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DREF operation update

South Sudan: Polio outbreak

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRSS002
GLIDE n° EP-2013-000137-SSD
Update n°1
29 October 2013

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) 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 emergency response. 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: 25 October - 28 October, 2013

Summary: CHF 168,065 was allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 25 October, 2013, to support the National Society in delivering assistance to some 525,749 beneficiaries.

This operations update is informing on the change in context in South Sudan in terms of Polio outbreak cases in the country.

South Sudan is situated in the "wild poliovirus importation belt" – a band of countries stretching from west Africa to Central Africa and the Horn of Africa, which are vulnerable to re-infection with imported poliovirus. An active outbreak of Polio is currently taking place in the region and South Sudan is at high risk of polio outbreak, given its borders with Kenya and Ethiopia and low rates of vaccination coverage. Three cases had been reported in South Sudan, but were retracted on 26 October 2013 due to laboratory error. Given the extremely high risk of polio outbreak, and the consequences it would have in the country, the DREF operation will continue as planned, providing support to the government to target the high risk areas along the borders with social mobilization for immunization.

National rounds of emergency polio immunization are planned in South Sudan in November and December 2013. The first round of immunization is planned by Ministry of Health to take place during the week beginning 4 November 2013. South Sudan Red Cross Society (SSRC), with support from IFRC's DREF, aims to assist the first two national rounds of emergency Polio immunization in 24 counties in 3 states of West, Central and East Equatoria in South Sudan through social mobilization activities. These states are the focus on the current outbreak in South Sudan and are high risk areas that border Kenya and Ethiopia (where other WPV1 cases have been reported). This DREF funding will support immediate participation and action of SSRC in the forthcoming immunization rounds and provide a foundation for future leverage of funding from other partners (including WHO/UNICEF) and activities in support of the Ministry of Health plan for further rounds of vaccination.

This operation is to be implemented in three months, and completed by 31 January, 2014. In line with Federation reporting standards, the final report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 30 April 2014).

The major donors and partners to the DREF include the Australian, American and Belgian governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and government, Danish Red Cross and government, DG ECHO, the Irish and the Italian governments, the Japanese Red Cross, the Luxembourg government, the Monaco Red Cross and government, the Netherlands Red Cross and government, the Norwegian Red Cross and government, the Spanish Government, the Swedish Red Cross and

government, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors.

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The situation

Polio (poliomyelitis) is a highly infectious and potentially fatal disease caused by a virus that is spread by faecal-oral transmission from person to person. Most people infected with the poliovirus have no signs of illness and are never aware they have been infected. These symptomless carriers can “silently” spread the infection to thousands of others before the first case of polio paralysis emerges. One in 200 infections leads to irreversible acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) in a matter of hours, usually in the legs, caused when the virus invades the central nervous system.

Polio can infect any age group, but it mainly affects children under the age of five years. There is no cure, but there are safe and effective vaccines and the strategy to eradicate polio is based on preventing infection by immunizing every child until transmission stops as well as rapid response through vaccination campaigns to control the outbreak.

South Sudan is situated in the “wild poliovirus importation belt” – a band of countries stretching from West Africa to central Africa and the Horn of Africa which are vulnerable to re-infection with imported poliovirus. An active outbreak of Polio is currently taking place in the region with a total of 194 cases currently reported in three countries (174 from Somalia, 14 from Kenya and 6 from Ethiopia).

South Sudan is at high risk of a Polio outbreak, given its borders with Kenya and Ethiopia and low rates of vaccination coverage. Three cases had been reported in South Sudan, but were retracted on 26 October 2013 due to laboratory error. National rounds of emergency Polio immunization are planned in South Sudan in November and December 2013. The first round of immunization is planned by Ministry of Health to take place during the week beginning 4 November 2013.

The Horn of Africa Polio outbreak is likely to be prolonged and to spread quickly, requiring vigilance and urgent coordinated action by Horn of Africa member states and between national and international partners. A total of 34 million children under five will be reached through multiple rounds of Polio immunization over the next six months across the Horn of Africa with an estimated 1.8 million children under five targeted in South Sudan. 525,749 children under five in 24 Counties in 3 States (West, Central and East Equatoria) of South Sudan will be targeted through this DREF operation to support national immunization rounds.

Coordination and partnerships

The South Sudan Ministry of Health is coordinating the national response to the situation, and has scheduled the first round of emergency immunisation to take place during the week beginning 4 November 2013. South Sudan Red Cross is a member of the national Polio Task Force and a key partner of Ministry of Health in Polio planning and response.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) is co-ordinating international and national partners, including World Health Organization (WHO), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Rotary and Centres for Disease Control (CDC) to support Horn of Africa member states in their Polio outbreak response activities. WHO has the mandate to provide technical support to member states and oversee surveillance of polio outbreaks. UNICEF has a mandate to supply vaccine stocks and communication for polio vaccination campaigns. CDC and BMGF provide technical support to member states in vaccination activities. World Vision is involved in immunization activities on local level. SSRC has been requested to assist with social mobilization, community mapping and educational activities for the immunization.

IFRC Regional Office for Eastern Africa and Indian Ocean Islands (EAIOI) will provide technical support and guidance in the planning and implementation of the DREF operation and other longer term Red Cross polio response and prevention activities. The IFRC EAIOI office will also continue to provide support to coordinate the response on a regional level. A similar DREF operation is undertaken in Ethiopia at the same time, and these operations will fall under the same regional coordination mechanisms.

IFRC, ICRC and partner national societies (PNSs) in-country with health interests participate in the health technical committee meetings that are convened by SSRC’s health department every month. All health issues are tabled there and actions (bilateral and multilateral) are discussed.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Movement will work closely with actors and agencies in South Sudan, including the South Sudan Ministry of Health, CDC, UNICEF, WHO, BMGF and Rotary to ensure activities are aligned and complement the national polio plan of action. This DREF funding will support immediate participation and action of SSRC in the forthcoming immunisation rounds and provide a foundation for future partnership with other agencies (including WHO/UNICEF) and activities in support of the Ministry of Health national plan for further rounds of vaccination.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards outcomes

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IFRC and the SSRC is currently being signed for the DREF operation, and the implementation structures are being set up for the DREF operation. The mobile phones for the mapping, monitoring and surveying are being purchased in Nairobi by the IFRC EAIOI Regional office, and the health technical advisor from the region is preparing for a mission to South Sudan.

Emergency health and care

Outcome: To reduce Polio morbidity and mortality and prevent Polio transmission among 525,749 children in 24 Counties in 3 States (West, Central and East Equatoria) of South Sudan	
Outputs (expected results)	Activities planned
1. Round 1 immunisation has been undertaken in 3 States (West, Central and East Equatoria) of South Sudan with logistics support and monitoring of community coverage from ERCS.	<p><i>1. Logistics support</i> Three branches provide logistics support to Ministry of Health Polio vaccination teams during Round 1 of vaccination.</p> <p><i>2. Independent monitoring</i> SSRC Supervisors will conduct independent monitoring of immunisation coverage of children under five during Round 1 of vaccination.</p>
2. Micro-planning for delivery of household and community-based activities have been completed and verified for 24 Counties in 3 States (West, Central and East Equatoria) of South Sudan for preparation of Round 2 of immunisation.	<p><i>1. National and State micro-planning</i> 1 national micro-planning and mapping training is completed for 3 States.</p> <p><i>2. County micro-planning</i> 24 County-level micro-plans are completed with Ministry of Health and partners. Accurate micro-planning of target households and population groups not included in census data (for example nomadic and cross-border populations), is essential to ensure all children under five are vaccinated and adequate immunity is reached.</p> <p><i>3. Village mapping and reporting</i> Mapping of villages omitted from desktop micro-planning exercises is completed by South Sudan Red Cross district teams using mobile phone based mapping and reporting tool (Magpi).</p>
3. 525,749 households in 24 Counties in 3 States (West, Central and East Equatoria) received household or village level education and social mobilisation during Round 2 for Polio prevention.	<p><i>1. Training of supervisors</i> Identify and train 52 South Sudan Red Cross Society supervisors (1 per 10 volunteer teams) in 24 Counties of West, Central and East Equatoria States.</p> <p><i>2. Training of volunteers</i> Identify and train 1,031 South Sudan Red Cross Society community volunteers (2 per team) in 24 Counties of West, Central and East Equatoria States.</p> <p><i>3. Household or village level education and Social mobilisation</i> Carry out four days of house-to-house and village-level education and social mobilisation activities prior to immunisation campaign activities (total of 2,062 volunteer days).</p> <p><i>4. Polio awareness and social mobilization radio campaign</i></p>

	<p>Production of radio jingles and messages to be broadcasted in 3 states in South Sudan for increasing awareness and mobilization purposes. The key messages will be delivered in Arabic language. One radio jingle will be run 3 times per day for 10 days in the targeted 3 states.</p>
<p>4. Household-based cross sectional survey of education and Round 2 campaign coverage is completed, indicating level of community awareness and coverage of immunization campaign.</p>	<p><i>A1. Survey training</i> 52 teams (one supervisor and one volunteer per team) training in survey methodology.</p> <p><i>A2. Coverage survey</i> 52 teams visit two villages each day across all Counties and survey 20 households per village (over four days).</p>

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
 2. Enable healthy and safe living.
 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.
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