

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

INDIA: MAHARASTRA MONSOON FLOODS

9 September 2005

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 181 countries.

In Brief

This Bulletin (no. 11/2005) is being issued for information only, and reflects the status of the situation and information available at this time. The Federation is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- In India: Indian Red Cross Society (Dr S P Agarwal, Secretary-General); email: spagarwalsg@indianredcross.org; phone: +91.11.2371.6441; fax: +91.11.2371.7454
- In India: Azmat Ulla, Head of Delegation, New Delhi); email: ifrcin65@ifrc.org; phone: +91.11.2332.4203; fax: +91.11.2332.4235
- In Geneva: Jagan Chapagain, Senior Officer, Asia Pacific department; email: jagan.chapagain@ifrc.org; phone: +41.22.730.4316; fax: +41.22.733.0395; Hiroto Oyama, Senior Officer, Asia Pacific department; email: hiroto.oyama@ifrc.org; phone: +91.22.730.4273 or Nelly Khrabrayal; email: nelly.khrabrava@ifrc.org; phone: +41.22.730.4306

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

The Situation

Seven weeks following the torrential deluge which flooded large areas of the western state of Maharashtra including the state capital Mumbai, the waters have receded and basic services have been re-established. The disaster claimed approximately 1,200 lives and affected 20 million people.

Much of Mumbai's drainage system collapsed and as the flood waters subsided, there was a continued risk from water-borne diseases. The most serious of these has been leptospirosis which is a disease people get when they wade through water infected by animal urine. Water-borne diseases have caused an estimated 150 deaths in the weeks following the flooding.

As of 6 September 2005, the Ministry of Home Affairs (National Disaster Management Division) reported that 3,200 people continued to be living in 44 relief camps. This is a significant reduction from a month ago when approximately 200,000 people were living in relief camps.

The Maharashtra state government reports the following impacts of the disaster include;

- 20,000 hectares of farmland have become waste due to topsoil being washed away
- 550,000 hectares of crops were damaged
- Over 26,000 cattle losses
- Over 350,000 houses partially damaged and over 14,000 homes destroyed
- Damage to roads and bridges estimated at CHF 330 million (USD 266 million, EUR 214 million)

The Indian government is looking at addressing reducing long-term vulnerability of the flood-affected areas, especially Mumbai which has a population of over 20 million people. Among the recommendations being examined by the government are:

- The large number of people living in low quality housing in highly vulnerable areas, particularly the bed of the Mithi River.
- Replacement of the Mumbai drainage system which is more than 100 years old. A Maharashtra state government report notes that unless this is done, monsoon preparedness measures will not be effective in the face of severe flooding.

The central and state governments launched a major relief effort and coordinated extensively with NGOs, UN bodies, etc. There was a significant financial response from the Indian corporate sector.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

A summary of major relief items from Indian Red Cross stocks distributed in various affected areas since information bulletin 10 (12 August) are as follows;

Item	Quantity
Pulses	1,600 kgs
Rice	7,000 kgs
Family kits ¹	3,080
Disinfectant	1,700 bottles
Mosquito coils	6,700
Mosquito replant	1,000 units

A wide variety of other items have been distributed including milk, clothing, biscuits, sugar, bedding, umbrellas and basic medicines.

Indian company Reliance Industries donated 16,416 family kits which were distributed through the Indian Red Cross in nine districts. Along with the Red Cross stock, this brings the total family kits distributed to date to almost 20,000.

In addition to the above, the following medical items were handed over to the Municipal Commissioner of Mumbai;

- 3,672 bottles of crocin suspension
- 1,470 strips of crocin tablets
- 5,040 bottles of Setranpaed suspension
- 7,500 sachets of electral powder

The Indian Red Cross has initiated a six-month operation with a budget of CHF 2 million (EUR 1.3 million, USD 1.6 million). This is being supported by the Federation secretariat from available funds. The operation is primarily based on two assessments – one jointly conducted by an Indian Red Cross national headquarters and Federation team immediately following the disaster; and the second by a national disaster response team completed in August. The operation is also undertaken following the various recommendations from the Maharashtra state branch. The main recommendations of the assessment reports are outlined in [Information bulletin 10](#).

A significant component of this is 20 ventilators to be distributed to various hospitals. The Maharashtra state branch identified a need for the equipment to assist people suffering from various conditions as a result of the flooding. Five ventilators were purchased directly by the state branch and have been distributed. Of the remaining 15, 11 have been procured and are with the state branch awaiting distribution while the other four have yet to be delivered by suppliers.

¹ Each family kit contains one tarpaulin, one sheet, one sari, one dhoti, one cotton blanket, towel, kitchen set and plastic bucket.

The other major component of the operation is the procurement of 30,000 family packs. This process has been initiated with the request for quotations issued on 30 August and the final date for receiving quotes on 7 September. Delivery of the family packs is expected by the end of September. Five thousand of these are for replenishing disaster preparedness stocks in the Bahadurgarh warehouse (situated near Delhi). The remaining 25,000 kits will be distributed in affected areas in Mumbai (10,000 kits) and other districts (15,000 kits).

The Vikroli warehouse (in Mumbai) will undergo renovation in the coming months as it was damaged by flooding. Some immediate repairs are required before the warehouse can be used for storage.

The three mobile disaster water sanitation response units deployed to Sangli, Kolapur and Parbhani have now been operational for 45 days now and will remain until 7 October.

Chemicals for these three units were replenished. A water sanitation delegate from Sri Lanka was deployed for two weeks; the deployment period also included his participation in the national disaster response team assessment. During his deployment the delegate carried out duties including:

- A water sanitation assessment in targeted affected areas.
- Established contact with other watsan agencies active in the operational area (Oxfam, UNICEF, Médecins sans Frontières) and undertook a mapping on of watsan activities with a view to identifying gaps.
- Prepared a plan of action including budget for further discussions with Federation India delegation, Indian Red Cross Society and Federation secretariat in Geneva.

In the water and sanitation delegate's report, he stated that each of the units is capable of producing 10,000 litres of potable water *per hour* for up to eight hours a day (i.e. 80,000 litres per day per unit.) Note this is significantly more than previous forecasts of capacity of 10,000 litres *per day*. These three units have been serving 30,000 people. They are being operated by the government water board. These units will be returned to the Indian Red Cross at the end of the two-month period. The Indian Red Cross deployed one water and sanitation technician and two water treatment unit operators to install and train the local authorities.

Acting on recommendations made by the water and sanitation delegate, national headquarters is initiating water and sanitation training for branch staff from West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa alongside warehouse and national headquarters staff. A consultant has been hired by the Federation to provide the training. Incidentally, the consultant will also be responsible for bringing back the water-sanitation unit deployed in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands after the 2004 tsunami. This unit will be stationed in the Kolkata warehouse. The same consultant will also be responsible for training Kolkata warehouse staff after the unit is returned.

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