

CUBA: HURRICANE IRENE

**preliminary appeal
appeal no: 27/99
20 October 1999**

***THIS PRELIMINARY APPEAL SEEKS
CHF 1,333,000 IN CASH, KIND AND
SERVICES TO ASSIST 21,600
BENEFICIARIES FOR 6 WEEKS***

Summary

Hurricane *Irene*, classified as a category 1 hurricane, crossed Cuba on 14 October beginning at 15:00 hrs local time with winds up to 120 kilometres and hour. The first town to be affected was Batabo, to the south of Havana province. Later *Irene* struck the capital, Havana, and Santiago de las Vegas and at about 17:00 hrs left the coast in the province of Baracoa on its way to Florida in the United States.

In its wake the hurricane produced intense rain and caused flooding along the coastal areas in western Cuba, especially the province of Havana from Villa Clara and then passing to Cienfuegos and Camagüey. The most affected were the capital city and the provinces of Cien Fuegos, Island of Youth, Pinar del Rio, Sancti Spiritus, Villa Clara and Matanzas.

Over 160,000 people had to be evacuated and four deaths have been reported. The hurricane destroyed homes, blew off many roofs and caused considerable damage to electrical generators, industrial centres and agricultural areas. Rains are continuing in the mountainous regions.

The Disaster

At 11:00 hrs on 11 October heavy rains began to fall on the Island of Youth (Isla de la Juventud) and along the western coast of Cuba. In 24 hours, 49 of 79 water reservoirs in the provinces of Matanzas, Ciego de Avila, Havana and Sancti Spiritus overflowed and 162,664 persons had to be evacuated from the danger zones, of which 21,602 were housed in temporary shelters and the remainder with family or friends. Over 3,000 homes were affected of which 224 were destroyed and 2,870 sustained damages to their roofs and walls. 144 factories and 26 agricultural installations suffered partial damage. Electricity was cut off and communications were interrupted. Three hospitals and one health clinic were damaged. 20 schools were damaged of which six were totally destroyed. Damage to agricultural areas is still being evaluated.

The Response so far

Government Action w

The government and Civil Defence authorities have been providing assistance to those evacuated to the temporary shelters and have carried out damage assessments in the affected areas.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action w

The Cuban Red Cross (CRC) has mustered 4,162 trained volunteers to assist with rescue efforts and evacuation of the population in the worst affected areas. The Red Cross informed the population on preventative actions to be taken in case of a hurricane and how to cope in the aftermath. First aid has been provided where needed and volunteers continue to bring assistance to people in areas difficult to access.

Co-ordination w

The Cuban Red Cross has been co-ordinating with Civil Defence authorities in evaluating the damage in the affected provinces, removing fallen trees from roads, and assisting with blood collection activities. Tracing activities are underway in addition to clearing debris.

The Federation's Regional Delegation in Santo Domingo has been in contact with the Cuban Red Cross via HF-radio, telephone and email. The Regional Delegation in standing by to send a delegate should one be needed. The Federation has released CHF 200,000 from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to help the Cuban Red Cross provide immediate assistance to the hurricane victims.

The Intended Operation

Assessment of Needs w

The Cuban Red Cross has prioritised the provision of emergency assistance to victims evacuated to shelters, namely providing food items, first aid, and health care.

Immediate Needs w

The most urgent needs are to provide emergency relief assistance to the 5,000 families (or 21,600 persons) currently accommodated in shelters. Food, personal hygiene articles, clothing, medical assistance, water containers and general sanitation are the most pressing needs for the next six weeks. Also, ponchos and boots are needed for volunteers.

Anticipated Later Needs w

Assistance which may be required later includes mattresses, additional food, water and sanitation items, and kitchen utensils. These items may be included in the final version of this Appeal.

Red Cross Objectives w

- { to assist with providing medical and first aid assistance to the sick and injured who are in the shelters;
- { to assist people in shelters by providing emergency food rations, safe drinking water, hygiene articles and bedding; and,
- { to provide basic equipment to the volunteers from those branches supporting the operation.

National Society/Federation Plan of Action

The Federation/CRC will provide food and basic relief items to 5,000 homeless families for a period of six weeks. A detailed plan of action prepared by the Cuban Red Cross will be available soon.

Budget summary

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

Hurricane *Irene* has caused severe damage to the infrastructure, industrial, and agricultural sectors of Cuba and left thousands homeless. This preliminary Appeal has been developed on the basis of evaluations carried out by the Cuban Red Cross in the affected provinces together with governmental and Civil Defence authorities. A rapid response from donors is necessary in order to give immediate assistance to over 21,000 people accommodated in shelters and to provide equipment for CRC volunteers.

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BUDGET SUMMARY***Cuba: Hurricane Irene - Preliminary Appeal***APPEAL No. 27/99P
IN CHF

ANNEX 1

RELIEF NEEDS

<u>Food items</u> (rice, oil, corn flour, pasta, beans, tinned fish and meat, salt, seasoning)	830,000
<u>Non food items</u>	
Hygiene	162,000
Bedsheets, towels	180,000
Water purification tablets, chlorine, water containers	22,000
Medical and first aid	2,000
Clothing and equipment for volunteers	40,000
TOTAL RELIEF NEEDS	1,236,000
<u>Transport, storage & vehicles costs</u>	13,000
<u>Personnel</u>	
Expat staff (1 expat/ 3 months)	30,000
<u>Administrative, office & general services</u>	
Assessment/Survey mission/Evaluation	2,000
Other administrative services	2,000
Secretariat operational support	50,000
TOTAL OPERATIONAL NEEDS	97,000
TOTAL APPEAL CASH & KIND	1,333,000
LESS ESTIMATED RESOURCES	0
NET REQUEST CASH & KIND	1,333,000