

CHINA: FLOODS

30 July 1999

Information Bulletin N° 3

The Disaster

Severe seasonal rainfall since the middle of June has caused widespread flooding along the upper and middle reaches of the Yangtze river. More than 66 million people have been affected in the six worst affected provinces, and almost 1.8 million people have been left homeless.

Experts fear that while the situation is stabilising in some provinces along the upper reaches of the river, flooding will continue to be a major threat in the months to come, especially in provinces along the middle and lower reaches. High water levels continue to pose a serious threat in many parts of Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu and Anhui Provinces.

<i>PROVINCE AFFECTED</i>	<i>AFFECTED POPULATION</i>	<i>HOMELESS</i>
<i>ZHEJIANG</i>	6,530,000.00	1,082,125.00
<i>ANHUI</i>	14,047,000.00	251,808.00
<i>JIANGXI</i>	5,970,200.00	111,900.00
<i>JIANGSU</i>	5,190,000.00	158,000.00
<i>HUNAN</i>	10,805,200.00	45,000.00
<i>HUBEI</i>	16,410,000.00	140,000.00
TOTAL	58,952,400.00	1,788,833.00

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

A total of 2,509 Red Cross medical teams have so far been sent to the affected areas to provide medical assistance and supply water purification tablets and sanitation materials to ensure safe water supplies and prevent the outbreak of waterborne diseases.

A total of RMB 19,994,000 (CHF 3,912,740) of relief goods, (including food, sanitation materials, medicines, clothing, quilts and tents) have so far been distributed by the provincial Red Cross Branches. These goods have either been released from the National Society's disaster preparedness stocks or purchased with funds donated to local campaigns launched specifically for the emergency.

Tendering has been completed for the purchase of additional relief stocks with Federation funds which were held as a disaster preparedness reserve for use in the early stages of any new disasters. Contracts are expected to be signed with suppliers in the next few days.

The RCSC Deputy Head of Relief Services has left for the field to carry out a further assessment of the situation.

The Federation team in Beijing will soon be strengthened by an additional Information Officer from the Federation Secretariat's Media Service. It is hoped that two additional Field Delegates will soon be assigned to assist with the tasks of monitoring and reporting.

A Joint Federation/RCSC Assessment team is currently being assembled to carry out an in-depth assessment of the needs in the affected areas.

Needs

Given the seriousness of the emergency, on 28 July the RCSC formally requested assistance from the International Federation, asking that an international emergency appeal be launched.

An Appeal document and budget is being prepared and the appeal is expected to be launched on Wednesday 4 August. Its main thrust will be to provide the RCSC with sufficient quantities of food, clothing, sanitation material, water purification tablets and quilts to cover the needs of the most vulnerable amongst those currently affected by the floods.

The Federation has already transferred CHF 200,000 to China from its Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), along with a contribution of approx. CHF 100,000 received from the Canadian Red Cross in response to this emergency. Today, it released another CHF 200,000 from the DREF. Once the international appeal is launched, the most pressing needs will be for cash, to finance the large scale procurement of relief items within China.

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