbeds of wildfires with the total area of 146.52 hectares were extinguished. Within twenty four hours, wildfires have travelled to 275.35 hectares, including 253.53 hectares – forest land, 21.0 ha - steppe land, 0.82 ha - peat land after detection, reported on 29th August 2011.²

50 hotbeds of wildfire (the area of active burning is 27.28 hectares, 270.32 ha has been contained) continue still burning. All the hotbeds are on the forest lands (FFA), including on large wildfire with the area of 26.0 ha (Arkhangelsk Region). There are 90 uncontrolled undergrowth burning sites and 2 hotbeds of waste burning in the territory of the Russian Federation.

Altogether 3,194 people and 1,081 units of equipment were involved to extinguish wildfires. This includes:

- 485 people and 157 units of equipment - from the Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM) of Russia;
- 220 people and 104 units of equipment - from FFA;
- 17 people and 13 units of equipment – from the Ministry of Natural Resources;
- 519 people and 203 units of equipment - from the Ministry of the Interior;
- 1,953 people and 609 units of equipment - other RSChS subsystems.

Compared to the previous 24 hours there is a rise in the number of fires (by 22 hotbeds) and in areas on fire (by 128.83 ha).

Given the weather forecast, the emergency wildfire situation will remain difficult in the Far Eastern, Siberian, Volga, Southern, North-Caucasian and North-western Federal Districts: Sakha (Yakutia), Tuva and Tatarstan Republics, Zabaikalsky Territory, Orenburg, Saratov, Nizhny Novgorod, Astrakhan, Volgograd, Rostov Regions, Krasnodar Territory, Republics of Kalmykia and Dagestan, Stavropol Territory, Murmansk and Voronezh Regions³.

Heavy smog and respiratory problems can be just some of the health effects of the wild fires especially if those are combined with extreme heat wave as it happened in 2010. At that time the combination of the smoke from the fires and the resulting heavy smog blanketing large urban regions and the record-breaking heat wave put stress on the Russian healthcare system.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the beginning of the crisis the Russian Red Cross was coordinating its activities on development of a plan of action with the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM). Russian Red Cross regional branches were participating in municipal meetings in order to coordinate their actions and avoid a duplication of efforts.

Furthermore the Russian Red Cross signed an agreement in February 2011 with the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM), where the two parties pledged to provide assistance to the affected population in emergency situations.

The IFRC Europe Zone Office deployed an assessment team, whose role it was to work closely with the Russian Red Cross in assessment, analysis and strategic planning process, focusing on emergency response and early/medium term recovery needs of the population who might be affected by forest fire in Russian Federation. Therefore several meetings with different stakeholders were organised. The team visited and conducted meetings with regional branches of the Russian Red Cross and local authorities. In Moscow, meetings were organised with EMERCOM, USAID, the representation of the European Union and the ICRC.

¹ Based on information from GREENPEACE and EMERCOM

² <http://reliefweb.int/node/443615>

³ <http://reliefweb.int/node/443615>

Achievements against outcomes

Damage and need assessments

Objective 1: RRC and IFRC team members will perform hazard and risk assessments in the regions affected by the forest fires and will elaborate a response plan.

Outputs (expected results) and activities planned:

A response plan will be elaborated to react to the needs of those people who are most vulnerable to the forest fires.

- 3 meetings with the regional (oblast) branches will be held to analyze the 2010 Forest Fire operations and to plan the new operations;
- Conduct a meeting with the Government and other stakeholders;
- Conduct emergency hazard and risk assessments in the field;
- Elaborate a response plan;
- Update the Russian Red Cross Contingency Plan.

The International Federation's Europe Zone Office and the IFRC Moscow Regional Representation were in constant communication with the Russian Red Cross Society to coordinate all the activities that might be required to assist with the forest fire crisis. An IFRC Assessment Team consisting of a team leader, a disaster manager, an RDRT health specialist and a liaison officer from the IFRC Moscow Regional Representation were deployed in Russia to provide support and assistance in the development of a plan of action in close collaboration with the Russian Red Cross and IFRC Moscow Regional Representation. The team consisted of the following persons: a team leader from IFRC Europe Zone office, a disaster manager from IFRC Serbia office and an RDRT member from Tajikistan Red Crescent Society.

The main objectives of the mission were to:

- Support the Russian Red Cross to establish an operational plan of action to address emergency and recovery needs of affected population.
- Support the Russian Red Cross to establish partnership opportunities for fund-raising activities focusing on forest fire preparedness activities
- Identify the priority emergency and recovery needs of the population who might be affected by the disaster
- Review existing assessment information, recommendations and actions taken by Government authorities, Russian Red Cross and other stakeholders
- Consider better programming initiative by identifying cross-cutting issues and appropriate contextual approaches to disaster risk reduction (DRR), gender, environment, social inclusion and participatory approaches.

Although the primary role of the IFRC team in the field was to support the Russian Red Cross in preparation for the forest fire season, the team has also worked on quick analysis of Disaster Management capacities of the Russian Red Cross in order to give recommendations how to strengthen the Disaster Management capacities. The team has also developed a list of 23 recommendations for overall strengthening the National Society Disaster Management capacity.

Field visits were done in 4 different regions (Voskresensk city branch - Moscow region, Krasnodar, Voronezh and Nizhniy Novgorod regions in the Russian Federation). This allowed sampling of communities across regions affected by forest fire in 2010. At the same time, similarities and distinctions were explored between rural and urban environments. In addition, these field visits enabled the IFRC team to gain a better understanding of different levels of preparation of the Russian Red Cross Branch and regional authorities (EMERCOM and local government) and their level of collaboration.

The capacities in the branches visited vary from region to region. Most of them have limited knowledge in assessment but information sharing with the local authorities or EMERCOM is at a good level. Since the branches have not done their own "mapping" of vulnerability in its regions, it is difficult to foresee possible disasters' impact. Therefore no specific preparedness activities apart from information work with the general population have been done.

As a result of the mission, a Plan of Action has been developed, and discussions were held to update the Russian Red Cross contingency plan. The overall objective of the Plan of Action is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by reducing impact of forest fires through development and effective use of capacities and resources of Russian Red Cross in the emergency and recovery phase. Therefore, 14 recommendations were produced and discussed with the decision makers of the Russian Red Cross and IFRC Moscow office. The PoA was developed as an evolving document and should remain flexible and adaptable to the changing humanitarian situation within the country. As for now, according to the present situation there is no need for further action mentioned in the plan.

In addition to the Plan of Action a round table/workshop on forest fires was held in Nizhny Novgorod from 28 to 29 July 2011. The workshop had the following objectives:

- Strengthen preparedness and response capacities of the Russian Red Cross in regards to the forest fires
- Explore partnership possibilities for joint preparedness efforts

Representatives of 10 Red Cross branches, ICRC cooperation officer from ICRC Moscow and Representative of EMERCOM from Nizhny Novgorod participated in the workshop. The facilitators of the workshop were: RRC DM coordinator, IFRC Belgrade DM Programme manager and Europe Zone DM coordinator. Based on the experiences of the operation last year, the workshop covered topics to support the local Red Cross branches to define possible steps they have to follow and obstacles, challenges they have to face in order to be well prepared for possible response operations in case of forest fires emergencies. Cooperation possibilities with local authorities and EMERCOM have been further discussed and simulation exercises and the development of contingency plans were emphasised. After the workshop it was defined that the local Red Cross branches need to improve their disaster management capacities and different trainings for staff and volunteers need to be proposed to the National Society (Basic Disaster Management training, Logistics training, National Disaster Response Team training, Volunteers Management) in the future.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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DREF history:

- This DREF was initially allocated on 10 July 2011 for CHF 33,015 for 1 month to **perform assessments in the high risk areas where the forest wild fires threaten the population's livelihoods.**

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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 (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.

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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.



Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2011/6-2011/12
Budget Timeframe	2011/6-2011/7
Appeal	MDRRU011
Budget	APPROVED

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Consolidated Funding

	Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
A. Budget	33,015					33,015
B. Opening Balance	0					0
Income						
Other Income						
<i>DREF Allocations</i>	<i>33,015</i>					<i>33,015</i>
C4. Other Income	33,015					33,015
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C4)	33,015					33,015
D. Total Funding = B + C	33,015					33,015
Appeal Coverage	100%					100%

II. Movement of Funds

	Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination	TOTAL
B. Opening Balance	0					0
C. Income	33,015					33,015
E. Expenditure	-33,015					-33,015
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)	0					0

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDRRU011 - Russia - Forest Fire Preparedness

Appeal Launch Date: 09 jun 11

Appeal Timeframe: 09 jun 11 to 09 jul 11

Final Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2011/6-2011/12
Budget Timeframe	2011/6-2011/7
Appeal	MDRRU011
Budget	APPROVED

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

III. Consolidated Expenditure vs. Budget

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Disaster Management	Health and Social Services	National Society Development	Principles and Values	Coordination		
A							B	A - B
BUDGET (C)		33,015					33,015	
Logistics, Transport & Storage								
Transport & Vehicles Costs		61					61	-61
Total Logistics, Transport & Storage		61					61	-61
Personnel								
International Staff	7,000							7,000
National Staff		1,114					1,114	-1,114
National Society Staff	1,500	729					729	771
Total Personnel	8,500	1,844					1,844	6,656
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training	10,000	9,335					9,335	665
Total Workshops & Training	10,000	9,335					9,335	665
General Expenditure								
Travel	10,500	19,225					19,225	-8,725
Information & Public Relations		1,059					1,059	-1,059
Office Costs	500							500
Communications	1,500	140					140	1,360
Financial Charges		-664					-664	664
Total General Expenditure	12,500	19,761					19,761	-7,261
Indirect Costs								
Programme & Services Support Recov	2,015	2,015					2,015	0
Total Indirect Costs	2,015	2,015					2,015	0
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)	33,015	33,015					33,015	0
VARIANCE (C - D)		0					0	