DREF operation

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Costa Rica: Floods

DREF operation n° MDRCR004
Glide No. FL-2008-000232-CRI
28 November 2008

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.

CHF 110,501 (USD 96,507 or EUR 75,685) has been allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Costa Rican Red Cross in delivering immediate assistance to some 5,000 beneficiaries. Unearmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.

Summary: A cold front and a low pressure system have merged in the Caribbean causing constant rain and overflowing rivers in the provinces of Limon, Cartago, Heredia and San Jose. The consequent flooding and landslides have affected more than 11,000 people. This DREF request will help the Costa Rican Red Cross jumpstart the response operation. In addition, and a preliminary emergency appeal for Costa Rica and Panama (which has also been severely affected by the same weather system) will be launched shortly to seek international support in the provision of humanitarian assistance to the affected people as well as to finance further humanitarian activities as a more complete picture of the situation emerges

A banana field completely destroyed in Sixaola, in the province of Limon. Source: Nacion.com

This operation is expected to be implemented over six months, and will therefore be completed by 28 May 2009; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 28 August 2009).

<click here for the DREF budget, here for contact details, or here to view the map of the affected area>

The situation

Since 17 November 2008, according to the National Meteorological Institute of Costa Rica, a cold front stationed between the border of Honduras and Nicaragua shifted towards the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama. The cold front caused an increase in wind intensity and heavy rain, overflowing rivers and floods leading to mud flows and landslides.

As of 26 November, the low pressure system was located south east of the Caribbean side of Costa Rica. Although rainfall has diminished considerably in the northern region of the country, isolated precipitations still remain.

Weather forecasts indicate rain will continue for at least two more days in the coast of Limon as well as in the north Caribbean, Central and northern mountain regions. Sea transportation is currently blocked since wind speed is ranging from 25 to 32 km/per hour creating up to two meter high waves in the northern Pacific region, and waves up to 2.5 meters high along the Caribbean coast.

According to evaluations carried out by the National Meteorological Institute of Costa Rica volunteers from the Costa Rican Red Cross, reports from the Local Emergency Committees and Costa Rica's National Emergency Committee (Comisión Nacional de Emergencias - CNE), floods have isolated 111 communities and destroyed banana and plantain crops. The most affected regions are Siquirres, Matina, Battan, Valle de la Estrella, Talamanca and Sixaola in the province of Limon. Several highways have been blocked by landslides and 38 roads have been closed down, hampering the completion of preliminary damage and needs assessments and distribution of relief aid to the affected communities. Aqueducts and eleven water wells were damaged. Several ditches sustained damages increasing the risk of flooding in nearby communities. The high levels in the water of rivers have affected at least seven bridges. Assessment figures indicate that at least 1,200 houses have sustained damages due to the floods.

The CNE distributing food items using a helicopter to reach the isolated communities.
Source: Nacion.com

10,740 people have been affected and 117 temporary shelters have been opened housing some 6,890 people. The floods can cause an increase in health risks such as diarrhea and common colds, which frequently affect the indigenous communities in the provinces of Limon and Cartago.

Coordination and partnerships

The Costa Rican Red Cross is in constant communication with the International Federation through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation Office for Central America and Mexico.

The Costa Rican government through the CNE declared red, yellow and green alert in several communities throughout the country. The CNE has been constantly monitoring the evolution of the emergency and has also activated all regional and local emergency committees.

The government is supporting and coordinating all institutions responding to the emergency. It also has relief supplies including blankets, mattresses and basic food items ready for deployment to the most affected areas.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The Emergency Operation Committee headed by the President of the Costa Rican Red Cross and the National Relief Director has been active since the onset of the emergency. The Costa Rican Red Cross has focused its initial actions in performing search and rescue operations, pre-hospital first aid care and evaluations. The National Society started installing and managing temporary shelters for people who had to evacuate their houses.

There are 63 Red Cross auxiliary committees in alert and seven are currently operating. Two National Intervention Team (NIT) relief workers in the province of Limon and approximately 100 volunteers are providing support in the response to the emergency. The volunteers are operating with more than 40 vehicles (4 x 4 vehicles, rescue vehicles, ambulances), two all terrain vehicles (Unimog) and three boats.

The Emergency Operation Centre has been active since the beginning of the emergency in the Operations Building in the capital city of San Jose where information provided by all the auxiliary committees and other agencies is gathered, centralized and processed. The CNE has dispatched a helicopter with three rescue volunteers from the Costa Rican Red Cross in order to access isolated communities like Sixaola, which lies in the south-eastern region of Costa Rica in the province of Limon.

A Costa Rican Red Cross volunteer evacuating children
Source: Costa Rican Red Cross

The needs

The immediate needs identified thus far by the National Society are emergency non-food items for 1,000 families, distribution of safe drinking water and resources to carry out damage and need assessments.

The proposed operation

Assessments are still ongoing, and more detailed information will become available shortly. Based on this, a bi-country preliminary appeal covering Panama and Costa Rica will be launched including additional objectives, as relevant to the operation. More specific objectives concerning early recovery, emergency health and water and sanitation will be added.

Relief distributions (basic non-food items)

Objective 1: 1,000 families (5,000 people) will benefit from the provision of relief items to recover from the effects of the floods.

Each family will receive the following:

- Kitchen kit (1 per family)
- Hygiene kit (1 per family)
- Jerry cans (2 per family)

These relief items will be purchased locally following the International Federation procurement standards.

Additionally, the Costa Rican Red Cross will receive 5,000 plastic bags to pack donated clothes received from several organizations and people.

Activities planned:

- Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.
- Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.
- Quote and procurement of supplies (bags and boxes).
- 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 distributions.

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:

- **In Costa Rica**: Guillermo Arroyo, Costa Rican Red Cross, National Emergency Director; phone: (506) 2233-7033; fax: (506) 255-3098; email: guillermoa@cruzroja.or.cr
- **In Panama**: Jean Pierre Taschereau, Disaster Management Delegate, Pan American Disaster Response Unit; phone: (507) 316-1001; fax: (507) 316-1082; email: jp.taschereau@ifrc.org
- **In Panama**: Ilir Caushaj, Logistics Coordinator, Regional Logistics Unit; phone. (507) 316 1001, mobile: (507) 6679 5355; fax: (507) 316 1082; email: ilir.caushaj@ifrc.org
- **In Panama**: Fabricio López, Regional Representative of the Regional Representation Office for Central America and Mexico; phone: (507) 380 0250; fax: (507) 317 1304; email: fabricio.lopez@ifrc.org
- **In Panama**: Maria Alcázar, Resource Mobilization Coordinator for the Americas; email: maria.alcazar@ifrc.org; phone: (507) 380 0250; fax: (507) 317 1304
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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

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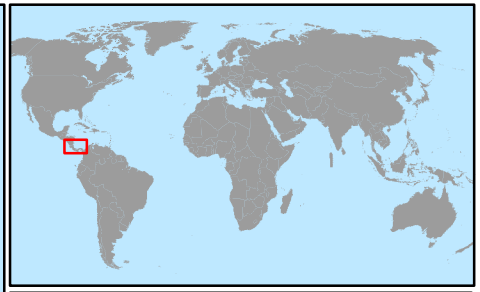

Capital
Cities
Lake
Rivers
Most affected areas
Affected areas

The maps used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies or National Societies concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.
Map data sources: ESRI, DEVINFO, International Federation, MDRCR004

DREF OPERATION BUDGET SUMMARY

DREF Costa Rica Floods MDRCR004

	BUDGET CHF
RELIEF NEEDS	
Shelter	
Construction Materials	
Clothing & Textiles	
Food	
Seeds & Plants	
Water & Sanitation	0
Medical & First Aid	
Teaching Materials	
Utensils & Tools	52,000
Other Supplies & Services	24,000
Total Relief Needs	**76,000**
CAPITAL EQUIPMENT	
Land & Buildings	
Vehicles Purchase	
Computers & Telecom Equipment	
Office/Household Furniture & Equip.	
Medical Equipment	
Other Machinery & Equipment	
TRANSPORT, STORAGE & VEHICLES	
Storage - Warehouse	
Distribution & Monitoring	7,500
Transport & Vehicles Costs	10,000
Service fee & Recovery	0
PERSONNEL	
International Staff	
Regionally Deployed Staff	
National Staff	
National Society Staff	5,250
Consultants	
WORKSHOPS & TRAINING	
Workshops & Training	
GENERAL EXPENSES	
Travel	
Information & Public Relations	1,000
Office running costs	1,500
Communication Costs	1,500
Professional Fees	
Financial Charges	568
Other General Expenses	
PROGRAMME SUPPORT	
Programme Support - PSR	7,183
Total Operational Needs	**34,501**
DREF ALLOCATION	**110,501**