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DREF operation update Moldova: Extreme winter conditions

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF operation n° MDRMD004
GLIDE n° CW-2012-000006-MDA
Update n°1
3rd May 2012

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: 21st February 2012 to 27th April 2012.



Summary: CHF 123,061 has been allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to support the Red Cross Society of the Republic of Moldova in delivering immediate assistance to some 1,000 families and individuals (4,000 beneficiaries). Unearmarked funds to repay the DREF are encouraged.

Like many other countries in Europe, Moldova was affected by extreme winter conditions during February 2012. Particularly hard hit were rural communities whose households, already affected by poverty, suffered from the cold weather, the lack of basic necessities and social exclusion. The Moldova Red Cross Society was asked by the Government of Moldova to mobilise support for the ongoing relief operation. The Moldova Red Cross Society confirmed its readiness for making efforts to assist the most vulnerable. For the consolidation of inputs by various agencies, the Moldova Red Cross and the Government of Moldova were holding regular meetings with the UN Disaster Management Team, which had established a task force to discuss the situation in terms of outstanding needs and coordination matters.

By the end of April, the Moldova Red Cross finalised the procurement and distribution of relief items to the targeted families. Selection of beneficiaries and the distribution were unfolded in close cooperation with local public authorities and district departments of social assistance with widespread involvement of Red Cross volunteers.

In May, the Moldova Red Cross is planning to organize a press conference with the participation of partners, national mass media and local public authorities. Coordination meetings with involved

volunteers will be conducted aiming at making conclusions, discuss the difficulties arising during project implementation and future plans in preparedness and reaction to natural disasters. Therefore the National Society would like to extend the operation timeframe until 31st May 2012.

The major donors and partners of the DREF operation in Moldova include the Australian, American and Belgian Governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and the Canadian Government, the Danish Red Cross and the Danish Government, the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), the Irish and the Italian Governments, the Japanese Red Cross Society, the Luxembourg Government, the Monaco Red Cross and the Monaco Government, the Netherlands Red Cross and the Netherlands Government, the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Government, the Spanish Government, the Swedish Red Cross and the Swedish Government, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), the Medtronic and Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors. On behalf of the Moldova National Society, the IFRC would like to extend their thanks to all of them for their generous contributions.

The situation

Like other countries in the region, Moldova was facing plunging temperatures in the beginning of February, which claimed victims and caused a disruption in public services. According to the data of the Civil Protection and Emergency Situations Service, the cold wave resulted in eight casualties, and at least 20 people were registered with frostbites daily. By 21st February, the Ministry of Health reported 280 cases of hypothermia and 10 fatalities.

The week from 30th January to 5th February was exceptionally cold (minus 16 to minus 12 degrees Celsius, lower than the usual average of minus 12 to minus 9.5 degrees Celsius) – for the first time over the past 20 years. During the nights following 14th February, the temperature in Northern Moldova dropped down to 31 Celsius below zero, and the soil froze to a depth of 60 -100 cm.

One hundred and fifty educational institutions, including 79 kindergartens were closed for a period of 10 days due to the frost; in some schools lessons were reduced to 30-35 minutes. Also, about 80 localities remained without water due to frozen pipes until the beginning of April.

According to sources in the Ministry of Agriculture, approximately 70 per cent of winter crops were damaged by the frost and ice. Basically, this year, Moldova, known as an agrarian country, is facing shortages of food, especially wheat, in summer. Vine plantations and orchards are reported to have also been affected; however, the extent of the damage is still to be estimated.

The situation improved in the second half of March when the roads got cleared. Still, the problem of access to water and sanitation persisted. Due to the thick snow and extreme cold weather in the winter, flooding was expected during the spring period, but luckily temperatures were rising only gradually, and floods have not been reported yet.

Coordination and partnerships

The Red Cross Society of Moldova was coordinating the response activities together with the Civil Protection and Emergency Situations Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as the UNDP Office in Moldova, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and IOM. Coordination meetings with all involved organizations and institutions were held every 2-3 days in order to discuss the situation and the disaster response measures and coordinate further steps. As the situation improved, at the moment, future cooperation possibilities are being discussed among partners.

A UN Disaster Management Team was created, based on the initiative of UNDP in Moldova of which the Moldova Red Cross is a part. It is planned to elaborate the Inter-Agency Contingency Plan (IACP) for United Nations in Moldova. This exercise aims at strengthening the disaster preparedness and response capacities in order to increase the effectiveness in supporting the Government and the population of Moldova at times of disasters.

The Civil Protection and Emergency Situations Service did not declare a state of emergency. However, it asked the Moldova Red Cross to take action in supporting the national relief efforts. In close collaboration with UNDP, Civil Protection and Emergency Service, local authorities, and other stakeholders, the Red Cross of Moldova was contributing to the mitigation of the consequences of extreme cold temperatures and heavy snowfalls.

The Civil Protection and Emergency Situations Service established 18 rehabilitation centres in a number of urban areas, including Chisinau, Briceni, Anenii Noi, Balti, Singerei, Soldanesti and Cahul. The centres were managed by the staff of the Civil Protection and Emergency Situation Service. These rehabilitation centres were equipped with 'heating cannons' running on petrol, and provided temporary shelter for those needing to

warm up. More than 2,100 persons of different ages and social categories received assistance on a daily basis, including tea, biscuits and medical assistance when needed.

The United Nations responded to the Government of Moldova's request for assistance by allocating USD 70,000 (of which USD 66,000 came from OCHA emergency grant). The UNDP provided clothes, blankets, food, fuel, heaters as well as 'heating cannons'. The UNHCR supported the response with heating fuel. Part of the UN assistance was directed towards supporting the rehabilitation centres, while part of the assistance was provided to the most vulnerable individuals and households in rural areas of the country.

The IOM provided warm clothes in the value of MDL 8,000 (approximately CHF 600) for distribution in the municipality of Chisinau through the Civil Protection and Emergency Situations Service on 12 February 2012.

The Moldova Red Cross involved its volunteers to support the operation of the rehabilitation centres.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Progress towards outcomes

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)
Objective: Providing emergency assistance (basic food and non-food items) for 1,000 families (approximately 4,000 people); distribution will be done for basic food, clothes and non-food items
Output: The nutritional and winterisation/health needs of 1,000 families/4,000 people are met over this period of extreme winter conditions
Activities planned: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparation of final beneficiary lists.• Preparation of distribution plan.• Procurement of emergency items in Moldova.• Distribution of emergency items by RC branches and their volunteers according to the prepared beneficiary lists.• Coordination with local emergency departments and social welfare authorities.• Monitoring and reporting.

Progress:

During March-April the procurement and distribution of food parcels, blankets, hygienic kits, winter coats and sleeping bags was finalized. After successful price negotiations with the suppliers, the Moldova Red Cross procured an additional 103 winter coats and 223 hygienic kits.

In May, the Moldova Red Cross will organize a press conference with the participation of partners, national mass-media and local public authorities. Several coordination meetings will be conducted with the volunteers involved in the implementation of the operation aiming at making conclusions, discuss the difficulties arisen during project implementation and future plans in relation to preparedness and reaction to natural disasters.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

- **Moldova Red Cross:** Vasile Cernenchi, Executive Director, phone: +373 692 94 856; email: vasile.a.c@gmail.com
 - **IFRC Europe Zone:** Alberto Monguzzi, Acting Disaster Management Coordinator; office phone: +36 1 8884 500; email: alberto.monguzzi@ifrc.org
 - **IFRC Geneva:** Christine South, Operations Support, Phone: +41.22.730.4529, email: christine.south@ifrc.org
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DREF history:

This DREF was initially allocated on 23rd February 2012 to the amount of CHF 123,061 for two months to assist 1,000 families and individuals (4,000 beneficiaries).



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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 (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.



encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby 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:

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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