

DREF operation update



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Paraguay: Drought

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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: 28 May to 15 June 2009.

Summary: CHF 237,515 (USD 218,944 or EUR 156,360) was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 26 May 2009 to support the Paraguayan Red Cross (PRC) in delivering immediate assistance to some 1,624 families (approximately 8,120 beneficiaries).

The Paraguayan Red Cross completed a plan of action and is currently implementing this to meet the needs of those affected in five departments in Paraguay. Priority has been given to five rural and fishing communities in the districts of Horqueta, Concepción (in the department of Concepción), and Tacuaras, Paso de Patria and Isla Umbu (in the department of Ñeembucú). This intervention will benefit 1,624 families, rather than the 1,100 initially planned, with food kits and rehabilitation of livelihoods, as the Paraguayan government is supporting the PRC with transport costs, which has enabled the PRC to reach a larger number of families.



Food kits distribution in the department of Concepción. Source: Paraguayan Red Cross

This operation is expected to be implemented over three months, and will therefore be completed by 25 August 2009; a Final Report will be made available three months after the end of the operation (by 25 November 2009).

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The situation

On 11 May 2009, the Paraguayan government declared a state of emergency due to the severe drought in the departments of Concepción, Ñeembucú, Presidente Hayes, Boquerón and Alto Paraguay. The state of emergency prompted the intervention of all Ministries, including the National Emergency Secretariat (Secretaría Nacional de Emergencia - SEN). Emergency measures were implemented and the SEN assisted the affected communities (indigenous, rural and others) through actions including livelihoods rehabilitation (focused on agriculture), social assistance and health.

The departments of Concepción and Ñeembucú are still being affected by the drought. Damage assessments performed by the SEN and reports from the departmental authorities of Concepción describe a lack of water and high risk of outbreaks of fires. There are between 30,000 to 50,000 families affected by the emergency. Nevertheless, records of the last rainfall show 60 millimetres of water in the department. According to the Ministry of Agriculture, people living in the area will be able to prepare the soil for the next sowing season.

In the department of Ñeembucú, there is lack of water and food items. There are approximately 25,000 people affected, according to the report from the SEN. The drastic climate changes experienced during the past years in the region and especially the yearly droughts have affected the agricultural sector. This

situation is critical since agrarian workers have not been able to produce food and access to food items is scarce. The Ministry of Agriculture reports a decrease in the production levels of crops, including maize, beans and yucca over recent years. Cotton crops have been decreasing throughout the years and currently there are no more than 2,000 hectares with a production of less than 500 kilos per year. The local branch of the Rural Association of Paraguay informs that livestock farmers have also been affected due to the lack of rainfall. The following table shows the number of affected families:



Distributions taking place in the Department of Concepción.
Source: Paraguayan Red Cross.

Department	Affected		Affectation
	Families	People	
Concepción	10,000	50,000	Agricultural production has been affected, lack of water and food
Ñeembucú	5,000	25,000	Decrease in production of livestock and agriculture causing lack of food. Lack of water.
Total	15,000	75,000	

Since 1999, the Paraguayan Red Cross has been working on development projects in the most vulnerable communities in the country, supported by the International Federation and also by bilateral agreements with the Spanish Red Cross, with a focus on health and disaster preparedness. Following the drought which affected the Chaco region in 2002, the Federation launched an appeal to assist the department of Boquerón. As a result of this appeal, more sustainable and long-term projects in the communities were developed. Nevertheless, every year the droughts have been affecting an increasing number of people and further short term and long-term projects are needed to assist the most vulnerable.

Coordination and partnerships

The SEN, in coordination with the Paraguayan Red Cross, has been working to meet the needs of the affected people to minimize the risks of malnutrition and the spread of diseases. Since the onset of the emergency, the Paraguayan Red Cross has been coordinating relief actions with the SEN. The SEN activated its departmental emergency committees including the local committees in order to identify the communities to be benefited by the DREF funds. The PRC local branches, local authorities and SEN committees have been in constant communication to avoid duplication of efforts. The National Society is coordinating with two of the local branches close to the affected municipalities of Horqueta, Isla Umbu, Paso de Patria and Tacuaras.

The leading relief organization during this emergency is the SEN. The SEN has provided logistical support including transportation for the PRC (eight trucks and fuel) to distribute food items to the communities in Concepción and Ñeembucú. Additionally, damage and need assessments were carried out jointly between the SEN, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF. The PRC is actively participating in meetings led by the SEN since the emergency was declared.

The International Federation through its Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) and the Regional Representation for the Southern Cone and Brazil has been communicating with and providing support to the National Society. A disaster management delegate and a disaster management Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member were deployed from PADRU to Paraguay, through funds outside of this DREF operation, to provide support to the PRC in drawing-up the plan of action.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Since the onset of the emergency, the Paraguayan Red Cross activated its response team. Additionally, the PRC has been providing humanitarian assistance and carrying out the activities included in the plan of action in order to fulfil the basic needs of the population and minimize risk in the affected areas. The National Society has been working with two local branches from Ñeembucú and Concepción. In addition, the Paraguayan Red Cross mobilized 15 volunteers to carry out the relief actions.

Interviews conducted by the PRC volunteers with one of the affected families indicate that the family's most viable means of subsistence are vegetable crops that are able to resist the low temperatures of the Chaco region. Two local agronomists were hired who have ample experience in the area and the type of crops and soil of the region. The agronomists made an analysis and drew up a work plan in order to re-activate agricultural activities. A Regional Intervention Team (RIT) member will be deployed to Paraguay in mid July to support the National Society with the rehabilitation of livelihoods.

Progress towards objectives

This update includes the progress towards the main objective of supplying families with food kits of 47 kg. (1,046 kilocalories each kit) for one month and rehabilitating their crops for their daily subsistence.

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

Objective: To assist 1,100 of the most vulnerable families in the departments of Concepción and Ñeembucú with humanitarian aid consisting of supplementary food items.

Activities planned:

- Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments.
- Develop a beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.
- Coordinate with the local branch president in Concepcion for presentation of proposal.
- Coordinate with municipalities involved and community leaders.
- Visits to the benefited communities.
- Selection of suppliers.
- Monthly distribution of a 47kg food parcel to the 1,100 families that are small farmers.
- Monitor and evaluate the relief activities and provide reporting on relief distributions.
- Develop an exit strategy.

Progress:

A total of 923 families received food kits in two districts in the department of Concepción and 700 families received food kits in three municipalities in the department of Ñeembucú. The following table shows the number of families that received food kits in each department:

DEPARTAMENT OF CONCEPCION				
District	Community	Committee	N° of families	N° of people
Horqueta	Arroyito	Núcleo Uno	115	591
		Núcleo Dos	77	400
		Núcleo Tres	256	1325
		Núcleo Cuatro	104	627
		Núcleo Cinco	83	434
		Núcleo Seis	104	553
		Núcleo Siete	61	344
Concepción	Associated Producers from the Centre of Concepcion (Productores Asociados del Centro de Acopio de Concepción – PACAC)	San Juan Bosco Committee – Culantrillo	12	84
		Mujeres María Auxiliadora Women's Committee – Culantrillo	7	34
		Jacinto de León Committee – Culantrillo	9	52
		San Cayetano Women's Committee – Culantrillo	10	56
		Rincón de Luna Committee – Santa Rosa	9	54
		Chokokue Aty Committee – Culantrillo	6	33
		Central Committee– Potrerito	17	122
		Sagrado Corazón Committee: Culantrillo	15	99
		Juaihupá Women's Committee – potrerito	12	101
		Committee: Sagrada Familia – Sagrada Familia	8	40
		Committee: Teko Pora – Culantrillo	10	45
		Committee: Integral de Calle11	9	60
		Total from the department of Concepción		
DEPARTAMENT OF ÑEEMBUKU				
District	Community	# of families	# of people	
Tacuaras	Belén	153	671	
Paso de Patria	Paso de Patria	200	713	
Isla Umbú	Tacurú Pucú	35	111	
	Valle Poí	55	190	
	Loma Clavel	30	97	
	Camba Cuá	32	128	
	Boquerón	51	163	
	Islerias	87	224	
	Costa Pucú	57	222	
Total Departament of Ñeembucú			700	2,519
TOTAL FROM THE DEPARTAMENTOS OF CONCEPCION AND ÑEEMBUKU			1,624	7,573

The distributions were carried out between 5 and 9 June 2009 with the logistical support of the SEN (vehicles and fuel). Thanks to this generous donation by the SEN, the PRC was able provide an additional 524 families with food kits; therefore, reaching a total of 1,624 families and surpassing the initial number of beneficiaries targeted.

Rehabilitation of livelihoods

Objective: 1,100 of the most affected small farmer families in the departments of Concepción and Ñeembucú will receive seeds to sow new crops.

Activities planned:

- Two agronomists will perform damage and needs assessments in the communities affected by the drought and will provide a proposal for each department.
- The agronomists will elaborate a chronogram of activities on the distribution of the seeds.
- Selection and census of beneficiaries.
- Selection of suppliers and procurement.
- Distribution of seeds to affected families.
- Agronomists will provide technical assistance.
- Monitoring and evaluation.

Progress:

The PRC hired two agronomists in May 2009 who have started implementing their work plan. The diagnosis performed by the agronomists was completed and sent to the International Federation's PADRU and served as a reference to establish priorities in agricultural activities. Seeds have been procured as well as equipment for the eradication of ants in the department of Concepción. In addition, a total of 140 silos of 60kg for the 7 committees (20 per committee) were procured as a result of the analysis made by the agronomist to ensure the viability of the intervention. These will be used to store harvests. Additionally, 6,000 metres of cloth was procured to shade and protect the crops from the forecasted frosts and sun. This will ensure growth of the crops in the department of Ñeembucú.

Initial distribution of seeds and materials took place between 17 and 21 June 2009. The sowing of the seeds started during the third week of June 2009.

Challenges:

In order to rehabilitate the agricultural lands in the affected areas, a real commitment must exist from the local authorities to follow-up all the activities.

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

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