

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

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: FLOODS

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Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) Allocated: CHF 80,000

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 180 countries.

For more information: www.ifrc.org

In Brief

This document is being issued

based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. In accordance with further updates and details from assessment reports, or should the situation deteriorate, the Federation will consider international support through an Appeal. A DREF allocation of CHF 80,000 has been released and unearmarked funds to repay DREF are needed.

The Situation

Since 20 November 2003, extensive flooding has occurred throughout the Cibao valley in the north east and north west of Dominican Republic, and particularly in communities where the rivers Yaque del Norte and Yuna have burst their banks. The disaster is causing loss of life and livelihoods and is exposing disaster victims to communicable diseases and economic hardship. The worst affected communities are in the districts of Duarte and Montecristi which encompass areas where the river basins merge with the ocean. Some of the most vulnerable populations, in particular Haitian migrants living legally and illegally on the border area, live within the hardest affected communities in Duarte and Montecristi and are reliant on daily wage labour for subsistence income.

The situation relating to water and sanitation is a major cause for concern. In the worst-affected communities water sources and sanitation facilities are contaminated as precarious pre-disaster conditions with a lack of clean water and adequate sanitation have been exacerbated by the floods. In addition, there are reports that the water distribution system has been damaged and that contaminated flood waters and seeping into the water systems. Furthermore, Montecristi and Duarte have high levels of endemic dengue fever, and there are fears of increased risks of outbreaks of dengue fever and malaria.

There has been significant damage to crops, particularly rice, plantains and bananas, as over 200,000 hectares of farmland have been flooded. Given that planting for the new harvest should be completed by the end of November, the floods will be likely to lead to small scale food insecurity and loss of income for small agricultural producers.



Map showing flood- affected areas in the blue circles

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Extensive search and rescue operations initiated by the Dominican Red Cross have concluded: 17,000 people were rescued, 47,000 evacuated together with the Civil Defence and the fire brigade. Relief work has now commenced to assist those affected. Detailed assessment information is being collected and 50 volunteers are being deployed in teams to the worst hit areas to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the disaster situation at the community level; however access to some of the hardest hit communities is limited, given that many roads remain flooded and without communication. The most affected districts are: Duarte, Montecristi, Santiago, Sanchez Ramirez, Valverde and Maria Trinidad Sanchez. According to the Dominican Emergency National Commission, it is estimated that approximately 65,000 people are currently affected by the disaster, 9 people have died and 12,000 have been displaced. More detailed assessment reports from the Dominican Red Cross, focusing on Montecristi and Duarte, will be forthcoming over the next few days.

To date, a total of 21 shelters, many of which are in schools, have been set up in the districts of Duarte, Montecristi and Sanchez Ramirez, currently housing approximately 1,514 people. Several shelters are accommodating displaced Haitians. As a result, the Dominican Red Cross is liaising with the Haitian National Red Cross Society in view of the affected Haitian migrant population. The Dominican Red Cross has set up an internal structure to respond to the emergency and has sent a water truck to the affected areas to assist the national water company in the different official shelters. Furthermore, the Dominican Red Cross has a mental health support unit which is being deployed to the affected areas, in particular to Montecristi. Volunteers are assisting with the provision of mental health services which focus on child care.

A member of the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and a trained regional intervention team (RIT) member were deployed to the Dominican Republic to work with the National Society on the assessment of the disaster situation and to assist in the planning of emergency response.

In view of the need for procurement of relief supplies, Red Cross staff have initiated an investigation of potential suppliers for mosquito nets, mattresses and blankets. The possibility of utilizing stocks of kitchen sets, hygiene sets, plastic sheeting and blankets from the Pan American Disaster Response Unit is also under consideration.



Floods in the disaster-struck area and distributions of donated relief items by the Dominican Red Cross

A donation of emergency food rations was made by the company, Carrefour, and the French Embassy. This was made up of 5,000 packages of meat, bread, bottled water, cans of tuna, and matches. The donation was distributed to disaster victims by Dominican Red Cross volunteers.

Coordination meetings are taking place on a daily basis between the Federation, representatives of the American Red cross, OXFAM, the Pan American Health Organization, ECHO and USAID and communication is also ensured with UN agencies with a view maximizing resources to avoiding duplication.

ECHO funding is being sought by the Federation in support of a relief operation to assist vulnerable flood victims and DREF funding in the amount of CHF 80,000 has been approved. Donors are requested to provide donations for reimbursement of the DREF contribution.

The Federation, through members of PADRU on the ground, and with the support of the regional delegation, continues to monitor the situation. Priorities for emergency response are water and sanitation and the distribution of emergency relief items such as hygiene kits and mosquito nets. Should the situation continue to deteriorate over the next two days, an international appeal may be launched.

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

For further details please contact

- *The Dominican Red Cross in Santo Domingo ; Phone (1809) 682 45 45; Fax number; (1809) 682 3793 email: cruzrojadom@codetel.net.do*
- *Gilberto Guevara, Head of Regional Delegation, Panama, Phone (507) 317 13 00; Fax number (507) 13 04; email: ifrcpa51@ifrc.org*
- *Luis Luna, Regional Officer, Phone 41 22 730 42 74; Fax 41 22 733 0395; email; luis.luna@ifrc.org*

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.