

INDIA: ORISSA CYCLONE

*29 November,
1999*

situation report no. 3

period covered: 11 - 20 November, 1999

budget revision and programme extension of 3 months until April 2000

The Government and Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) responded immediately to the cyclone of October 29 by preparing a flood rescue and relief operation. The International Federation action is intended to facilitate voluntary assistance to support the operational response, and to promote solidarity in times of distress through its network of member National Societies from around the world. The revised budget attached to this Situation Report No. 3 replaces that included in the original request for assistance no. 28/99 launched on 1 November, 1999.

The context

The Government of India does not intend to launch a formal international appeal, but the Federation will support the Indian Red Cross action in Orissa by providing resources channelled through its international network of member National Societies.

A violent cyclone hit India's eastern coast at noon local time on Friday 29 October, crossing the coast at approximately 600 kms southeast of the port of Paradwip in Orissa State with winds of up to 260 kph (155 mph) and a 20 foot tidal surge. Paradwip port itself was very heavily damaged, and the cyclone caused massive destruction and loss of life in the entire area, and forcing the evacuation of tens of thousands of families in the districts of Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Puri and Bhubaneswar.

Latest events

The latest officially reported death toll is over 9,500, but is expected to rise to over 10,000, with most of these deaths in the Jagatsinghpur District. The health situation is, at present, considered to be under control, but is being monitored constantly. Some agencies are reporting cholera cases in small numbers, particularly in Cuttack district. A senior Red Cross delegate together with the Indian Red Cross Branch is just completing a health review, and has made an interim conclusion that there is no imminent deterioration in the situation.

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Assessments continue, but recent information indicates that at least 1 million houses have been destroyed, and this number could increase to 1.7 million. At least 300,000 cattle have been lost, 1.2 million hectares of paddy crop destroyed, and 32,950 hectares of non paddy land. Nearly all of the semi-concrete and thatched structures have been washed away or reduced to rubble. Communications and electricity systems in most areas are completely destroyed, and will take many months to repair.

While rescue operations were initially hampered because of difficulties in reaching the affected areas, with the waters now having receded all major routes are now accessible allowing for assessments and recovery operations to proceed. Visits by Red Cross staff have now been made to all the affected coastal areas. A team composed of Federation specialists and the Indian Red Cross Branch in Orissa have now completed a review of the area, and jointly produced a plan of action.

Food supply needs are being addressed in all areas, but substantial quantities will be needed in the most affected areas, and these needs will not be fully resolved by the forthcoming harvest. In many areas predictions of 30% to 40% of the normal yields are being made. Contamination of the water supply is still a very serious concern, but with many agencies addressing this problem many wells are now operating again. The original concern over human and animal bodies contaminating water supplies is being resolved, with bleaching, burying and, where possible, burning.

An effective three-level coordination process has been developed:

- Level 1 - New Delhi: Central Government, International / National NGOs, Red Cross and the UN. Objectives: Policy, macro level inter-organisational relations, operational issues, joint assessments, and resource allocation.
- Level 2 - Bhubaneshwar: State Government, International / National NGOs, Red Cross and UN. Objectives: Liaison with Delhi HQs, liaison with field cells, assessments of remaining needs and assistance gaps, support to the development of action plans, logistical support at district level.
- Level 3 - District: local authorities, local field staff from all government, NGOs, Red Cross and UN. Objectives: District level coordination, and reporting to Bhubaneshwar.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The present assistance provided by the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) in association with the International Federation, considered as phase 2 of the relief assistance, will continue until 22 December and focus chiefly on the communities which are located around the Indian Red Cross cyclone shelters along the coastline where the Indian Red Cross has a well established network. This also coincides with the most affected areas. An emergency ration was immediately distributed by the Indian Red Cross to 20,000 families during the initial phase 1 of the emergency. The second phase consists of the distribution of emergency rations in order to sustain the livelihood of the most affected people until the reduced harvest in late December. A third phase will, after an updated assessment, consist of further food as necessary, associated with a more detailed rehabilitation programme. In all cases the programme will be fully co-ordinated with all other Government and non government organisations active in Orissa.

A distribution system, run by the local Red Cross branch and based on the cyclone shelter areas, has supplied emergency rations. The level of assistance is now being increased, not only in the quantity of supplies but also in the expansion to new villages in the coastal areas. The availability of 23 Red Cross Cyclone shelters during the actual cyclone has been carefully analysed, and there is considerable evidence that the German Red Cross-supported operation has proved crucial at saving hundreds of lives.

Co-ordination w

The Government maintains overall responsibility for the operation, and the IRCS is collaborating with all other parties in the affected areas. There are daily co-ordination meetings in the field which all the

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major agencies and the government attend. In Delhi a weekly system of co-ordination meetings is continued as well.

Plan of Action

Phase 1 ●

Immediate Needs

Procurement will be carried out locally (in India) by the IRCS, and relief items will be distributed through the Red Cross branches in collaboration with the Federation. All local procurement is being conducted through The Food Corporation of India. Emergency stocks maintained by the IRCS in their regional warehouses have already been drawn on, in order to begin the relief operation, and these will be replaced as part of the appeal.

Duration

The overall operation, including rebuilding of emergency stocks, will be implemented and completed within six months. The relief distribution will be completed as soon as possible, with many supplies already sent and received in the most affected areas.

Distribution

The IRCS will be responsible for organising the initial central distribution. State and district branches will carry out distributions in the field with guidance and support from national staff co-ordinators. Volunteers and youth members will be heavily involved in the process, with overall guidance and monitoring being provided by the IRCS / Federation.

Selection of beneficiaries

An initial selection of the most vulnerable has been conducted by the joint Indian Red Cross/Federation rapid assessment team. A detailed village to village evaluation will be conducted as part of this operation - distribution of immediate and rehabilitation items will be made according to the needs which vary by village, and in some cases also by family.

Warehousing

Wherever possible local suppliers will be identified and contracted who can transport the supplies to the nearest distribution point, thereby reducing the need for stockpiling and redistribution between warehouses.

Transportation

Local suppliers will use their own vehicles as far as possible, final distribution will be conducted by the Indian Red Cross, only using outside vehicles if strictly necessary.

Staffing

A joint Indian Red Cross / Federation rapid assessment team, among the first to gain access to the area after the cyclone hit, has been in the field since the start of this emergency operation. The Federation has assigned a senior relief co-ordinator, and a small health and logistics team to work alongside the Indian Red Cross in order to assist with monitoring, assessment, procurement, distribution and operational management. Branch staff and volunteers are crucial in the relief operation. The Federation's South Asia Regional Delegation is providing support to the operation as requested and within their capacity.

Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting will be undertaken by the relief co-ordinator and the disaster response team. Operational and financial reports will be produced on a regular basis. A final report and financial statement will be issued.

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Phase 2 ●

The initial objectives of this stage will be to provide:

- emergency food rations to 50,000 families for one month;
- at least 25,000 families with basic shelter;
- blankets to 50,000 families;
- used clothes to 100,000 adults;
- kitchen utensils to at least 10,000 of the most affected families.

In addition, 150 tube wells in affected villages will be rehabilitated and an emergency health preparedness capacity will be established to respond to possible outbreaks of epidemics.

The Orissa State Branch Headquarters will carry out the following operational responsibilities:

- Procurement of relief items.
- Organization of transport of relief items to distribution centres.
- Warehousing/storage of relief items in Bhubaneswar.
- Issuing clear directives to staff officers & volunteers at distribution centres.
- Coordination with government authorities.
- Keep District Branches of IRCS informed of relief activities and distributions in their area.
- Monitor the programme implementation.

Programme Officers will provide support to the operation by receiving relief materials and ensuring they are safely stored until the end of the distribution, preparing a list of all registered beneficiaries and issuing a ration card to each registered family, organise and monitor the distribution of relief materials. The International Federation and Indian Red Cross Headquarters will arrange for the transfer of necessary funds, support IRCS Orissa State Branch in management of the relief operation, and monitor and facilitate distributions and relief activities.

The following food ration, sufficient to provide 1,700 Kcals per person per day and calculated on the basis of a family of five, will be distributed:

- 50 kg of rice.
- 10 kg of dal.
- 2 litre's of cooking oil (palm oil).

The following emergency health and sanitation items will be purchased:

- 3,000 mosquito nets;
- cholera prevention kits (ORS & IV fluid);
- Zero B Sirja filters;
- iron and vitamin tablets;
- bleaching powder;
- water purification tablets.

One local Medical Co-ordinator will be temporarily employed to assist the IRCS in monitoring the situation, and subsequently in implementing the programme.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Budget Summary

See Annex 2 for revised budget details, as well as Annex 3 for the detailed Phase 2 budget.

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Budget Summary

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Conclusion

With the immediate assistance provided by the Indian Red Cross and Federation teams effectively reaching the intended beneficiaries, Red Cross assessment team have now completed their rapid assessments of the area and identified the immediate and longer term needs. The results have formed the basis of discussions with senior State Government Officials, and led to agreement on further action and coordination to be taken between the Red Cross and all major agencies involved in the operation.

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