

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

DPR KOREA: FLOODS

15 October 2001

Information Bulletin N° 1

This Information Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Based on further updates and details from assessment reports, the Federation is preparing an international Appeal for more than CHF 650,000 to assist 12,000 beneficiaries for three months.

The Situation

On 9 and 10 October 2001, heavy rain combined with strong winds and sea surges resulted in severe flooding in two cities and five counties in Kangwon Province and three counties in South Hamgyong Province, on the eastern coast of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

According to meteorological information, Wonsan City, the provincial capital of Kangwon Province recorded 450mm rainfall in one day while some counties reported up to 500mm.

The Kangwon Provincial Red Cross Branch, in coordination with the Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) of the Government of DPR Korea, has reported 81 people killed, 27 people missing and 84 people seriously injured. Additional data provided was as follows:

- 11,207 families homeless
- 918 houses destroyed (affecting 1,320 families)
- 1,124 houses seriously damaged (affecting 2,944 families)
- 31,546 houses partially damaged (affecting 59,584 families)
- 28,933 hectares of arable land affected
- 22,610 hectares of paddy field damaged
- 6,202 hectares of vegetable non-paddy fields damaged
- 73,604 metric tonnes (MT) of rice lost

FDRC has also reported damage to 21 bridges (including six carrying railways), 1,600 metres of water piping, 44,000 metres of sewage piping, four ports, and 1,200 metres of embankment in 20 locations.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

The Red Cross was the first international organisation on site and the first one to respond. A disaster assessment team comprising DPRK Red Cross staff and the Federation disaster preparedness and relief delegate conducted a survey of needs within 20 hours of the disaster.

Additional assessments were conducted on 13 and 14 October by Federation health and water and sanitation delegates and counterpart staff from the DPRK Red Cross.

On October 12 the following relief items were released from the DPRK Red Cross regional warehouse in Wonsan City and distributed to 1,200 of the worst affected families living in and around the city:

- 100 metric tonnes of wheat
- 3,600 blankets
- 192 kitchen sets
- 132 first aid kits
- 1,200 water containers
- 110,000 water purification tablets
- 50 rolls of plastic sheeting

These needs were identified based on observation and information gathered from FDRC, other local government representatives, local Red Cross branch staff, affected households, and health staff in provincial and city hospitals.

The Federation and DPRK Red Cross have also had meetings with OCHA, UNDP, WFP, UNICEF and other agencies in DPRK to coordinate the response effort.

The team has reported severe damage to water and sanitation facilities and an increased risk of water-borne diseases and sanitation related diseases.

This situation is putting additional pressure on an already over stretched health system. The shortage of anesthetics is one of the most serious problems. Added to this is a general lack of antiseptics, dressing materials and water and soap, which increases the risk of infections.

The DPRK Red Cross has established a small temporary first aid post staffed with two volunteers equipped with first aid kits from the disaster preparedness warehouse. Minor injuries are being treated through this post. Psychological support is also being provided.

Families have reported fear of sleeping in their homes in case further rains cause more damage and landslides. The team witnessed men, women and children hastily collecting cut rice bundles which have been washed away from the paddy fields.

Background

In 1995, following severe flooding, the Government of DPRK, for the first time, appealed for international assistance. The Federation, in cooperation with the DPRK Red Cross, launched a CHF 5 million appeal for the distribution of clothing, blankets, food and first aid kits to 130,000 men, women and children and to rebuild 1,900 houses. The emergency operation has since evolved from food aid and shelter to a programme focused on disaster preparedness and support to the health system, through drug distributions, water and sanitation activities, health worker training, and community based first aid. The 2001 annual budget is approximately CHF 10 million.

The Federation operational area currently covers three provinces and a municipality (North Pyongan, Chagang, South Pyongan, Kaesong Municipality), comprising 50 counties and 1,706 provincial, county and village level health institutions, with a catchment population of approximately 6 million. The Federation delegation comprises nine international delegates including four health delegates, a disaster response and relief delegate and a water and sanitation delegate.

As a result of its role in disaster response operations during the 1995 and 1996 floods, and the 1997 drought, the DPRK Red Cross has been increasingly recognised by the Government and international agencies as a key player in disaster preparedness and response. A Memorandum of Understanding between the DPRK Red Cross and the FDRC was signed in 2000. The document outlines the roles and responsibilities of DPRK Red Cross in disaster preparedness and response. In the same year, DPRK Red

Cross and the Federation cooperated to provide relief assistance to 6,000 households affected by the Typhoon which hit the east coast of DPRK. The strategic pre-positioning of relief items under the 1999 programme proved to be crucial in the implementation of this operation.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact :

The Red Cross Society of DPRK in Pyongyang ; Phone 850-2-18333/18444 ask for 8048)the Federation phone 850-2-3813490); Fax 850-2-3814644

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

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