

COLOMBIA: earthquake relief and rehabilitation

Joint Federation/ICRC appeal

appeal no: 04/99
22 March 1999

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 16,382,000
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 200,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 12 MONTHS***

Summary

The preliminary appeal launched jointly on 28 January by the International Federation and the ICRC in aid of victims of the earthquake that struck western Colombia on 25 January 1999 has been 65% covered. Although the rescue and urgent assistance operation was over in two weeks, emergency relief is still going on and assistance to victims in shelters will continue until at least the end of April.

This appeal, which incorporates the CHF 11.7 million sought by the preliminary appeal, outlines the second and third phases of the operation. These comprise a short period of transitional assistance, plus rehabilitation programmes in 28 municipalities and a series of measures to restore Colombian Red Cross facilities destroyed or damaged by the disaster and to reinforce its disaster preparedness capabilities.

The appeal will continue to be administered by the Federation. The ICRC continues as the lead agency for activities related to the armed conflict in Colombia.

The Disaster

A powerful earthquake struck western Colombia on 25 January, leaving 1,185 dead, 8,563 injured and 731 missing, feared buried under the rubble, (figures as of 12 March). The 'quake, 6 on the Richter scale, was followed by many strong aftershocks. The area, a coffee growing region in the Andean mountains, has a total population of three million. The city of Armenia, the capital of Quindio province, was the worst hit, but the disaster area extends across five provinces, and includes 28 towns. The heavy rains that have been falling in the whole country since mid-February have created additional damage in already affected areas and are making life even more difficult for those accommodated in provisional shelters.

The Response so far

Government Action w

The Colombian Government has delegated food distributions, community kitchens, and the running of tent camps to the Red Cross and NGOs. Soft loans and subsidies will be made available to house owners who want to reconstruct and repair their demolished or damaged houses. The Government's Office of Co-operation together with the local authorities will draw up reconstruction plans, while the work will be carried out by private companies directly contracted by the Office of Co-operation.

Other Agencies' Action w

During the first two weeks of the emergency phase the governments of Mexico, Spain, Chile, and Japan sent rescue and medical teams. International agencies operating in the region include UNICEF, Mediciens sans Frontières, and WFP, working through the Colombian Family Welfare Office (ICBF).

Red Cross Red Crescent Movement response w

The ICRC delegation in Colombia immediately assisted with food and logistics. National Societies, in some cases supported by ECHO donations, swiftly sent supplies such as tents, blankets, medical equipment and water purifying tablets, as well as substantial cash donations.

The relief needs (food and non-food items) outlined in the Preliminary appeal were revised and adjusted by the Colombian Red Cross and the Federation's liaison delegate in Colombia.

A Federation telecommunications delegate has been to the area to assess technical needs. Two Federation information delegates were assigned to the operation during the first three weeks.

Colombian Red Cross Action w The Colombian Red Cross (CRC) is distributing food and non food items, has installed electric plants and water systems, and is running community kitchens and provisional camps on a contractual basis at the request of the Government which does not have the structures to provide these services. It has vaccinated 2,500 persons against tetanus.

Fifty trained volunteers working in affected neighbourhoods and provisional camps have provided recreation and psychological support for 3,500 children from 6 to 14 years old.

The National Society is relocating people housed in the few schools that remained intact to tent camps so that children can return to school. Provisional bamboo structures with plastic sheeting have also been erected to serve as temporary schools and community centres.

A national fund raising campaign launched by the National Society brought in donations in cash and kind from individuals and organisations all over the country (to be incorporated in a later list of contributions).

Co-ordination w

The Colombian Red Cross co-ordinates its work with the government and other organisations. The psychological support programme was carried out in co-operation with UNICEF. The CRC is responsible for the distribution of the food parcels of the Colombian Family Welfare Office.

The Intended Operation

The acute emergency phase of the relief operation was concluded on 4 February. Since then, the Colombian Red Cross has been providing basic items such as food, blankets, kitchen utensils, drinking water, hygiene kits and medicines to the most vulnerable. It will continue with this second, transitional phase assistance until the end of April. While this goes on, it will start on the third and final phase of the operation -- the rehabilitation phase.

The rehabilitation projects will benefit affected communities in the provincial capitals of Armenia and Pereira and the 28 most affected municipalities of the area. This phase also includes the reconstruction of damaged Red Cross buildings and the strengthening of the Red Cross disaster preparedness and prevention network.

Red Cross Objectives w

In the second phase:

- { to continue psychological and medical support to 28 communities and to 26,000 persons in shelters
- { to support feeding programmes in these shelters until the end of April
- { to provide clothing and blankets for 26,000 people until the end of April
- { to ensure supplies of drinking water for 158,000 homeless until at least the end of April when the number of homeless is expected to diminish
- { to collaborate with the authorities on the running of 53 shelters and to provide logistics support to the 26,000 inhabitants until the shelters can be closed.

In the third phase

- | to support longer term rehabilitation needs such as community welfare programmes for 200,000 persons, reconstruction and repair of 250 houses, 50 schools and 28 health centres
- | to strengthen the capacities of local Red Cross branches in the area.
- | to consolidate the disaster preparedness system in the area.

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

Capacity of the National Society w

During the first days of the emergency the Colombian Red Cross had 750 volunteers and staff working in the area. Since mid-February 130 volunteers per day working in shifts, 22 people on temporary contracts and 18 staff have been working in the Quindio area. In Risaralde, the numbers are 50 volunteers, 5 temporary hires and 25 staff. In the CRC national headquarters in Bogota, 3 volunteers, 8 temporary staff and 30 regular staff are involved in the operation. Three staff are working on tracing, and as of 26 February have handled 8,713 tracing inquiries of which 7,482 have been resolved.

a) Rehabilitation Programmes

The Colombian Red Cross, with the full participation of the communities involved and the local authorities, plans to help restore living conditions and health and education services for the earthquake victims. Health education and educational activities with children and young people are part of this process.

Social and psychological support is still needed for many people, particularly for children, as well as financial and technical help in reconstruction. The main programmes will be:

Education and reconstruction of schools w

In order to restore the educational system, schools and educational centres must be rebuilt. At the same time, various programmes will be carried out for children in affected communities, who will receive a kit

of educational materials and a daily lunch during the first months. Particular attention will be paid to first aid training and safety measures.

Reconstruction of Health Centres and Health Education w

Support for the reconstruction of damaged health centres in the most affected municipalities will help restore and improve the health system. At the same time a primary health care programme will be carried out in all the municipalities with a special emphasis on children and women. A bank of orthopaedic appliances for patients injured during the earthquake will be a complementary community service.

Psychological and Social Support w

Psychological support is still needed particularly by children and young people. The tracing network will continue its work, reinforcing the system in various areas.

Support for the restoration of housing w

A building materials bank will be created to help communities repair and reconstruct their damaged houses. This programme will be part of the community development efforts, involving communities in the work, with strong leadership from the Red Cross branches.

b) Rehabilitation of the Red Cross System

During the earthquake, the local branches played an important role in disaster response. However, some of them suffered serious damage. In order to restore and consolidate their capacity and their human resources, municipal operational units will be set up in the affected and earthquake prone region.

Repairing and reconstruction of branches w

During the earthquake, the Armenia Red Cross Health Centre and Blood Bank in the south of the city suffered severe damage and had to be demolished and rebuilt. Some offices and the warehouse of the Red Cross Headquarters in the north of the city were also damaged.

In Pereira, the wing of the Headquarters building that houses the observation and hospitalisation units was damaged and part of the roof fell apart and has to be repaired.

As an effect of the earthquake and worsened by the heavy rains, a slope behind the Headquarters of the Pereira Red Cross is in danger of collapse, threatening the lives of 200 poor families living in fragile wooden houses a few metres below. According to studies by engineers, the slope can be secured through drainage, by digging terraces and planting vegetation.

Volunteer Welfare w

The volunteers working for the operation are local people and many lost family members, houses and belongings. The programme aims at strengthening the human resources capacity through training and the provision of proper equipment.

Equipment and infrastructure w

To ensure faster and better assistance in an emergency, two complementary strategic warehouses will be established in Pereira and Armenia and six satellite warehouses in the municipalities.

The Federation telecommunications delegate who evaluated the Red Cross communications system found weaknesses at the local branch level. In order to be able to save lives and speed up rescue work, additional equipment and training is needed. A delegate will be needed for at least three months.

A number of operational units in the municipalities are poorly equipped and were not able to function satisfactorily during the emergency. It is planned to supply from 10 to 15 units with basic office equipment. There were also difficulties in obtaining accurate information during the emergency phase. The installation of software and hardware and the training of personnel and local volunteers will permit

these units to manage, process and store information, not only in future disasters but also during the upcoming rehabilitation and reconstruction phase.

c) Reinforcement of the disaster preparedness system

The region is very vulnerable to seismic and other natural disasters. In order to prepare for future events and to be able to save lives, the CRC intends to strengthen the disaster preparedness system in the region. The system consists of public entities (fire brigade, civil defence, NGOs, Scouts and University groups) and the Red Cross. An essential element will be the education and organisation of the communities themselves.

Consolidation of Disaster Response Systems w

It is planned to make available emergency, search and rescue kits to the region, and to train Red Cross staff in search and rescue, with emphasis on collapsed structures.

Integrated Hospital Security Plans will be prepared including health posts, evacuation plans and individual response systems in case of disaster. Medical and paramedical personnel will be trained in stabilising patients and triage in these kinds of disasters.

When an earthquake occurs a small number of earthquake-resistant centres are needed to house services when the local RC branches and others premises have been put out of action. These alternative co-ordination centres will be furnished with basic equipment. Finally a Training Centre will be set up in Bogotá and a regional centre in the earthquake area in order to educate volunteers, RC personnel and communities in disaster prevention and preparedness.

Community based education in disaster preparedness w

The involvement and education of communities is an essential component of the post-earthquake rehabilitation plan. Evacuation plans, alarm systems, practical exercises and solid community-level organisation will be among essential features. This programme will be linked to the other proposed programmes, with a particular focus on environmental education, prevention and response in high risk seismic areas. In the most remote areas, rural brigades trained by the Red Cross will be particularly necessary.

More detailed descriptions of the projects included in this Appeal are available on request from the Secretariat's Americas Department.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

List of Contributions

See Annex 2 for details.

Note that payments to the Colombian Red Cross will be treated as transfers to the National Society, not as working advances.

Conclusion

Although immediate emergency action was over in two weeks, relief needs in the affected communities and particularly among the homeless are extensive and the authorities in the quake affected areas are still struggling to rehouse victims and restore basic services in damaged towns. The Colombian Red Cross programme outlined in this appeal is designed to help individuals and communities in the stricken areas rebuild their lives and at the same time ensure that this highly vulnerable region is better prepared and equipped to respond to future disasters. Donors are urged to give the programme their generous support.

Margareta Wahlström
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This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>

BUDGET SUMMARY
COLOMBIA EARTHQUAKE -
 Revised budget

APPEAL No 4/99R
IN CHF

RELIEF NEEDS	Initial budget	Revised budget	Total budget
<u>NON FOOD ITEMS</u>			
Construction Material		2,560,000.00	2,560,000.00
Tools		100,000.00	100,000.00
Trees and Plants		15,000.00	15,000.00
Plastic Sheeting	96,200.00		96,200.00
Tents	1,600,400.00		1,600,400.00
Blankets	498,000.00		498,000.00
Clothing sets	89,400.00		89,400.00
Water Tanks	95,800.00		95,800.00
Cooking sets	2,120,000.00		2,120,000.00
Kerosene lanterns	17,800.00		17,800.00
<u>FOOD ITEMS</u>			
Rice	600,000.00		600,000.00
Maize	402,000.00		402,000.00
Beans	500,160.00		500,160.00
Salt	1,500.00		1,500.00
Sugar	11,100.00		11,100.00
Oil	75,000.00		75,000.00
<u>MEDICAL ITEMS</u>			
Water purification tablets	11,000.00		11,000.00
Blood transfusion kits	2,500.00		2,500.00
First Aid Material	10,000.00	20,000.00	30,000.00
Other medical equipment & Drugs supplies		370,000.00	370,000.00
Volunteers /Rescue Teams costs: equipment/food/accomodation		215,000.00	215,000.00
School furnitures/Teaching material		175,000.00	175,000.00
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS	<u>6,130,860.00</u>	<u>3,455,000.00</u>	<u>9,585,860.00</u>
<u>Capital equipment</u>			
Computers/Printers	100,000.00	35,000.00	135,000.00

Telecommunications (radio equipt/mobile phone)	75,000.00	110,000.00	185,000.00
Generators	2,663,700.00	-2,663,700.00	0.00
Vehicle	279,070.00		279,070.00
<u>Transport, storage & vehicle costs</u>	1,280,000.00		1,280,000.00
Freight (Air/Sea/Land)		835,000.00	835,000.00
Warehousing/Machinery Rental		170,000.00	170,000.00
<u>Personnel</u>			
Personnel (3 expat staff)	90,000.00	130,000.00	220,000.00
Personnel (local staff)	650,000.00	1,052,000.00	1,702,000.00
Training (Material and Fees)		715,000.00	715,000.00
<u>Administrative, office & general expenses</u>	15,000.00	240,000.00	255,000.00
Assessment/survey mission/Evaluation		25,000.00	25,000.00
Printing costs/Information/Publicity		187,000.00	187,000.00
Secretariat operational support	416,370.00	151,700.00	568,070.00
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS	<u>5,569,140.00</u>	<u>1,227,000.00</u>	<u>6,796,140.00</u>
TOTAL APPEAL CASH & KIND	11,700,000.00	4,682,000.00	16,382,000.00
LESS CASH ON HAND (see list of contributions attached)			7,660,000.00
NET REQUEST CASH & KIND			8,722,000.00

All items are going to be purchased locally