

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

TAIPEI: EARTHQUAKE

Reference no: 25/99
24 September 1999

THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION REQUESTS CHF 3.3 MILLION TO ASSIST 100,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 4 MONTHS

Summary

The Taiwanese Red Cross Organisation has been fully engaged in the emergency relief operation to assist survivors of the earthquake that struck the island on Tuesday, 21 September. In addition to assisting with search and rescue efforts, volunteers have been distributing food and other relief to the approximately 100,000 people left homeless. An assessment of needs was begun immediately by the Taiwanese Red Cross Organisation with the assistance of International Federation and Japanese Red Cross delegates. Priority needs identified so far include clean water, medicine, blood, tents, generators and coffins. The Federation has today released CHF 200,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) for the immediate procurement of essential relief items.

The Disaster

Over 2,100 people were killed, nearly 8,000 were seriously injured and some 100,000 were left homeless as a result of the earthquake, measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale, which struck Taiwan in the early morning hours of Tuesday, 21 September. Thousands of people remain outdoors, either because their homes were destroyed or from fear of the strong aftershocks (at least three with magnitudes of 6 to 6.8) that have been rocking the region. Hospitals are full of injured people and in Nantou a large sports stadium has been converted into an emergency medical clinic. Relief and rescue efforts in devastated communities in the central region have been hampered by collapsed bridges and damaged roads leading into the area.

The aftershocks triggered large mudslides which have caused more damage to infrastructure, most notably to one of Taiwan's biggest reservoirs. The extensive destruction of buildings, bridges, roads, and the telecommunications and electricity infrastructure is causing concern over the cost of reconstruction. However the worst hit areas, near the epicentre in Nantou and Taichung counties, were primarily agricultural and tourism income earners with most severe destruction in the towns of Pu-li and Chung Liao.

The Response so far

Government Action w

Local authorities and relief agencies have been fully mobilised and are providing search, rescue and relief assistance throughout Taiwan. Search and rescue work is continuing despite fading hopes of finding survivors in the rubble. Rescue teams from 16 countries have been providing assistance with searching for survivors and victims of the quake. No official registration of the homeless has yet been undertaken.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w

Volunteers of the Taiwanese Red Cross Organisation have been assisting in the search, rescue and general relief distribution efforts from the start. Volunteers have been distributing items such as blankets, clothing, dried food, some medicine, water and baby supplies to temporary shelters. The local Red Cross branches are assisting in the posting of announcement boards on which the names of the dead, injured and missing are included.

The International Federation and the Japanese Red Cross immediately dispatched an eight-member relief and medical team to Taipei the day the earthquake struck. The team includes two relief experts, a medical unit currently working in a hospital in Pigun, and an information delegate, responding to information requests from media and National Societies, as well as providing the Federation's Secretariat and its Regional Delegation with information.

The Red Cross Society of China (RCSC), which offered aid to Taipei on the first day of the disaster, and the Taiwanese Red Cross Organisation are now in direct contact working out the mode of co-operation and assistance. The Red Cross Society of China has opened a nationally advertised bank account for public donations, as well as keeping open a 24-hour nationwide telephone line for donations. Three RCSC branches in eastern China - Shanghai, Fujien and Guangzhou - are also raising funds. The Guangzhou branch has already raised RMB 100,000 and the Guangzhou government has contributed USD 100,000 to the local Red Cross branch for the Taiwan earthquake operation. Also, the Federation has released CHF 200,000 from the DREF to accelerate relief efforts.

Co-ordination w

Since the onset of the emergency the International Federation, through its Secretariat, its Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur and its office in Beijing, has been in close contact with the Taiwanese Red Cross Organisation and the Red Cross Society of China to coordinate all international Red Cross and Red Crescent assistance.

The Taiwanese Red Cross Organisation and the Hong Kong Red Cross are co-operating in providing tracing services. A facsimile-based service has been set up to process domestic and international requests for information on missing people. The fax no is: + **886-2-236 35 154** and can be used by National Societies. Hundreds of tracing requests have already come into the Hong Kong Red Cross. The National Societies in Malaysia and Singapore are also receiving tracing requests and forwarding them on to Hong Kong Red Cross. Bilingual tracing forms, in Chinese and English, can be downloaded from the Hong Kong Red Cross homepage, at <http://www.redcross.org.hk>

The Intended Operation

Assessment of Needs •

The current assessment underway by the Red Cross in the worst affected areas is expected to provide a complete picture of the situation and the main needs very shortly. The emergency efforts have been well organised despite logistical difficulties in reaching the affected areas due to collapsed roads and bridges. Access to some areas is only possible with helicopters. Water supply systems have been dramatically damaged and are having an impact on the overall sanitation and hygiene situation.

The International Federation's Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur has been in constant contact with the Red Cross Society of China, the field team on the ground and the Taiwanese Red Cross Organisation. Based on the preliminary findings of the needs assessment, the Federation is now mobilising 3,000 family size tents for the homeless, 6,000 sleeping bags, 30 generators, and 6,000 flashlights. The Federation is dispatching a liaison delegate to Taiwan to help with the co-ordination of the external Red Cross and Red Crescent assistance.

Anticipated Later Needs •

Funds may also be required at a later stage for rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts given the large number of people left homeless as a result of the earthquake.

Red Cross Objectives •

- to provide emergency relief materials to the Taiwanese Red Cross Organisation to meet the immediate needs of the earthquake victims;
- to provide technical expertise by relief experts during the assessment of needs;
- to help meet the urgent need for sheltering approximately 100,000 people left homeless by this disaster.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details. This is a preliminary budget that will be developed once assessments have been completed.

Conclusion

The devastating earthquake and aftershocks which struck Taiwan earlier in the week have caused significant human and material losses. Tens of thousands of people are homeless and in need of adequate shelter. The Federation will offer technical and material support to the Taiwanese Red Cross Organisation to enable its continued response to the needs of tens of thousands injured and homeless people.

Margareta Wahlström
Under Secretary General,
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

George Weber
Secretary General

Taipei Earthquake
RELIEF NEEDS**Non food items**

Tents (3,000 x 180 CHF)	540,000.00
Sleeping bags (6,000 x 70 CHF)	420,000.00
Flashlights, batteries (6,000 x 10 CHF)	60,000.00
Other relief items	1,800,000.00

TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS	2,820,000.00
---------------------------	---------------------

Capital expenditures

Telecommunications equipment/Computers	4,000.00
Generators (15 x 5,000 CHF - 5KW; 15 x 10,000 CHF - 10KW)	225,000.00

Transport, storage & vehicles costs

Airfreight/Seafreight/land	125,000.00
Storage/Warehousing costs	10,000.00

Personnel

Expat staff	10,000.00
-------------	-----------

Administrative, office & general services

Travel & Communications	20,000.00
Assessment/Survey mission/Evaluation	12,000.00
Printing Costs/Information/Visibility	2,000.00
General administrative costs	10,000.00
Secretariat operational support	120,000.00

TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS	538,000.00
--------------------------------	-------------------

TOTAL APPEAL CASH & KIND	3,358,000.00
-------------------------------------	---------------------

LESS PLEDGES ANNOUNCED	0.00
------------------------	-------------

NET REQUEST CASH & KIND	3,358,000.00
------------------------------------	---------------------

All items are to be purchased locally