

# ***BOLIVIA : FLOODS***

**appeal no: 04/97**  
**27 February 1997**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 2,450,000  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 108,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR TWO MONTHS***

## ***The Intended Operation***

As part of Bolivia's national response to current disastrous floods, the Bolivian Red Cross will distribute 2,412 mt. of food stuffs to the 18,013 affected families (108,000 people) in the eight stricken provinces. Other organisations will carry out distributions of other relief goods.

## ***The Disaster***

Heavy rains that began in January over the high mountains of central Bolivia and are still continuing produced widespread flooding in February in eight of the country's nine departments, or an area of over one million sq. km.

To date, 18,013 families are affected, located as follows: 4839 in Beni, 7,800 in Santa Cruz, 1765 in Cochabamba, 1,306 in Tarija, 182 in Potosí, 135 in Oruro, 1,286 in La Paz and 700 in Pando. The rains have grown worse this month, in one week driving up the numbers of people affected from 36,000 to 108,000.

Mudslides and flooding have caused serious damage to the road network in all eight provinces and communications have been disrupted. Many of the flooded towns and villages are still isolated. The evacuation of areas at risk is continuing under very difficult conditions.

Although no precise figures are available as yet, huge losses of crops and cattle, as well as extensive damage to houses have been reported. Outbreaks of diseases are feared, particularly because there was an upsurge of cholera cases in recent months in parts of the disaster area.

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

### **Government Action •**

The Bolivian Government has declared a state of emergency and is providing rescue and relief services, chiefly through the Civil Defence. While concentrating its efforts on reopening roads and restoring telecommunications it has also distributed some food and other items. It has decided to devote 1% of the state's revenues to rehabilitating municipal infrastructures.

**Red Cross/Red Crescent Action •**

All branches of the Bolivian Red Cross (BRC) are assisting the victims with their limited resources, while the BRC headquarters, supported by a Federation Delegate and a Swiss Red Cross bilateral delegate, is co-ordinating the operation. The BRC has launched a national appeal for food and clothing for the victims. The Federation Secretariat and its Regional Delegation in Buenos Aires are providing technical assistance.

**Other Agencies' Action •**

An Inter-Agency Response Committee, chaired by the Civil Defence, was set up on 20 February. It comprises state agencies, BRC, Swiss RC, CARITAS, World Vision, USAID and Assistance to Indigenous People (AIP). Under the division of responsibilities agreed on by the Committee, the BRC took on responsibility for food distributions, while the other agencies will handle other relief needs and services.

**Co-ordination •**

The Civil Defence is co-ordinating operations by the authorities and NGOs.

## ***Red Cross Objectives***

- To help provide food, identified as the most urgent need by a preliminary evaluation, to those affected.
- To co-ordinate with other agencies, to ensure that victims' needs are adequately met in the relief period.
- To evaluate needs for further action in the rehabilitation phase with the affected communities and the other agencies involved in the relief response.

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

**Emergency Phase: March 1997 •**

Procurement, packing and transportation to the flooded areas of 2,412 mt. of basic foodstuffs, as follows:

. maize	810 mt.
. rice	270 mt.
. flour	540 mt.
. sugar	270 mt.
. salt	72 mt.
. edible oil	90 mt.
. lentils/beans	360 mt.

These commodities will be purchased in bulk in La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, and forwarded to the packing and distribution centres in each affected area.

**Phase Two: March - April 1997 •**

Distribution by community leaders, helped by 250 BRC volunteers. The first 100 volunteers have already been notified.

**Capacity of the National Society •**

The BRC has the necessary operational capacity within its branches in the eight affected departments. The Swiss RC will help five of these branches (Santa Cruz, Beni, Pando, Tarija and Chuquisaca) to assist indigenous communities through the working network of these communities built up in recent years as part of its bilateral co-operation project.

**Present Capacity of the Federation •**

The Federation will maintain its Relief Delegate in Bolivia during the operation. He will be given support by the Buenos Aires Regional Delegation and the Geneva Secretariat.

**Evaluation •**

A final evaluation will be carried out at the close of the operation.

***Immediate action***

CHF 200,000 is being allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) as start-up funding for the operation. The Swiss RC has already contributed CHF 90,900 for relief to indigenous communities

***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

***Conclusion***

Donors are invited to contribute as rapidly as possible to this operation, which needs to begin immediately.

For more information, please contact the Director of the Americas Region (Santiago Gil, phone 41-22-7304391) the acting Desk Officer (Darrel Diedrichs, until 17 March, phone 41-22-7304258) or from 18 March onwards the Desk Officer for Bolivia (Luis Luna, phone 41-22-7304274).

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