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Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) Maldives / South Asia: Water Crisis

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF Operation n° MDRMV0002	
Date of issue: 8 December 2014	Date of disaster: 4 December 2014
Operation manager (responsible for this EPoA): Olivera Burgess, Regional Programme Coordinator, South Asia Regional Delegation	Point of contact (name and title): Abdul Razak Ibrahim, Secretary General, Maldivian Red Crescent
Operation start date: 4 December 2014	Expected timeframe: 14 days
Overall operation budget: CHF 211,403	
Number of people affected: 153,000 (excluding expatriates and undocumented migrants)	Number of people to be assisted: 10,000
Host National Society(ies) presence (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): Currently 24 staff and up to 150 volunteers from the MRC Malé branch are involved.	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation (if available and relevant): The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Maldives government, Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF), Police and local organizations.	

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

A fire broke out on Thursday, 4 December in the afternoon inside the Maldives Water and Sewerage Company (MWSC) Generator Unit in the capital Malé. The fire caused severe damage to the unit. Subsequently to the fire, MWSC – the sole provider of clean desalinated water in the capital – had to suspend all water supplies. According to media reports, spare parts needed for the repair are not available in the country. The authorities estimated that it will take a week to make it fully functioning again. On 6 December, three days into the crisis, the repair works had reached 60 per cent, according to the authorities.

The population of Malé is 153,000 as per the preliminary results from a census¹ done this year. In addition, Maldivian Red Crescent (MRC) estimates there are up to 150,000 expatriate workers and undocumented migrants in the city (not covered under the census). This is an important point, as most media outlets are running with old census figure, indicating a total population of 100,000. The vast majority of households in the capital rely on MWSC for their daily water needs. Wells have been a traditional source of water, but in recent years drainage water and other pollutants have increasingly lowered the water quality resulting in water from wells not currently in use for household purposes. The total estimated needs for safe drinking water in Malé – based on the above-mentioned total population figures and minimum Sphere standards – would be at least 450,000 liters (450 tons) of water per day.

A state of disaster has been declared by the government and a task force has been set up to coordinate the distribution of safe drinking water. The government has officially requested organizations and partners, including MRC, to urgently provide water as a short-term solution as well as desalination units and other support to alleviate the situation. The president of the Maldives, currently abroad, has cut his trip short and is returning to the country.

¹ <http://www.planning.gov.mv/census/census%202014/CensusPreliminary/PreliminaryResults.pdf>

MRC has mobilized 24 staff and 150 volunteers to assist the Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF) and the Police in the distributions.

Governments of India, Sri Lanka, China and the United States have been requested to support the Maldives. Planes from India and Sri Lanka loaded with water have already begun to arrive in Malé, bringing in at least 300,000 liters of water over the coming days. A Chinese vessel carrying 90,000 tons of water is bound for Malé.

Currently, water is being pumped every six hours by MWSC for one-hour periods. However, low water pressure means that many of the capital's residents living in high rise apartments have received no supplies. While there is anxiety among locals about the situation, there have not been any reports of violence, apart from some scuffles in distribution cues. However, if the water supply is not restored soon or water supplies from other sources do not reach people efficiently, there is a risk that the situation triggers into civil unrest.

When the distribution points closed at midnight on 4 December, 90,000 people had received two liters of water each. Maldivians and expatriates with identification cards and documentation (work permits and entry stamps) received bottled water. To ensure accessibility to the water distributions, authorities have informed that identification cards and documentation (monitoring purposes) are not necessary needed in this situation. The distribution of water bottles started again in the morning on 5 December, but no confirmed distribution figures are available. The MNDF is replenishing some water from the nearby water desalination plants at Thulusdhoo Island, located at about two hours from Malé. However, these water sources are not viable for longer term and if continues will likely bring disruption to the water supply on Thulusdhoo island.

Summary of the current response

Overview of Host National Society

The Maldivian Red Cross (MRC) has deployed 24 staff as well as 60 volunteers from the MRC Malé branch National Emergency Response Team (NERT) and the Emergency Response Team (ERT) to assist the government run water distribution points. In addition, 90 new volunteers have signed up with MRC in recent days to assist in the operation. The government of Maldives has made an official request to MRC to supply safe drinking water, jerry cans or water containers and desalination units. The formation of the MRC started in 2007 – three years after the hit of Indian Ocean Tsunami. MRC was officially recognized as the 187th member of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and a full member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in 2011.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country

Neither the IFRC nor any Partner National Societies has had a permanent in-country presence in the Maldives since the 2004 Tsunami programming was completed. The regional delegation for South Asia, based in New Delhi, acts as the country team for IFRC.

Movement Coordination

One delegate from the IFRC delegation in Sri Lanka is deployed to Malé on 7 December to support MRC in coordinating with the authorities and other organizations and in assisting operational planning and implementation. Another delegate will remain on standby.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

From the government side, an Emergency Task Force led by the Defense Minister has been formed to lead the operation. The Task Force has assigned Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF) to execute the operation. The MNDF and police as well as a few local organizations, such as MRC, the Scout Association of Maldives and Guide Association of Maldives are also supporting the government in providing water at distribution points. The MNDF and the Maldives Police Service (MPS) are engaged in the distribution of bottled water. MPS is also providing human resources to ensure security at the distribution points. In-country UN agencies have also started to distribute 180 tons of reserve rain water from the UN building.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) is monitoring the situation closely for potential health hazards and preparing information, education and communication (IEC) materials in different locally spoken languages to generate awareness on health hazards. HPA has requested MRC to assist them during awareness promotion activities.

The Maldives government has requested and received support from several countries, including India, Sri Lanka and China. The first planes from India and Sri Lanka arrived on 5 December, bringing in some 300,000 liters Friday and Saturday. An Indian navy patrol vessel also arrived on 5 December in the evening, carrying water and two reverse osmosis plants onboard, capable of producing 20,000 liters per day. Other vessels are sailing to the Maldives or are on stand-by. Sri Lanka also sent its first planes to Malé during 6 December. The Chinese government is sending a

ship loaded with 90,000 tons of water to Maldives. The Singaporean Government has provided technical experts to assist in the repair works needed at the water treatment plant linked to the fire accident.

Needs analysis, beneficiary selection, risk assessment and scenario planning

In the current situation, the whole city of Malé is affected as the MWSC is the sole provider of water. While water is the immediate need, there are other concerns like health and hygiene that are being closely monitored. Limited possibilities for hand washing and general hygiene, and, over time, limited or no latrine flushing, will increase the risk of epidemics.

Beneficiary selection will be done in close coordination with the government and other relevant stakeholders. Special attention will be given to vulnerable groups, including expatriate workers and undocumented migrants, who might for various reasons not be able to access sufficient amounts of water.

Risk Analysis

So far, no cases of violence or civil unrest have been reported, but the risk will increase if the situation persists. Malé is an extremely dense urban context area and the capital has seen civil unrest before linked to political processes. Weather conditions could pose a risk for the transportation of water by sea and air. Further, the health and hygiene situation is being monitored closely, as noted above, as the risk for epidemics is increasing with time.

B. Operational strategy and plan

Overall objective

The overall objective of this operation is to provide up 10,000 people with clean drinking water for three days.

Proposed strategy

A total of 90,000 litres of bottled water will be procured, initially in Sri Lanka, and sent via commercial cargo airplanes to Malé. MRC will, in coordination with the authorities, set up distributions or link up with existing distribution points to distribute the water. Staff and volunteers will continue to support the authorities with distributions outside of the stock provided through this DREF. Distributions will be paired with basic hygiene. The DREF also covers ongoing assessments and monitoring of the situation.

The proposed strategy is not optimal, financially efficient nor environmentally friendly. However, this short-term, gap-filling approach is a rapid intervention to meet the immediate and acute needs in Malé, as per the official request from the government. With the total water contribution from other government and international agencies being closely monitored and the supplies supported by this DREF to be delivered in batches, the overall distributions can be controlled accordingly.

Depending on how the situation evolves, the operation might be adapted or expanded through a DREF revision/extension in the coming days. As per the official request from the government, options for mobilizing desalination units to produce drinking water locally are being explored. Some of the units available have low production capacity and as such could be used for targeted interventions in hospitals, schools, for example. The option of quickly dispatching jerry cans, also requested by the government, is being considered and could be included in a possible DREF extension.

Operational support services

Human resources

MRC is currently using 24 staff and 150 volunteers in this operation. Their mobilization costs are included in the budget, as well as the minimum volunteer insurance for 2014 and 2015. One delegate from the IFRC delegation in Sri Lanka is deploying to Malé on 7 December to support MRC in coordinating with the authorities and other organizations. The delegate will also assist MRC in operational planning and implementation. Another Delegate will remain on standby in Colombo. The DREF budget also includes a provision for the deployment of two Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) members specialized in water and sanitation, if desalination units are deployed in the coming days.

Logistics and supply chain

The IFRC delegation in Sri Lanka, supported by the Asia Pacific zone's logistics unit in Kuala Lumpur, is handling the procurement of water and cargo space. The initial and immediate procurement will be done in Sri Lanka, but potential suppliers in India are also being contacted. The water will be shipped on commercial cargo planes. However options of humanitarian transport support from government of Sri Lanka is being explored, which would contribute to lower

the costs significantly. Plans will be drawn up to determine how MRC, with the support of IFRC, can contribute to the disposal of water bottles, to avoid environmental issues. Planning is also ongoing around the provision of jerry cans and the transportation of desalination units that would be part of a possible expansion of the DREF. Any procurement will be done following IFRC standards to ensure audit trails.

Communications

With the proposed operation, MRC will increase the communications efforts towards the media and towards beneficiaries in connection with distributions. A lump sum amount has been included in the budget to cover related costs, including possible IEC material related to hygiene promotion as well as visibility material.

Information Technologies (IT)

MRC has requested 20 Very High Frequency (VHF) handsets to support the operation. Options to respond to the request are being explored. These handsets are not included in the budget, but as the request is processed and solutions and costs are identified, money from other DREF budget lines (under general expenses) might be used for this purpose, depending on overall prioritization in the coming days.

Security

Malé is an extremely densely populated urban context and this can pose security concerns, especially if the water crisis leads to civil unrest. MRC is well familiar with the context and staff and volunteers will use established security policies during the operation.

Planning, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting (PMER)

MRC, supported by the surge deployment from IFRC delegation in Sri Lanka, will be responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of the operation. A lessons-learned workshop has been tentatively included in the budget, as this is a unique operation for MRC, that is a very young National Society.

Administration and Finance

Existing financial systems will be used to support and monitor the operation.

Contact information

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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 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.**

DREF OPERATION

08/12/2014

MDRMV002 Maldives: Water Crisis

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget CHF
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	27,000
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	27,000
Storage, Warehousing	5,500
Distribution & Monitoring	3,600
Transport & Vehicle Costs	118,800
Logistics Services	13,600
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	141,500
International Staff	9,200
National Society Staff	2,400
Volunteers	6,750
Total PERSONNEL	18,350
Workshops & Training	1,250
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	1,250
Travel	2,500
Information & Public Relations	5,000
Office Costs	1,500
Communications	600
Financial Charges	300
Other General Expenses	500
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	10,400
Programme and Services Support Recovery	12,903
Total INDIRECT COSTS	12,903
TOTAL BUDGET	211,403



Maldives: Water crisis

