

GUYANA : FLOODS

1. The disaster

Severe flooding has been caused to most of the ten provinces of this South-American country by heavy rains falling at a rate 2.5 times above the normal levels of the rainy season, that normally lasts from May to June and this year has continued over the three first weeks of July. The last reports received to date from the Government through UN-DHA and the Guyana Red Cross through the Federation Delegation to the Caribbean state the number of 28,000 to 33,000 people affected (3 to 4% of the total population). At least 10,000 people are severely affected. This number can increase once the assessment being carried out by the Government and other agencies, including the Red Cross, is completed. No information is available yet about flooded areas in the Southern part of the country (this part is about 35% of the 214,970 sq km total surface of the country).

The flooded areas are along the country's major river system. They are: Morawhanna, Upper Pomerron River (Karawab), Mahaica Creek (including St Cuthbert's Amerindian Mission), Mahaicony Creek (including St Francis Amerindian Mission), Abary Creek (Black Bush Polder, East Bank, Berbice, Hyberpark, Lillown and Julia's Burg), Lower Essequibo River (Winiperu), Rupununi (Kurupukari), South Pakaraimas (Nappi Parishanna, Karanambo, Moco-Moco and Ashiwib), Upper Demerara River (Coomacka, Three Friends, Malali, Maritario and Bootabo) and Borbice River (Kwakwani). Estimates are that 8,255 families are affected in these areas.

The 10,000 severely affected persons are in urgent need of food assistance and protection against malaria, diarrhoea disease and typhoid. They will also need rehabilitation support as soon as the flood waters recede.

2. Action by the Government and other agencies

The Government declared the state of emergency and has held several meetings with national and international aid agencies, including the local Red Cross and the Federation. It has conducted a needs assessment with the co-operation of PAHO, UNDHAC, CDERA, the Guyana Red Cross and the Federation. But due to the difficulties created by the disaster itself and the limitation in transport and communication resources, as well as the dispersal location of the communities affected, this assessment is not completed yet.

In the meantime, the Government has made available GYD 50 million (USD360,000) for immediate relief, while awaiting external aid for this operation and the subsequent rehabilitation activities.

At least 10,000 people have been evacuated and are living in public shelters or with relatives and friends in other parts of the country.

3. Red Cross action

Since the beginning of the emergency the Guyana Red Cross has participated in the needs assessment and the disaster response. It has been supported by the Federation, particularly by a Delegate, sent on 17 July from the Regional Delegation based in Kingston.

The Guyana Red Cross and the Regional Delegation have outlined a preliminary relief/rehabilitation *plan of action*, as follows:

Phase 1: Emergency health care and food assistance (four weeks), which will include completion of needs assessment, health care, distribution of food/hygiene parcels and registration of beneficiaries for the next phases.

Phase 2: Food assistance and training in primary health care in areas of high crop loss (six weeks).

Phase 3: Livelihood restoration in these high loss crop areas (four weeks): the main activity will be the distribution of agricultural implements and seeds.

The *preliminary budget* amounts to *CHF 300,000* and include the following expenses:

	CHF
Relief goods (food, medicines and hygiene items)	145,000
Rehabilitation goods (agricultural implements and seeds)	50,000
Local transport (boat hire etc.)	20,000
Personnel	40,000
Strengthening of GYRC's administrative and logistics capabilities	20,000
Federation support (H.q. and Delegation)	15,000
Contingency	10,000

Last week the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (*DREF*) made available *CHF 300,000* for the operation. Out of this loan, USD 15,000 are already in the hands of the Guyana Red Cross for the most urgent needs. The rest of the loan will be used as soon as a more detailed budget is adopted by the Guyana Red Cross and the Delegation.

The above budget does not include expatriate costs, but these would be necessary in case of a larger operation requiring expertise from donor societies.

The National Society, which is in the beginning of an institutional strengthening and reorganisation process, conducted by a new management, is expecting external financial and technical support from sister societies and other donors. Among other support measures, the Federation's Regional Delegation is creating a team of Caribbean Red Cross workers to strengthen the local team.

According to preliminary information, medicines, food and miscellaneous relief items are available locally in quantities that allow large purchases without inflation effect on the local market's prices.

4. Conclusions:

4.1. Additional needs might appear from the current needs assessment or in case of aggravation of the floods, as further rainfall cannot be ruled out between now and September.

4.2. Donors are invited to contribute to the replenishment of the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund.

Luis Luna,
Desk Officer for the Caribbean,
Americas Department

Darrel Diedrichs,
Acting Director,
Americas Department

N.B.: For further information, please apply to the Americas Department:
Santiago Gil, Director : phone 41-22-7304391 (from 24 July)
Luis Luna: phone 41-22-7304274

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