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# DREF operation update

## Papua New Guinea: Drought

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

<b>DREF Operation n° MDRPG005</b>	<b>Glide n° <a href="#">CW-2015-000116-PNG</a></b>
<b>DREF operation update n° 1</b> <b>Date of issue: 30 October</b>	<b>Date of disaster: 31 July 2015</b>
<b>Operation start date: 15 September 2015</b>	<b>Operation end date: 15 December 2015</b>
<b>Overall operation budget: CHF 150,669</b>	
<b>Number of people affected: estimated 2 million</b>	<b>Number of people to be assisted: 15,000 people (3,000 families)</b>

### Description of the disaster

Papua New Guinea has been experiencing a prolonged dry spell since May 2015 which is the consequence of changing climatic conditions caused by El Nino. The country has experienced reduced rainfall in all regions and the seasonal rains expected in November are now not anticipated until the first half of 2016. The drought situation and its ongoing impact remains largely unchanged despite some rain and distribution of food by the Government of PNG.

Vegetation Stress Index Aerial Maps reflect the situation, showing that vegetation across north east part of PNG is under stress most notably in the Highlands, in Chimbu Province, Western, Southern and Eastern Highlands as well as Morobe and East New Britain. The maps indicate that vegetation in lower altitude is under more stress compared to higher altitudes.

The majority of a portion of staple food crops (sweet potato and potato gardens), plants and trees are destroyed and creeks and rivers are also drying up in the agricultural hub of the Tambul Nembilyer district of Western Highlands Province. Some provincial markets have closed down, reduced quantity of produce, whilst prices increased - as reported in the affected areas of Tambul Nembilyer (Western Highlands) and Andareas (Southern Highlands). There has been a spike in the price of produce in the market in Mt Hagen, combined with a decrease in quantity and quality of produce available. The main supply areas include most affected regions in Western Highlands, Tambul Nembilyer and Highlands Central as well as Jiwaka. Produce is continuing to be exported to main centers, Port Moresby and Lae, where the demand and the market price is significantly higher than in Mt Hagen.



**Community from Upper Nembilyer, Tambul Nembilyer district, with clothes in dried creek bed.**  
*Photo: Freeman Manyavi, PNGRC*

It has been reported by the Western Highlands branch that some streams and rivers that were used as primary water sources have dried up. Populations in affected areas are resorting to secondary water sources (traditionally used for washing and bathing) as drinking water and in food preparation. This increases the risk of diarrhoea and typhoid already prevalent in PNG. However, the Ministry of Health has not confirmed increased cases or any outbreak to date.

Affected populations are coping using traditional mechanisms, including sharing of resources within tribes.

There is an increased risk of fire, as traditionally land is cleared and rejuvenated by burning in some of the affected areas. A fire occurred in Henganofi, in Eastern Highlands, during week of Monday 28 September that spread with dry vegetables catching fire from wind. Preliminary PNG Red Cross assessments indicate that more than 25 houses were destroyed. Local authorities are recommending restrictions to land clearing by fire during El Nino.

## Summary of current response

### National Society

Papua New Guinea Red Cross (PNGRC) headquarters representatives continue to participate in government-led coordination meetings. The National Society is engaged in response planning and ongoing dialogue with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in relation to ongoing support needs. At the branch level, Western Highland branch has mobilized volunteers and staff for participatory hygiene training supported by the IFRC regional WASH delegate and local NGOs. On 16 October, the interim secretary general and disaster manager travelled to Mt Hagen to meet with branch representatives. The meeting discussions informed the broader national drought management plan and the immediate Western Highlands assessment plan of action. It is likely that the DREF plan of action and budget will be revised to accommodate these updated needs.



PNG Red Cross volunteers during the participatory hygiene training. Photo: Freeman Manyavi /PNGRC

### Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

The IFRC country team comprising a WASH delegate and disaster management (DM) officer seconded from Solomon Islands Red Cross were mobilized to Mt Hagen, Western Highlands Province, supporting the local branch with hygiene promotion, assessment methodology and response planning.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) based in Port Moresby and Mt Hagen continue to support the IFRC country team and National Society with accommodation, logistics and security. Joint planning and collaboration between ICRC and IFRC and the Papua New Guinea Red Cross is ongoing. The Australian Red Cross (ARC) have pledged assistance in the form of HR capacity and have offered to deploy a WASH advisor to the country in order to replace the WASH delegate once her mission is completed.

### Non-Movement actors in country

#### Government response

At provincial level, the Provincial District Councils (PDC) continue to monitor the situations and have started small scale initial responses in some affected areas. The PDCs are updating the NDC regularly.

The government's initial allocation of PGK 5 million (approximately CHF 1.69 million) was used for the deployment of four multi-agency rapid assessment teams and the purchase of the first batch of food supplies for the most affected communities in the Highlands region. Another PGK 25 million (approximately CHF 8.46 million) has been committed by the government.

The first phase of the Government response has been completed. The response includes food distribution to communities in Highlands, in provinces and districts that are in category 4 or 5. There are government plans to purchase and provide jerry cans to East New Britain for transport and storage of water. The second phase is expected to commence this month and ends in December with recovery expected from January to March 2016.

Government-led National Disaster Response Committee (NDRC) meetings are continuing to take place weekly. A humanitarian assistance tracking form was circulated to all partners to indicate activities and locations to assist the Government of PNG in coordination.

Coordination in WASH sector continues with a subcommittee of the NDRC, newly established for the drought response. This will complement the WASH committee within the National Department of Health, which has a development focus. Coordination with other humanitarian agencies by PNGRC continues in Port Moresby. PNGRC attended a coordination meeting focusing on the Highlands on 14 October in Goroka, Eastern Highlands that was hosted by Oxfam, and attended by Provincial Government Partners and key humanitarian partners based there.

### **Other humanitarian agencies**

CARE is focusing its assistance in Oburu Wonenara, Eastern Highlands; Gumine, Chimbu Province, and Menyama, in Morobe. Assessments and distribution of jerry cans, soap and aqua tabs have taken place in ten communities in Oburu Wonenara, assisting 1,200 families in total.

Oxfam are focusing on livelihoods, WASH and protection. Activities include carrying out training in coordination with governmental and partner agencies in Chimbu that will cover drought adaptation and agriculture. Communities are being assisted with gravity-fed water systems, rain water tanks in existing project sites in Eastern Highlands.

Other humanitarian agencies include World Vision, who are coordinating WASH cluster meetings in Port Moresby and have a presence in Madang, Port Moresby, Bougainville, the Highlands and East Sepik. Other agencies that are active in PNG include Caritas and Save the Children.

## **Operational implementation**

As a result of a recent PNGRC and branch joint planning meeting a pilot assessment will take place in the most affected villages in Tambul, Nembilyer district of Highlands region, targeting WASH, with some focus on livelihoods. The assessment based on recent training, will take into account cross cutting issues, such as gender, disability, safety, access, community participation and staff and volunteer safety.

PNGRC will prioritize the Western Highlands region as the population in these areas are most severely affected by the shortage of water and food supply and it is where there is branch capacity. PNGRC also plan to target those communities that have been given the highest classification, category 5, by multi-agency assessments.

Assessment training has taken place on 19 October and will also cover safety and security in field protocols, beneficiary communications and GPS training. Assessments will commence on the 20 October, in Lower Kagul LLG, Tambul Nembilyer District, Western Highlands. Assessment teams will to be joined by the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) representatives, who have established good community connection. The assessments are to be done in coordination with PDMO members.

The detailed assessments will inform the intervention, however secondary data indicates that WASH intervention is likely and is therefore already planned for under this DREF operation. Traditional hygiene methods like boiling of water and solid purification will be also be encouraged during engagement with communities. Jerry can distribution is also planned but will be subject to effective supply lines and procurement.

## **Human resources**

Due to ongoing delays in the visa process, the IFRC country team leader and food security mission had to be cancelled. The DREF operation is currently being co-led by PNGRC disaster manager and the IFRC WASH delegate.

The development coordinator from the Pacific country cluster support team has also been in PNG for 12 days supporting the new PNGRC interim secretary general on strategic and operational issues.

The current IFRC WASH delegate mission has been extended until 5 November to accommodate the delays in initiating the DREF plan, notably the assessments. A replacement will likely be sourced from Australian Red Cross subject to confirmation from the PNGRC.

Further peer to peer support from another neighboring National Society is also being considered to replace the staff member from the Solomon Islands Red Cross who has completed his two week support mission.

## **Communications**

The National Society interim secretary general has undertaken some radio interviews with media. A series of talking points focused on the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement has been developed by IFRC in consultation with PNG Red Cross and the ICRC and these have been distributed via newswire. Informal updates from the IFRC county team are being compiled weekly and shared with partners as required.

## **Security**

On 4 October, the Mt Hagen branch chairman was car jacked in a marked Red Cross vehicle in the vicinity of the ICRC compound. He received a number of injuries as a result of a beating was treated in the local hospital and later discharged. The vehicle was later recovered in a damaged state. As a result the ICRC have introduced additional security measures. No other personnel were involved in this incident. IFRC country team members continue to come under the ICRC security umbrella whilst operational in the Highlands.

## Progress towards outcomes

Needs analysis		
	Outputs	% of achievement
Outcome 1: Continuous and detailed assessment and analysis is used to inform the design and implementation of the operation.	Output 1.1 Needs assessments are conducted and response plans updated according to findings.	5%
	Output 1.2 Additional assistance is considered where appropriate and incorporated into the plan	
Activities		% progress (estimate)
1.1.1 Mobilize PNGRCS staff and volunteers for assessments.		90%
Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PNGRC disaster management officer from Port Moresby has been deployed to the Western Highlands branch to assist volunteers in response activities</li> <li>• The Western Highlands branch emergency operations centre (EOC) is being opened and branch concept of operation for drought response developed detailing roles, responsibilities and mode of operation</li> <li>• 15 volunteers from Western Highlands branch have been mobilized to commence planned assessments commencing on 20 October.</li> </ul>		
1.1.2 Mobilize/deploy IFRC delegates and regional peer exchange available in the region and Geneva to support PNGRCS in conducting assessments.		70%
Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The IFRC WASH delegate was deployed and is currently based in Mt Hagen.</li> <li>• The peer to peer exchange support mission for 14 days has been completed.</li> <li>• The team leader/food security delegate mission had to be cancelled.</li> </ul>		
1.1.3 Undertake assessments to determine specific needs of beneficiaries in the target affected areas.		15%
Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment form and methodology has been developed by PNGRC with support from IFRC.</li> <li>• An assessment methodology training and briefing has been prepared for volunteers to be undertaken prior to the pending field work.</li> </ul>		
1.1.4 Develop a response plan with activities that will meet identified beneficiary needs.		10%
Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PNGRC have conducted a joint response meeting with branch representatives from 16 to 18 October in Mt Hagen which will be attended by the acting secretary general.</li> </ul>		
1.2.1 Ensure that any adjustments to initial plans are informed by continuous assessment of needs and through established feedback mechanisms.		10%
Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of secondary data has resulted in the area of operation for PNGRC to be confined to the most affected areas of the Western Highlands. Other areas in PNG will be subject to further assessment and planning.</li> </ul>		
Progress towards outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been delays in commencing the POA due to a recent change in the PNG Red Cross leadership.</li> <li>• The assessment mission has been delayed one week due to the unavailability of the branch volunteers.</li> </ul>		

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion		
Outcome 2: Risk of waterborne, water-related and vector-borne diseases in communities affected by the drought and frost reduced.	Outputs	% of achievement
		<b>Output 2.1 Knowledge, attitude and practice on safe water, sanitation and hygiene by target population increased.</b>
Activities		% progress (estimate)
2.1.1 Collaborate with the relief sector in providing jerry cans and hygiene kits; complement with hygiene promotion for safe hygiene practices and usage of safe water storage containers.		5%
Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial enquires into the procurement and delivery of jerry cans within PNG has been commenced.</li> </ul>		
2.1.2 Mobilize existing WASH/Health branch volunteers to participate in hygiene promotion activities, in coordination with the relief team.		50%
Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hygiene promotion training took place in Mt Hagen from 6 – 9 October for 28 persons.</li> </ul>		
2.1.3 Coordinate with the NDC, WASH and Health Clusters to develop hygiene promotion and disease prevention dissemination/ awareness campaigns		50%
Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information education and communication (IEC) materials are being developed in consultation with government health counterparts covering safe water handling and treatment practices and promoting good hygiene behaviours. The materials will be used to carry out initial hygiene promotion activities that will complement the assessments.</li> <li>Additional participatory hygiene promotion activities are planned to complement distribution of materials and to be used to monitor and evaluate the situation. These activities include participatory hygiene promotion activities, such as F-diagram, and participatory source-to-mouth water handling and treatment activities.</li> </ul>		

## Contact information

### For further information, please contact:

#### Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society (phone +675 325 7016):

- Alison Dage, interim secretary general, email: [alisondage.pngrcs@gmail.com](mailto:alisondage.pngrcs@gmail.com)
- Michael Sembenombo, DM manager, email: [msembenombo@gmail.com](mailto:msembenombo@gmail.com)

#### IFRC Pacific country cluster support team, Suva (phone +679 3311 855):

- Stephanie Zoll, disaster management coordinator, mobile: +67 99 980 561, email: [stephanie.zoll@ifrc.org](mailto:stephanie.zoll@ifrc.org)
- Aurélia Balpe, head of country cluster support team, email: [aurelia.balpe@ifrc.org](mailto:aurelia.balpe@ifrc.org)

#### IFRC Asia Pacific regional office, Kuala Lumpur (phone: +60 3 9207 5700):

- Nicolas Verdy, operations coordinator, mobile: +60 19 6200 357, email: [nicolas.verdy@ifrc.org](mailto:nicolas.verdy@ifrc.org)
- Peter Ophoff, head of planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting (PMER), email: [peter.ophoff@ifrc.org](mailto:peter.ophoff@ifrc.org)

## 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 Humanitarian 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.**

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



**Save lives,**  
protect livelihoods,  
and strengthen recovery  
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**  
and **safe** living.



Promote **social inclusion**  
and a culture of  
**non-violence** and **peace.**