DREF operation update

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Costa Rica and Nicaragua: Tropical Storm Alma

DREF operation n° MDR43003
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Update n° 1
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The International Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) is a source of un-earmarked money created by the Federation in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent response to emergencies. The DREF is a vital part of the International Federation's disaster response system and increases the ability of national societies to respond to disasters.

Period covered by this update: 4 June to 7 August, 2008.

Summary: CHF 200,000 (USD 190,476 or EUR 122,926) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 4 June, 2008 to support the National Societies of Costa Rica and Nicaragua in delivering immediate assistance to some 1,500 families (7,500 beneficiaries).

On 28 May, 2008, Tropical Storm Alma caused torrential rain in the Central Pacific region of Costa Rica with gust winds reaching 75 km per hour, affecting several regions. It later moved on to Nicaragua where it affected seven Pacific coast departments, causing the deaths of three people, while several people were missing. This Update no.1 will reflect the progress of the planned activities undertaken by the National Societies to date.

Distributing activities in Nicaragua.
Source: Nicaraguan Red Cross

This operation was expected to be completed in three months, but additional activities are being implemented by the Costa Rican Red Cross (CRCC); the plan of action has therefore been adjusted and the duration of the operation will be increased by 30 days; the operation will now be completed by 3 October, 2008. In line with Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 3 January, 2009).

The Netherlands Red Cross (NRC) together with the Netherlands government kindly contributed € 40,000 (CHF 65,400) to reimburse DREF funds for the emergency operation in Costa Rica and Nicaragua from the NRC Silent Emergency Fund.

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The situation

The first storm of the Pacific hurricane season, Tropical Storm Alma, started as a low pressure system off the coast of **Costa Rica** strengthening to a Tropical Depression on the Pacific coast of Nicoya, on 28 May reaching **Nicaragua** a day later, on 29 May, 2008.

In **Costa Rica** heavy rain prevailed for more than 60 hours causing saturation of soil, overflowing of rivers along the coastal areas of Nicoya, Central valley, South Pacific and Central regions. 18 out of 81 districts in the country were affected by the floods. Most infrastructural damages were reported in the districts of Acosta, Aguirre, Cubano, Dota, Hojancha, Leon Cortes, Montes de Oro, Nandayure, Nicoya, Paquera, Perez Zeledon, Puntarenas, Santa Cruz and Tarrazu.

Other districts suffered fewer damages, but need further evaluations since infrastructure such as houses, roads, aqueducts were affected. These districts are: Puriscal, Desamparados, Upala, San Carlos, Corredores, Alfaro Ruiz, El Guarco, La Union, Goicoechea, Naranjo, Alajuelita, Aserri and Osa.

The Pan American Highway 2, an important road in the sector known as Villa Mills was obstructed by a landslide, making the area inaccessible for 24 hours affecting approximately 400 people. On 31 June, Disaster Response Units (consisting of firemen, public agencies and the CRRC) intervened in order to complete the clearing up activities so that the road could be used again. Additionally, Route 34 in the sector of Parrita was also obstructed by a landslide and a bridge over Rio Parrita was damaged. The damages the districts suffered are affecting the economic conditions of the region and the transit of commercial goods as well as the people.

One beneficiary in Nicaragua is on his way home, after having received relief items distributed by the NRC. Source: International Federation.

Relief items such as blankets, food parcels and mattresses were distributed by the government, through the National Emergency Commission (Comisión Nacional de Emergencia - CNE). CNE has constantly monitored the emergency and consequently activated their local emergency committees.

Tropical Storm Alma reached **Nicaragua** on 29 May 2008 and it was located approximately 85 km southwest of the capital city of Managua, with winds reaching 100 kilometres per hour. Three people died and ten were reported missing due to the storm. Approximately 263 families (1,390) people were evacuated and placed in temporary shelters from the departments of Leon, Chinandega, Masaya, Managua and Rivas.

The most affected department was Leon, located in the southern pacific area of the country. The strong winds damaged roof tops (280 houses), interrupted and damaged phone and electricity services. Most major roads, water wells and latrines sustained damages. In addition, agricultural crops were affected in some areas of Leon.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the beginning of the emergency the **Costa Rican Red Cross (CRRC**) monitored and carried out search and rescue and evacuation activities. The local branches of the CRRC in the affected areas were activated, as was the Emergency Operations Centre (Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia – COE). The CRRC provided pre-hospital medical assistance and volunteers assisted in the common shelters opened for the affected people. Five relief officers of the CRRC were deployed to the Pacific coast with 4 x 4 vehicles, rescue units and ambulances.

The **Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC)** held coordination meetings with Partner National Societies present in the country and was closely monitoring the evolvement of the emergency through the National Operation Centre. The NRC Damage and Needs Assessment team performed their evaluations and elaborated a Plan

of Action to benefit the most affected families. 10 members of the NRC National Relief Team were supporting the relief and distribution activities.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective 1: 1,500 families (7,500 people) will benefit from the provision of relief items to recover from the effects of the floods.

Affected families in **Costa Rica** will receive:

• Drinking water
• 20 litre water containers (500 families)
• Food parcels (750 families)
• Kitchen kits (1,000 families)
• Hygiene kits (1,000 families)
• Plastic buckets (500 families)

Affected families in **Nicaragua** will receive:

• Food parcels (500 families)
• Blankets (500 families)
• Hygiene kits (500 families)
• Plastic buckets (500 families, two buckets per family)

Activities planned:
- Conduct needs assessments, census and beneficiary targeting.
• Procurement of relief supplies according to Federation procedures.
• Distribute relief supplies and control supply movements from point of dispatch to end-user.
• Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distribution.

Progress:

Costa Rica
During this reporting period the CRRC completed the procurement of 1,000 food parcels (250 more as initially planned), 1,000 kitchen kits, 1,000 hygiene kits and 1,000 jerry cans. On 18 July, 2008 these items were distributed in the areas of Los Santos and Perez Zeledon benefiting 1,000 families.

The content of the kits were the following:

Food parcels	Hygiene kits	Kitchen kits
Rice	Soap bar	Pots
Beans	Toothbrush	Cups
Milk	Toothpaste	Cooking spoons
Salt	Toilette paper	Glasses
Syrup	Sanitary pads	Pitchers
Coffee	Shampoo	Aluminium and steel plates
Soup	Detergent	
Tuna	Razors	
Cooking oil		
Sauces		
Pasta		
Flour		

Sugar		

Due to special prices offered by the suppliers, the CRRC will be able to provide food parcels to an additional 150 affected families. These additional families are from the affected communities of Nivel, Alto de Jaular, Lagunillas, El Jardin, Division, La Lira, California and Los Angeles de Paramo. Therefore, the operation has been extended for an additional 30 days in order to complete distributing the additional food parcels. To date, 1,000 families have received relief items, therefore reaching the objective.

Challenges
Some minor challenges were encountered during this first part of the operation: delays in the delivery of relief supplies from the suppliers and poor road conditions. Nevertheless, the objective surpassed expectations since the objective has increased and more families will benefit.

Progress

Nicaragua
The Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) distributed the relief items in two municipalities located in the department of Leon (Nagarote and Paz Centro). The NRC identified the centers of distribution and notified all beneficiaries. The NRC also coordinated the distribution activities with the communities' leaders in order to accomplish a swift and orderly delivery.

The following items were distributed by the NRC:

Food items	
Quantity	**Item**
15 lbs	Beans
15 lbs	Rice
15 lbs	Sugar
15 lbs	Corn
10 bags	Oatmeal
10 bags	Soup
5 bags	Salt
1 gal	Cooking oil
Hygiene & other items	
12 bars	Soap
4 rolls	Toilette paper
1 tube	Toothpaste
1 bag	Sanitary pads
3	Blankets
1 package	Clothes for adults and children
2	Buckets

The above mentioned items were distributed by the NRC in the municipalities of La Paz Centro and Nagarote in the department of Leon on 2 August through 4 August 2008. The chart below shows the number of beneficiary families in each municipality:

Department	Municipality	Families
LEON	La Paz Centro	149
	Nagarote	351
	TOTAL	**500**

Challenges:
No challenges were identified within this objective.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion

Objective: To ensure safe water supply by cleaning the water wells and promote hygiene practices among the affected families in Nicaragua.

Activities planned:
• Evaluate the areas that need immediate water well cleaning.
• Mobilization of a cleaning team and of equipment to the affected areas.
• Cleaning and chlorination of water wells.

Progress

The Nicaraguan Red Cross (NRC) has still to complete this objective, but is in the process of cleaning the water wells that were affected by the storm.

Challenges:
No challenges have been identified within this objective to date.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the ***Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (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.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:
- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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