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## DREF operation update

### Belize: Hurricane Ernesto

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

#### DREF operation n° MDRBZ003 GLIDE n° TC-2012-000133-BLZ Update n°1 – 21 September 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:** 8 August to 21 August 2012.

**Summary:** CHF 48,745 were allocated from the IFRC's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) on 8 August 2012 to support the Belize Red Cross Society (BRCS) in delivering assistance to some 750 beneficiaries by replenishing disaster preparedness stocks available in the National Society warehouse.

This DREF operation was launched in preparation for the landfall of hurricane Ernesto on the coast of Belize on the first week of August. It supported the deployment of teams in affected areas, the rapid damage and needs assessments, and the replenishment of prepositioned stocks used to assist some 150 families. This operation is expected to be implemented in 3 months, and completed by 8 November 2012. In line with Federation reporting standards, the Final Report (narrative and financial) is due 90 days after the end of the operation (by 8 February, 2013).

The major donors and partners of DREF include the American, Australian, and Belgian governments, the Austrian Red Cross, the Canadian Red Cross and government, the Danish Red Cross and government, the European Commission 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 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 Z Zurich Foundations, and other corporate and private donors. The IFRC, on behalf of the national society, would like to extend thanks to all for their generous contributions.

ECHO has replenished the DREF with 81 per cent of the allocation made to this operation.

<http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/responding/disaster-response-system/financial-instruments/disaster-relief-emergency-fund-dref/>



Belize Red Cross Society National Intervention Team performing assessment in Caledonia, Corozal district in 2012 after floods due to Hurricane Ernesto. Photo: Anna Beloff, IFRC.

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## The situation

On the morning of 7 August, Ernesto was located about 350 kilometres from Chetumal, Mexico and was moving towards the west at 22 kilometres per hour with sustained winds of 100 km/h and higher gusts. Later in the day, Ernesto became a hurricane category one with sustained winds of 130 km/h. After Ernesto had passed Belize on 8 August, rainfall followed and some storm surge occurred along the northern coast of Belize. Risk of flooding was estimated to be very high in northern areas. This DREF was launched as a preparedness measure before hurricane Ernesto struck Belize and includes funding for damage and needs assessment teams deployed to the field. The assessments revealed that most of the affected houses had minor damage and neither injuries nor fatalities were caused by the hurricane.

## Coordination and partnerships

Since the beginning of the operation the Belize Red Cross Society was present in all National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) meetings at the national and district levels. During the secondary hazard assessment period the National Society continued to monitor the situation very closely in liaison with NEMO and the Meteorological Department to obtain updates on the weather and on the movements of the national authorities.

The National Society has also been in close coordination with the IFRC's Americas zone office and Caribbean Regional Representation Office (CRRO), as well as with the Norwegian Red Cross who was ready to assist if needed. With the aim to avoid duplicating efforts, the BRCS shared their assessments with NEMO and continued to attend planning meetings in order to determine the gaps in information and response actions. Finally, the National Society's plan of action was also shared with NEMO and other actors such as United State Agency for International Development (USAID).

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

### Progress towards outcomes

Two IFRC delegates were pre-deployed to Belize to support the National Society with overall operations and to assist the team completing rapid damage and needs assessments, covering 23 areas during the first day. Overall, throughout the country, all assessments revealed the need for some relief and a plan of action was developed. The pre-positioned stocks used by the National Society are being replenished with the support of the DREF.

#### **Damage and need assessments**

**Outcome: Belize Red Cross Society NIT members will perform damage and need assessments in the affected departments.**

**Outputs and activities planned:**

- Conduct rapid emergency needs and capacity assessments over a period of 48 hours.
- Print and distribute assessments forms.
- Deployment of two IFRC delegates.
- Report analysis of assessments.
- Develop a plan of action, if required.

**Progress:** After the passage of hurricane Ernesto, the rapid assessment team noted only minor damages to houses with flooded yards and to only two household latrines in one community (Caledonia). This community also had no access to drinking water due to the flooding around the water pipeline.

The assessment team estimated that the most significant threat was from secondary hazards. Flooding was a possibility due to strong rain still affecting the region of Petén, Guatemala and in East Yucatan, Mexico, creating more water flow downstream to Río Hondo as well as to River Valley in Belize. With the ground completely saturated after the passage of Ernesto in Patchakan, Sarteneja, Chunox and Copper Bank, any additional rain would worsen the situation rapidly. The Belize Red Cross Society worked closely with NEMO and the Ministry of Health during secondary hazard evaluation period.

On 14 August, 6 days after Hurricane Ernesto passed Belize, the Belize Red Cross Society secondary hazard assessment revealed that although there were limited material damages, and the hurricane caused some damages to vulnerable crops (e.g. papayas), the continued rain had caused flooding in many areas. This additional rain could contribute to secondary hazards such as epidemics/diarrheic diseases as a result of flooded latrines contaminating water sources, additional crop damage and increase of vector transmitted diseases due to stagnant waters.

On 16 August Corozal district experienced more rains, which caused secondary hazard flooding in various areas (Corozal Town and villages in the affected area of Corozal district). Based on the report provided by the NEMO coordinator, areas in Chula Vista, White Cocal, Alta Mira, Skeleton town, Joseito Lay Out, Chunox, Libertad, Xiabe, Caledonia, Santa Clara, San Roman and Free Zone close to the Mexican border, experienced flooding and damages to personal property. Some families were evacuated to collective centres from these areas.

**Challenges:** Some areas were still inaccessible at the time of these first assessments and the Belize Red Cross Society was working with volunteers and NITs to reach the small riverside communities that had been isolated and were only accessible by boats.

### Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)

<b>Outcome: The immediate needs of 150 families affected are met through the distribution of essential food and non-food items.</b>
<b>Outputs and activities planned: 150 families are reached with four blankets, one food parcel, two jerry cans and one hygiene kits.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop beneficiary targeting strategy and registration system to deliver intended assistance.</li> <li>• Distribute relief supplies to affected families.</li> <li>• Replenish pre-positioned stock.</li> </ul>

**Progress:** Affected populations in the districts of Corozal and Orange Walk have been provided with relief items. As of 17 August 2012, Belize Red Cross volunteers and staff had developed a plan of action for 150 of the most vulnerable families (750 persons) that will be provided with safe drinking water, food, blankets, buckets, hygiene kits, jerry cans, mosquito nets, kitchen sets, cleaning kits, baby kits and clothes over a period of three months. The items listed below were distributed between 17 and 21 August, reaching 773 people as shown in the table below (those marked in light blue are covered through the current DREF-supported operation):

	No families	Food	Bottled water	Hygiene Kit	Jerry Cans	Tarp	Bucket	Mosquito net	Blanket	Cleaning Kit	Baby Kit	Kitchen Set	Potable w.trucks X W.purification tablets
Chula Vista	35	11	74	32	46	7	9	22	21	1	0	7	0
Fire Burn	4	5	20	9	5	6	10	4	0	0	0	2	0
Libertad	16	12	30	16	28	5	14	14	23	6	0	5	45
Copper Bank	9	5.5	20	8	16	3	10	19	1	3	0	2	0
White Cocal	3	1	6	3	4	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	0
Xiabe	8	8	20	9	18	8	5	24	8	6	0	0	0
Conception, Altamira, Loisville, Parasito, School Area, Consejo Road, San Antonio, Santa Clara	11	0	12	8	15	4	3	17	2	0	0	5	0
Caledonia	13	9	31	13	22	11	11	35	0	0	5	2	0
Chunnox	14	14	11	1	31	4	17	26	2	0	5	1	0
Sartaneja	22	17	60	18	21	13	21	61	0	0	3	2	0
Rainbow Town	4	1	7	4	6	0	1	2	4	0	1	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>45</b>

\*Food parcel included food for family of 5 for 2 weeks: 25 lbs flour, 20 lbs rice, 10 lbs sugar, 10 lbs beans, 1 lb salt, 1.6 g can powder milk, 4 cans corned beef, one 1 ltr cooking oil, 1 8 oz can baking powder.

Red Cross volunteers completed house to house visits to target beneficiaries through the pre-positioned stock in the local branches of Corozal and Orange Walk districts. USAID/OFDA provided a total of 600 blankets and, as a result, the Belize Red Cross Society requested that the DREF support with the priority need of 300 mosquito nets to prevent vector-transmitted diseases. The National Society used their existing stocks and relief items, replenishment was sent from Panama via sea transport (12 days) including 150 hygiene kits, 300 jerry cans and 300 mosquito nets.

The Belize Red Cross Society continues to distribute relief items according to its plan of action and in line with needs.

### **Steps from Federation/PADRU to support the Belize Red Cross Society**

During the mission in country, PADRU members (a disaster management delegate and a water and sanitation specialist) supported with the rapid needs assessments and the development of a Plan of Action. However, the Belize Red Cross Society also required their support to check the water and sanitation kit 2 available in Belize City. The kit was tested and cleaned alongside members from the National Society and is now ready to be deployed. Some recommendations were given by the water and sanitation specialist for the maintenance and use of the equipment.

BRCS has also approached the Americas zone emergency health coordinator to assist in the planning and facilitating of a training in emergency health in October 2012, as a result of a request from the Ministry of Health.

**Challenges:** Some areas have been difficult to access by the Belize Red Cross Society and its volunteers. The mobilization of volunteers has taken time due to limited access to vehicles needed to support the assessment missions.

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## Contact information

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## DREF history:

- This DREF was initially allocated on 8 August 2012 for CHF 48,745 for 3 months to assist 750 beneficiaries.
- Budget was revised according to request from the Belize Red Cross Society to replace earlier requested 600 blankets with 300 mosquito nets.



[Click here](#)

1. Click [here](#) to return to the title page
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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.

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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