

WEST AFRICA: FLOODS

appeal no: 26/99
19 October 1999

***THIS APPEAL SEEKS CHF 2,003,000
IN CASH, KIND AND SERVICES
TO ASSIST 77,000 BENEFICIARIES FOR 3 MONTHS***

Summary

Each year, West Africa is prone to devastating floods and 1999 is no exception. The Red Cross is at the forefront of assessment missions and provision of assistance to those worst-affected whose meagre livelihood is in jeopardy. The authorities of Benin, Burkina-Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal have provided initial emergency aid as well as shelter for the homeless, to the extent possible, in schools and vacant buildings. The National Societies also distributed limited relief assistance. It is now planned to supply food rations for a one month period, together with household goods, tents and blankets to assist the most vulnerable as they struggle to rebuild their lives. Health education messages will be disseminated by Red Cross volunteers, since during the period following floods there is a high risk of epidemics, particularly of diarrhoeal diseases and malaria. The Appeal also aims to build up the disaster preparedness capacity at National Society, branch and community levels.

The Disaster

In July and August, West Africa experienced exceptionally heavy rainfall, flash floods and tropical storms. The countries which have been most affected are Benin, Burkina-Faso, the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal. The National Red Cross Societies play a key role in disaster preparedness and response and work side by side with the government authorities, NGOs and local communities. Evaluation teams were sent as soon as possible to the flood-affected areas in order to assess the situation and provide immediate emergency assistance. Flooding has caused widespread displacement, loss of crops, destruction of property and has jeopardised livelihoods. Those affected are, in the majority of cases, subsistence farmers and labourers who eke out a living in difficult conditions.

In ***Benin***, the heaviest rainfall occurred between 15 and 17 July and on 24 July. The centre of the country was badly hit, particularly the sub-prefectures of Djidja, Zangnanado, Bantè, Ouèssè, Zogbodomè in the Department of Zou and the town of Bohicon. It is estimated that 47,000 people (of the total 355,000 inhabitants of this area) are badly affected. However, the National Society has identified 10,469 people who are particularly vulnerable and are in urgent need of assistance. These people are homeless since over 9,850 mud-built homes were washed away in the surge of water.

Torrential rains and flash floods hit ***Burkina-Faso*** in July and August, and five Provinces were particularly badly affected: Oudalan, North Loroum, West Tuy, Sanguié and Oubritenga. In the area of Markoye, 366 km north of Ouagadougou and on the border with Mali, it is estimated that 800 persons are victims of flooding and that 152 families are stranded without shelter. The National Society and government authorities are powerless to help given the region's current inaccessibility by road.

The Gambia suffered torrential rainfall and tornadoes in early August which continued throughout the month, with particularly violent downpours between 15 and 27 August. Roads in the badly-affected Upper River, Central River and Western Divisions have become impassable, communications are cut off, livestock, food provisions and belongings washed away as over 5,000 people have been displaced and left homeless. Large swathes of cropland have also been submerged and 300 cases of dysentery reported.

Northern **Ghana** was hit by persistent downpours of heavy rain during the entire month of August. Nineteen districts are severely flooded in the Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions where the White Volta, Red Volta and Sisili Rivers have burst their banks and irrigation dams have overflowed, submerging farms and communities. Affected areas remain inaccessible by road and thousands have been displaced by the flood waters. Furthermore, outbreaks of cholera have been reported in three regions, resulting in 53 deaths.

Bamako, Koulikoro, Kéléya and Koutiala suffered the greatest damage in **Mali**. The populations affected are mostly disadvantaged communities who live in low-lying land in proximity to river beds. The Malian government distributed food rations and the National Society has received bilateral financial contributions from the American and German Embassies to come to the aid of some 2,000 flood victims.

The Mauritanian Red Crescent reports that violent winds followed by flooding occurred between 4 and 12 September, severely affecting a number of villages in the Tagant, Gorgol, and Trarza regions as well as the capital of **Mauritania**, Nouakchott. Some 3,600 persons (or 720 families) in 13 villages have been badly affected from the damage sustained by the winds which ripped up makeshift shelters and tents, leaving household goods and belongings out in the open to be swept away by the subsequent flood waters.

The situation in **Niger** is equally alarming. In August, the regions of Tillabéry, Diffa, Agadès, Tahoua in the region of Konni were the hardest hit. Some areas reported over 200 mm of water in a single burst of rainfall. In Konni, 789 people have lost their homes and land with 107 houses washed away and 154 fields submerged under water. As a result of the loss of crops, it is likely that this region will suffer from food shortages.

During the week of 13 to 18 August, **Senegal** was hit by tornadoes and torrential rain affecting the entire country and wreaking havoc in the regions of Kaolack, Thiès and Ziguinchor. It is estimated that 65,853 people have been affected, 22 people died, 994 houses were either totally or partially destroyed and 31 tonnes of millet and rice were lost. The floods occurred at a critical period since farmers had not yet harvested their crops.

The Response so far

Government Action w

Benin

The government undertook visits to the affected areas and has begun levelling damaged roads and re-constructing bridges. Flood waters were drained away and health centres were supplied with additional medicine and staff in order to cope with the influx of patients. Those in need of urgent medical attention were cared for and some food assistance was also provided.

Burkina-Faso

In Houndé, the government, through the National Committee for Emergency Relief (CONASUR), provided blankets, mats and food to flood victims. The National Society and CONASUR have combined efforts and will come to the assistance of the flood-affected in Markoye as soon as it is possible to reach the region by road. In the meantime, CONASUR has instructed local authorities in Markoye to purchase mats and blankets locally.

The Gambia

A state of emergency has been declared by the government of Gambia. The National Disaster Relief Committee established two years ago is made up of all government departments, the UN, international organisations and the Gambia Red Cross Society. The committee is monitoring the situation on a daily basis and is responsible for the mobilisation of resources. An assessment mission was carried out by the Gambia Red Cross Society through its Emergency Response Team in collaboration with the government.

Ghana

The National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), of which the Ghana Red Cross Society is a member, undertook an aerial survey of the affected areas on 11-12 September. As of 15 September, NADMO began aerial drops of food to areas which are surrounded by flood waters. As far as possible, blankets, foam mattresses, plastic plates and cups, plastic sheeting and cooking pots are being distributed to the flood victims.

Mali

The government set up a crisis committee which is represented in all regions of the country. 31 tonnes of cereals were distributed to flood victims in the affected areas.

Mauritania

Local and regional authorities formulated official requests for assistance and, as auxiliary to the government of Mauritania, the National Society has been designated to co-ordinate relief and ensure rapid intervention to assist the flood victims.

Niger

The government ensured that flood victims were housed in vacant school buildings and set up temporary systems for the supply of clean drinking water and the provision of first aid care. The Red Cross Society of Niger conducted a needs assessment in partnership with the local authorities.

Senegal

The government put the regional and departmental "ORSEC" plans into action in Kaolack and Joal in the Thiès region. Authorities and Red Cross personnel acted together to drain away flood water, help evacuate flood victims and distribute food contributed by the authorities.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w

Benin

The Red Cross Society of Benin carried out a needs assessment and provided blankets and second-hand clothing to flood victims, as well as medicine to health centres. Teams of trained volunteers were mobilised to boost health education messages. Of an initial 15,700 persons who were considered to be vulnerable, rapid assistance on the part of the government and inhabitants of the area has resulted in a reduction in numbers. The figure of those in urgent need of help now stands at 10,469 persons.

Burkina-Faso

In Houndé, the National Society immediately distributed tents, blankets and second-hand clothing. The priority needs remain tents, as there are an estimated 532 families without shelter, blankets and clothes. Food shortages are feared as a direct result of the flooding.

The Gambia

The needs of the flood-affected far exceed the response capacity of the National Society which distributed limited supplies of relief goods. The needs assessment identified 30,000 vulnerable flood victims who are in need of food, blankets, cooking utensils, second-hand clothing and tents for shelter. This year's dramatic floods have underlined the importance of the disaster preparedness plan which the Gambia Red Cross Society is developing and which is expected to be launched by the end of the year.

Ghana

The Red Cross branches in the affected areas are working in co-operation with NADMO and the Ministry of Health to provide relief. Assessments of the situation were forwarded to headquarters from each of the branches. The Ghana Red Cross Society has identified 15,000 women and children who are particularly vulnerable and require immediate assistance.

Mali

Through its local branches, the Mali Red Cross conducted assessments of loss of life, numbers of wounded as well as damage to crops, property and infrastructure. The National Society helped to evacuate flood victims who are temporarily housed in school buildings.

Mauritania

The Mauritanian Red Crescent took part in evaluations carried out in the field and confirmed the urgent need for tents, blankets and food for 720 flood-affected families.

Niger

The Red Cross Society of Niger distributed one tonne of millet from its warehouse. It also has 290 tents in stock which will be put at the disposal of those who remain homeless and who will be identified by Red Cross volunteers. Of the 11,606 badly-affected flood victims, the National Society has identified 3,000 persons who are particularly vulnerable. A health education campaign will also be launched in order to provide information on diarrhoeal diseases, the need for immediate treatment with Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS), general hygiene and the use of impregnated mosquito nets.

Senegal

The National Society has local branches in the flood-affected regions and mobilised its volunteer network. The government's emergency structure, ORSEC, is also operational in many of these regions and works in collaboration with the National Society. The Red Cross volunteers distributed family sized tents, blankets and second-hand clothing. They also dealt with first aid care for the wounded, distributed food items and helped relocate flood-victims in school buildings.

Other Agencies' Action w

The National Societies are the principal organisations involved in assisting the flood-victims in co-operation with government authorities and the local inhabitants of the region. In Ghana, an inter-NGO consortium is co-ordinating relief assistance, whilst in Mauritania the NGO community worked with the government teams to carry out an overall evaluation of needs.

Co-ordination w

The Regional Delegation in Abidjan is liaising with the National Societies in the region and is centralising information. Procurement of relief items will be carried out through the Regional Logistics Centre.

The West African National Societies have established excellent relations with their respective governments and have a solid reputation regarding delivery of relief.

The Intended Operation

Assessment of Needs w

In the case of each of the flood disasters described above, initial assessments were performed in co-operation with the government. It is based on these assessments that the most vulnerable among the victims have been identified and for whom urgent assistance is proposed.

Immediate Needs w

Immediate needs for food, blankets and clothing were taken care of, as far as possible, in distributions of relief goods. To the extent possible, those without shelter were provided with tents or were placed in vacant school buildings.

However, the needs far exceeded the amounts of relief supplies available. Shelter is an urgent priority with many people still homeless during the cool, rainy season. A one month's supply of food rations is equally essential to enable the flood-victims to survive a difficult period. In addition, blankets, clothing and cooking utensils are vital for those whose entire possessions were washed away by the flood waters. In areas where cholera has broken out, essential medicines are urgently required.

Anticipated Later Needs w

Those whose homes were destroyed by the flood waters will need assistance in rebuilding their homes, in the form of tools and materials. This appeal seeks to provide basic tools to each of the National Societies which would loan them out to needy communities on a rotating basis.

Red Cross Objectives w

- { to help alleviate suffering by providing the most vulnerable flood victims with shelter, food for one month, blankets and clothing;
- { to take advantage of the distribution of relief items to disseminate health education messages to local communities regarding basic hygiene, sanitation and prevention of diarrhoeal diseases and malaria;
- { to provide essential medicine to those communities which are faced with outbreaks of cholera;
- { to assist local communities in rebuilding their houses lost during the floods;
- { to enhance the Red Cross image in isolated regions; and,
- { to strengthen disaster preparedness and prevention capacities at the National Society level, particularly through training, and to integrate the DP plans of the NS into national plans.

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

Emergency Phase: July - August 1999 w

The emergency phase immediately following the floods in each country has been handled by the relevant National Society and respective government authorities.

Phase Two: September - December 1999 w

Red Cross volunteers at the branch level will be mobilised to carry out distributions of relief goods to the flood-affected communities. Community Based First Aid activities will be reinforced and health messages disseminated by the volunteers as distributions are taking place. Information on prevention of cholera and the use of ORS will be provided, together with medicines, to communities affected by epidemics of cholera. In November and December, it is planned to assist with reconstruction of homes by providing tool kits and technical advice. Refresher courses on disaster preparedness and disaster response support will also be organised.

Capacity of the National Society w

The National Societies in West Africa have solid ex

perience in relief assistance and a network of reliable, trained volunteers. Capacities in contingency planning for floods will be reinforced.

Present Capacity of the Federation Regional Delegation

The Regional Delegation for West Africa in Abidjan benefits from a Regional Relief Delegate, a Regional DP Delegate, a Regional Health Delegate, two Regional ID/RD Delegates, a Reporting Delegate, the Regional Logistics Centre and the Regional Finance Unit.

Evaluation

Regular reports will be provided by the National Societies to the Regional Delegation. Analysis will be made at individual National Society level on the different aspects of the operation: distribution of relief items, provision of medicine, health education, re-building of houses, training in capacity building at branch level, contribution of the Regional Delegation.

At the close of the flood relief operation, a joint evaluation will be carried out by the Operating National Societies; this exercise will be co-ordinated by the Regional Delegation for West Africa.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details. A summary of individual country budgets can be found in Annex 2.

Conclusion

The widespread flooding in West Africa with its trail of suffering has again struck those who are least able to cope. It is the very poorest who live in areas which are susceptible to flooding and their mud huts and makeshift homes are washed away in the torrents of water, sweeping away all stocks of food and belongings. Recurring floods highlight the necessity of disaster preparedness measures, including early warning systems and the introduction of evacuation procedures, which would not avoid the occurrence of a disaster, but would mitigate its impact. The Regional Delegation will work with the National Societies towards improving their capacity to implement appropriate disaster prevention strategies.

Margareta Wahlström
Under Secretary General,
Disaster Response & Operations Coordination

George Weber
Secretary General

BUDGET SUMMARY***West Africa - Floods*****APPEAL No. 26/99
IN CHF**

ANNEX 1

RELIEF NEEDS

<u>Food items</u> (cereals, oil)	504,000	
<u>Non food items</u>		
Tents	825,000	
Blankets	263,000	
Clothes	41,000	
Ustensils and tools	74,000	
<u>Medical items</u>	26,000	
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS		1,733,000

Transport, storage & vehicles costs

Transport contracts	74,000	
<u>Personnel</u>		
National staff	59,000	
Training	19,000	
<u>Administrative, office & general services</u>		
Travel & Communications		
Assessment/Survey mission/Evaluation		
Printing Costs/Information/Visibility		
Other administrative services	28,000	
Secretariat operational support	90,000	
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS		270,000

TOTAL APPEAL CASH & KIND	2,003,000
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LESS PLEDGES ANNOUNCED	0
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NET REQUEST CASH & KIND	2,003,000
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All items are to be purchased locally

Appeal 26/99: West Africa Floods									
Detailed budget - per country (CHF)									
Item	Benin	Burkina Faso	Gambia	Ghana	Mali	Mauritania	Niger	Senegal	TOTAL
Tents		187,500	375,000	125,000		107,006		31,250	825,756
Blankets	35,003	5,000	158,550	50,000	3,750	10,692			262,995
Clothing	20,914			20,000	250				41,164
Cereals	94,000	15,750	169,002	100,000	6,125	11,700	10,800	75,000	482,377
Oil	10,000			10,000	1,225	500			21,725
Medicines	4,000	1,300	12,000	6,000		1,440	1,200		25,940
Kitchen utensils				72,000	501				72,501
Agricultural tools		600				600			1,200
Transport costs	6,500	4,545	17,605	20,000	500	20,000	1,100	3,750	74,000
National staff	10,050	11,250	5,100	23,100	900	8,100	600		59,100
Training	3,000	2,000	3,000	3,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	19,000
Administrative costs	2,000	2,000	7,750	3,200	2,000	10,000	600	375	27,925
Operational support	11,250	11,250	11,250	11,250	11,250	11,250	11,250	11,250	90,000
TOTAL	196,717	241,195	759,257	443,550	28,501	183,288	27,550	123,625	2,003,683