

# ***INDIA: FLOODS***

**appeal no: 27/98**  
**9 September 1998**

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 1,632,000  
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES  
TO ASSIST 100,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 3 MONTHS***

## ***Summary***

*Several countries in Asia are badly affected this year by the devastating floods. Federation response in each situation is determined by the interaction of the number of factors: gravity of the disaster; level of external support required by the respective National Society and its operational capacity; availability of resources and capacity of the governments and role of other humanitarian organisations.*

This year's exceptionally heavy monsoon rains have flooded 12 states in northern India, affecting over 23.6 million people and leaving up to 8 million people homeless. The situation is particularly serious in four states: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and parts of West Bengal. The floods cover vast areas and in some parts water levels are the highest since 1938. An estimated 22,000 villages have been inundated. Nation-wide, a total of 4.76 million hectares of agricultural land are flooded, with a projected crop loss of over 2 million hectares.

The Indian Red Cross Society's branches have been providing humanitarian assistance to the flood victims from the beginning. They are providing data to its headquarters (HQ) in New Delhi as the disaster evolves. On 2 - 3 September, representatives of the Indian Red Cross and the Federation's South Asia Regional Delegation (SARD) joined state government authorities in gathering an overview of the situation in Uttar Pradesh. An initial Plan of Action has been developed that provides food, shelter materials, kitchen utensils, and water purification chemicals to 20,000 families.

## ***The Disaster***

Although flooding is occurring in 12 states, the worst hit are Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, where altogether more than 18 Million people are affected. More flooding could be on the way, since there are still two months left in the monsoon season. Large numbers of homeless who have very limited resources and inadequate coping mechanisms are in urgent need of assistance.

An aerial survey of **Uttar Pradesh** on 2 and 3 September showed many agricultural areas and villages to be completely submerged. In some areas, the water is receding through drainage and evaporation in the warm temperatures, leaving behind debris and filth -- ideal conditions for the spread of both water borne and vector carried disease. The risk of epidemics is serious. Young and old alike are living in very harsh conditions, huddled beneath plastic covered shelters with no access to food supplies, proper shelter or, most importantly, clean water. The incidence of snakebites has increased.

State authorities in Uttar Pradesh estimate that more than 1,000 people have died and over 500,000 are homeless. Less than half have found refuge in community relief centres, leaving the majority to fend for themselves. Many are cramped together on the top of long embankments with the livestock they were able to save. More than 100,000 people lost everything they were not able to take with them when their houses were destroyed.

The government has opened relief centres in schools or public buildings, but these shelters are very crowded and have only limited supplies of food and potable water. Local health services are overwhelmed by the growing medical needs.

The heavy rains have also sent saturated hillsides crashing down on villages in the extreme north of the state, wiping out entire villages. Rescue and body recovery operations have been carried out by both the Armed Forces and local Indian Red Cross personnel. More than 300 bodies have been recovered from under the debris and mud so far.

The Uttar Pradesh districts most badly affected are Azamgarh, Ballia, Basti, Deoria, Gorakhpur, Kushinager, Maharajganj, Mau, Basti, Sant Kabirnagar, Siddharthnagar, Azamgarh, Ballia and Mau. At least 7 districts in the east of the state are almost totally submerged.

Detailed information on Assam, Bihar, and West Bengal is still being gathered but needs can be surmised from data already to hand. In **Assam**, 3.4 million people in 21 districts are affected. While the death toll remains relatively low, the need for relief assistance is just as crucial for the most vulnerable. In the state of **Bihar** 25 districts face disastrous flooding, the worst affected being Champaran, Dharbanga, Khatihar, Kishangunj, Madhubani, and Supaul. Roads have been breached, communication lines broken, and electrical supplies cut off. In **West Bengal**, initial assessments put the number of houses destroyed at 3,800. To date 56,300 people have been rescued. Authorities are operating 158 relief centres.

<b>ESTIMATED FLOOD IMPACT 18 MILLION AFFECTED IN THE 4 WORST HIT STATES</b>				
State	Deaths	Villages flooded	Districts flooded	Cropland in hectares
<b>UTTAR PRADESH</b>	1015	7,256	30	556,000
<b>ASSAM</b>	47	4,000	21	215,000
<b>BIHAR</b>	194	6,538	25	1,232,000
<b>WEST BENGAL</b>	10	*1,000	7	7,000

\* estimate

## *The Response so far*

### **Government Action •**

The Government is co-ordinating the on-going relief operations. The Indian armed forces are conducting search and rescue missions, and transporting emergency shelter materials, food, and

non-food aid together with state and local authorities. In its auxiliary role, the Indian RC has assisted. Dry rations, medicines, and potable water are being distributed, but not in sufficient quantities given the extent of the flooding. There is a very serious shortage of water purification chemicals. Boats have been airlifted into the area in order to reach marooned families and to deliver relief supplies to those sheltering on embankments and other higher ground. The Air Force is also flying the deceased to Dharchula for identification and cremation.

The Government has released the equivalent of CHF 29 million for the relief operation in Uttar Pradesh.

#### **Indian Red Cross/Federation •**

The disaster in India has been growing for several weeks as flood waters accumulated in the catchment basins of the large river systems. The continuous downpours have transformed the situation from one that could be met by local response into a national level emergency and now into a disaster that has begun to exceed national response capabilities. In these exceptional circumstances, the Indian Red Cross has requested the assistance of the Federation in obtaining funds for additional relief aid, and in providing technical expertise to support its operation.

The Indian RC district and state branches are significantly involved in the relief efforts. Initially assisting with the search and rescue activities, they have continued to provide crucial aid to the flood victims through community kitchens, and the distribution of prepared food, clothing, and small stocks of medicine. The Indian RC Uttar Pradesh State Branch has increased its relief efforts after carrying out a rapid assessment of the area. A recent breach of a dike raised flood water even higher in Gorakhpur. The branch evaluated the needs of 300,000 urban dwellers and as a result distributed blankets and food to the most vulnerable. Red Cross volunteers have also been advising local inhabitants on self-care related to health and hygiene concerns -- particularly the dangers of polluted water. Supplies of bleaching powder have already been provided. The Indian RC HQ deployed inflatable boats to help in the search and rescue and aid distribution efforts.

In Bihar rice, milk powder, emergency rations and butter oil were distributed from stocks stored in 4 Indian RC regional warehouses and 1 district warehouse. The Indian RC has also set up 2 soup kitchens to provide 1,000 of the most needy with hot meals. Cotton blankets, sheets and clothes have also been provided by the Society.

The Indian RC Assam State Branch deployed medical and relief teams to the worst affected areas around the Nalbari district. They have given medical assistance to 250 people. Milk powder, emergency rations, butter oil and clothes have been distributed to 1,500 people identified as most in need.

#### **Other Agencies' Action •**

A few small local NGOs are operating in the flooded areas but the total need exceeds the combined capacity of all involved. This has been factored into the Plan of Action.

#### **Co-ordination •**

The responsibility for co-ordination lies with the Government which has directed and empowered State authorities to manage operations within their jurisdiction. They have established 24 hour control rooms in each state capital and are holding regular briefing meetings for those involved in the operation, including the Indian Red Cross. In Uttar Pradesh, the Governor's office facilitated the missions of the Indian Red Cross HQ and Federation representatives and provided the helicopter for the aerial survey.

## ***The Intended Operation***

#### **Assessment of Needs •**

Assessment of needs is being done through the analysis of data obtained from the Indian Red Cross branches, observations by Federation representatives, information provided by other international organisations present in the country, and from government sources. For areas off limits to international staff, the information from the local branches is vital. Based upon years of experience in flood disasters, the Indian Red Cross can anticipate what the needs of the beneficiaries will be. The Society is also ensuring the planned operation maintains cultural norms.

**Immediate Needs •**

Immediate needs vary as the downpour continues in some areas and the water recedes in others, requiring flexibility.

Because of the large numbers affected, an immediate priority is to increase the individual and community capacity to cope. Helping families help themselves reduces the impact on overwhelmed community services. The Indian Red Cross, with Federation support, will contribute to this process by providing assistance to 20,000 of the most vulnerable families. The most urgent needs are for safe water, supplemental food, shelter, and bedding.

**Operational Objectives •**

The overall aim is to assist individuals and communities in getting back to normal by providing relief aid to approximately 20,000 most vulnerable families (100,000 people) in the four worst affected states in India. The objectives are to:

- *Reduce the incidence of diarrhoea diseases* by providing water purification tablets
- *Increase family disaster-coping skills* through health education focusing on hygiene and sanitation
- *Help beneficiaries maintain adequate caloric intake* as they repair and rebuild their homes by providing supplemental food for 1 month
- *Support self-reliance* by supplying basic kitchen sets for family food preparation
- *Build the disaster response capacity* of the Indian Red Cross through the guidance and support of the Federation
- *Promote public awareness* of the disaster services of the Indian Red Cross.

**Immediate action**

Field assessments are underway in the flood affected areas by Indian Red Cross staff and volunteers. Using their feedback, the Indian Red Cross HQ is working with the SARD in assessing needs and developing this response. A senior relief delegate is being recruited to provide technical support to the Indian Red Cross as well as to monitor the total operation.

Each family identified will receive a family kit consisting of:

- 12 kilograms of rice
- 2 litres of oil
- 1 kitchen set
- 2 blankets
- 1 tarpaulin
- 1 month's supply of water purification tablets.

Blankets are being provided because temperatures in the flooded areas are beginning to drop at night. The tarpaulin will initially provide shelter and can be used later for the storage of building materials.

The Federation has provided CHF 100,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to allow procurements to begin.

### **Procurement**

All procurement will be done locally in India through collaboration between the Indian Red Cross and the Federation. Standard Federation procedures will be applied to all procurements. The disaster team (see staffing) will be responsible for co-ordinating this process with the support of the South Asia Regional Delegation and the Federation Secretariat. To start this operation immediately, emergency stocks, maintained by the Indian Red Cross in case of another disaster, are being drawn on and will be replaced as procurement begins.

### **Duration**

The operation will be completed within three months of the receipt of adequate funding.

### **Distribution**

The Indian Red Cross HQ will be responsible for organising the central distribution. State and local branches will carry out distributions in the field with guidance and support from national staff, who will assign field co-ordinators to the operation. Volunteers and youth members will assist in the distributions. Overall monitoring will be the responsibility of the Federation's Relief Co-ordinator.

### **Selection of beneficiaries**

Beneficiaries will be identified from among those whose homes have been destroyed and who are dependent upon agricultural land that has also been severely damaged. An initial selection of the most vulnerable in this group will be done jointly by the local authorities and the Indian Red Cross, which will then run a final cross-check on the list. Standard Federation procedures will be followed.

### **Warehousing**

Efforts will be made to reduce the need for stockpiling and re-distribution of food between warehouses. Whenever possible, suppliers will be sought who can transport the food to the nearest distribution point. The Indian Red Cross central warehouse in New Delhi and warehouses at the state and local level will be utilised when possible. Temporary storage will be sought only when unavoidable.

### **Transportation**

Several locally manufactured cargo vans will be purchased for the local distribution of relief aid and will remain with the Society for use in future operations. Other vehicles will be provided from the Indian Red Cross fleet. Those used extensively will be serviced on completion of the operation. Rental vehicles will be used only as a last resort.

### **Dissemination**

Public awareness of the services the Indian Red Cross provides helps ensure access by beneficiaries. Secondary gains include an increased interest in volunteering, and local contributions to the efforts of the Society. The opportunity also allows the public and officials to learn more about the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, its Fundamental Principles, and the Federation, which serves to foster, ultimately, better services to the end user. The Federation Secretariat and SARD Information Officer will work with the Indian Red Cross to promote the work of the Society nationally, and on behalf of the Movement, internationally. Other National Societies will embark upon fund-raising efforts in support of this operation.

Throughout the operation the Indian Red Cross and Federation will be identified through the use of banners, flags, aprons and other forms of identification. Down-loadable digital photographs of the operation will be available from the Federation Secretariat.

### **Staffing**

A disaster response team comprised of 3 senior Indian Red Cross staff from HQ have been assigned to co-ordinate the relief action at each state branch. They will be joined by a senior Federation Relief Co-ordinator and share responsibility for quality control, assessment, procurement, distribution, and operational management. The team will also establish protocols for service delivery and reporting. Branch staff and volunteers will be utilised when possible for distributions,

and will work in the health and hygiene education courses. They will also monitor the use of water purification chemicals and re-educate if necessary to help ensure the tablets are used correctly.

The Federation's South Asia Regional Delegation will provide support to the operation as requested and within its capacity.

### **Monitoring and Reporting**

Monitoring will be co-ordinated by the disaster response team who will define systems to assess both quality and quantity of service delivery. The Federation's Relief Co-ordinator will oversee monitoring. Operational and financial reports will be issued regularly by the Secretariat. A final report and financial statement will be issued.

### **Capacity of the Indian Red Cross**

In recent years, the Indian Red Cross has increased its capacity to respond to human needs caused by the many calamities that occur annually in India. It has organised a series of institutional and disaster preparedness workshops with support from the Federation and, for some, joint Federation-ICRC support. Lessons learned from these sessions have been put to use in the Society's response to a number of national level disasters this year including this flood, a deadly heat wave, and the Gujarat cyclone. Participants in these workshops will be utilised in this operation when possible.

The Indian Red Cross has great human resource potential. This operation will give it the possibility of increasing its skill base with technical assistance furnished by the Federation and enhancing its ability to respond to disasters now and in the future.

### **Capacity of the International Federation**

The Federation, through its network of National Societies, will provide a senior relief delegate to co-ordinate field support for this operation. The South Asia Regional Delegation, established in early 1998 in New Delhi, is now fully staffed with delegates specialised in public health, disaster preparedness, finance, development and management, and information/media as well as experienced Federation staff from both Nepal and India. Expertise not available within the delegation will be provided through the Federation Secretariat.

## ***Budget summary***

See Annex 1 for details.

## ***Conclusion***

This huge disaster, already affecting 18 million people, may grow as more rain is anticipated. The Indian Red Cross has been providing humanitarian aid to the victims for several weeks but due to the extent of the flooding and to a number of other severe disasters this year, it has requested support from its Federation. The most urgent need is for ***immediate financial support*** to enable a timely response to the needs of 100,000 victims of this devastating flood to get under way.

For additional information please contact Kris Hurlburt, Desk Officer for India 41.22.730.42.69 or [hurlburt@ifrc.org](mailto:hurlburt@ifrc.org)

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**BUDGET SUMMARY**  
**INDIA FLOODS**

**APPEAL No. 27/98**  
**IN CHF**

ANNEX 1

**EMERGENCY RELIEF SUPPLIES**

Non Food items

Tarpaulins (20.000 pieces x CHF 15)	300,000.00
Blankets (40.000 pieces x CHF 7.5)	300,000.00
Kitchen utensils (20.000 sets x CHF 22.5)	450,000.00

Food items

Rice (240 MT x CHF 550)	132,000.00
Butter oil (40.000 LT x CHF 2.60)	104,000.00

Medical items

Chlorine tablets (900.000 tablets x CHF 0.003)	24,000.00
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**TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS** **1,310,000.00**

**NEEDS IN CASH**

Capital equipment (vehicles - 2 x 4WD)	75,000.00
Capital equipment (Communications equipment)	11,000.00
Capital equipment (Software/hardware)	10,000.00
Transport, storage & vehicle costs	50,000.00
Personnel (1 del. x 3 months including RD costs)	47,000.00
Personnel (local staff)	25,000.00
Travel & communications	10,000.00
Information	10,500.00
Monitoring/Evaluation	5,000.00
Administrative, office & general expenses	15,500.00
Secretariat operational support	63,000.00

**TOTAL NEEDS IN CASH** **322,000.00**

**TOTAL APPEAL NEEDS** **1,632,000.00**

**LESS CASH ON HAND** **0.00**

**NET REQUEST CASH & KIND** **1,632,000.00**

NB: All procurement will be made locally