



PAN AMERICAN DISASTER RESPONSE UNIT: HURRICANE SEASON PREPAREDNESS 2006

*Final Report for
DREF Bulletin
no. MDR42001
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The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in 185 countries.

In Brief

Period covered by this Final Report: May to December 2006.

[Click here to go directly to the final financial report](#)

History of this Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF)-funded operation:

- CHF 100,000 was allocated from the Federation's DREF on 24 May, 2006 to prepare for the 2006 hurricane season.
- CHF 59,114 was the total expenditure from this allocation for the 2006 hurricane season.
- CHF 40,886 of unused funds were returned to the Federation's DREF.

The International Federation undertakes activities that 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.

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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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.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for

national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background and Summary

The predictions for the 2006 hurricane season indicated that the Caribbean faced the threat of being hit by five to six severe storms and at least a dozen medium force hurricanes during the 2006 hurricane season. In the years 2004 and 2005 the Caribbean, Central America and Mexico experienced very active hurricane seasons. In fact, the year 2005 registered the most active hurricane season ever with a total of 42 hurricanes, 27 of them in the Caribbean. The experience from the 2005 hurricane season showed that both the National Societies and the Secretariat increased their capacity in getting organized and prepared prior to the season as well as responding effectively once the disaster hit. In order to continue this trend and ensure that resources were in place and available to guarantee a timely and effective response, the Americas department requested and received CHF 100,000 from the Federation's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF).

Meteorologists predicted that the 2006 Hurricane season in the Atlantic region was going to be the most active in the Caribbean and Central American region. But in spite of these forecasts, the 2006 hurricane season was relatively calm as no hurricanes of great magnitude developed. Altogether, four tropical storms and four hurricanes passed over the Caribbean. Hurricane Ernesto caused the most impact in the region, necessitating part of the allocation of DREF funding for Haiti. Seven tropical storms and ten hurricanes were reported in the Pacific, two of which, John and Lane, affected the west coast of Mexico.

The head of the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) was the budget holder of the DREF allocation and used the funds to his discretion and always informed the Americas Department and Operations Support Department prior to its use. CHF 40,886 of unused funds was reimbursed.

Analysis of the operation – achievements and impact

With the onset of the 2006 Caribbean hurricane season at the beginning of June – and following the very active hurricane seasons of 2004 and 2005 – the Federation recognized the need to reinforce the regional communication and reporting capacity in the Americas in the event of emergency situations. Therefore, an Information and Communication Delegate and a Reporting Delegate were added to the staff. To continue PADRU's output of accurate and up-to-date information to the key target audience, a Reporting Officer was hired after the mission of the Reporting Delegate came to a close.

Information and Communication Delegate

In order to support the Red Cross communication activities, a special hurricane communication plan was elaborated based on the learned lessons of previous hurricane seasons. This plan was previously elaborated for the 2004 and 2005 season.

As part of the DREF allocation for the 2006 hurricane season, an Information and Communication delegate was employed to carry out the communication plan, and to increase the visibility of the work done by National Societies and the International Federation in case of a hurricane in the region. For administrative purposes, this position was contracted through the Spanish Red Cross.

The main tasks of the Information delegate were to maintain regular contact with mass media; to be the spokeswoman of the Federation when responding to hurricanes; elaborate press notes, identify stories, maintain the websites updated; inform other international agencies about the work carried out by the Red Cross in response to a hurricane.

In order to strengthen the response capacity of the National Red Cross Societies during the hurricane season, the communication plan was shared with the National Societies during the X Inter-American Communication Forum that took place in Guatemala. Key messages for the 2006 hurricane season as well as facts and figures for hurricane seasons 2004 and 2005 were produced, shared with all national societies and posted on the regional websites.

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Special sections were created and continuously updated on the two regional websites: www.cruzroja.org and www.caribbeanredcross.org. The hurricane season communications plan for the REDICOM (Red de Comunicadores y Difusores de Centro America) meeting was presented in July.

As part of the response to the emergency in Haiti caused by hurricane Ernesto, the information delegate was deployed to the affected area. The delegate provided support to the Haitian National Red Cross Society in their public and media relations in order to increase the understanding of the mission of the Haitian National Red Cross Society and the activities undertaken by the Red Cross in general. As a result, several articles and information about a risk reduction project (Kouri di Vwazin 'W) were published.

Besides the hurricane related activities, the Information delegate also provided technical information support to four operations that were coordinated from PADRU. In two of these operations- volcanic eruption in Ecuador and floods in Panama- a special communication plan was elaborated.

In addition, the Information Delegate attended several meetings with other relevant organizations. Meetings with the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) took place in order to create the new information plan 2007 under ECHO programmatic funding for the Caribbean. The Information Delegate also participated in two meetings with the REDLAC sub-group on information (Risk, Emergency, and Disasters Task Force of the Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean). A partnership for the systematization of information sharing through the information group was elaborated.

Reporting delegate

As part of the DREF allocation for the 2006 hurricane season, the Federation decided to appoint a regional reporting delegate to the Regional Reporting Unit (RRU) for the Americas for a period of three months, in order to reinforce reporting capacity, with a particular focus on assisting PADRU. For administrative purposes, this position was contracted through British Red Cross.

Although the hurricane season was relatively calm during the mission of the Reporting delegate, there were nevertheless some smaller-scale disasters within the Americas – in particular the floods in Chile and Surinam, and volcanic eruptions in Colombia and Ecuador – for which PADRU resources were activated and which required reporting support. The Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU) had never benefited from a dedicated reporting delegate or officer – resulting in a backlog of overdue reports and Operations Updates.

This relatively calm period therefore enabled the Reporting Delegate to:

- clear-up a quite substantial back-log of pledge-based reports from previous years (some going back to 2004),
- assist PADRU in meeting its current reporting obligations – in particular the Final Report due for the ECHO Programmatic Funding;
- complete actual operational reporting obligations, linked to the Suriname floods and the Hurricane Wilma emergency operations;
- Develop some reporting formats and procedures to facilitate field reporting on the part of both Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members and delegates.

The Reporting Delegate also provided assistance to capacity-building and training, through:

- Briefings on reporting functions to RIT members prior to and post deployments;
- Briefing new delegates and staff within PADRU;
- Developing a RIT reporting format;
- Collaborating with PADRU Disaster Management Department to develop an internal reporting tool, for capturing consolidated operational information – which was field tested in Ecuador.

Furthermore the Reporting Delegate developed recommendations for future reporting 'ownership' within PADRU, provided translation on an ad hoc basis and worked in close association with the Information Delegate and Officer on material and interviews, when necessary.

Reporting officer

Experience had demonstrated that without a dedicated reporting delegate or officer based at PADRU, an enormous backlog of overdue reports and Operations Updates would be the result. Based on recommendations of the Reporting Delegate it was therefore decided to hire a permanent reporting officer with primary responsibility for PADRU reporting.

Impact

The deployment of the Information delegate and the Reporting delegate significantly improved PADRU's service functions such as information and reporting during and after the hurricane season. Their deployments have increased the capacity of PADRU and National Societies in the region in getting organised and prepared before the season as well as responding effectively once the disaster is a fact. In addition, their work in preparation and clearing of pending work strongly contributed to disaster preparedness for the 2007 hurricane season.

Constraints

In the last years great emphasis has been put upon increasing the regional cooperation and exchange of regional human resources within the Americas region through the training and deployment of specialized regional human resources. Unfortunately, in the Americas and the Caribbean not many regional human resources specialized in communication are available when a disaster occurs. One of the main obstacles is that, with the exception of one communicator, most of the communicators in the National Societies of Latin America do not have sufficient knowledge of English in order to full fill the communication task as a Red Cross spokesman at international level. Therefore, it is important to have a reporting and information officer that can fulfil these activities.

Conclusions

In spite of the limitations of communication resources at global level, the Americas and Caribbean region took their latest experiences into account and reinforced the area of communication. This is crucial in order to increase visibility and transparency among donors but also among the public. PADRU is therefore focusing on strengthening the communication capacity of National Societies in the region, through the organisation of Regional Intervention Team (RIT) members courses specialized in information during disaster.

To further strengthen the image of the Red Cross in the continent, the relation with mass media is crucial. It is recommended for the 2007 hurricane season to focus even more on continental communication in order to strengthen relationships with regional and international media.

Experts at the NOAA Climate Prediction Centre are projecting a 75 percent chance that the Atlantic Hurricane Season 2007 will be above normal—indicating that the ongoing active hurricane era remains strong. For the 2007 Atlantic hurricane season, NOAA scientists predict 13 to 17 named storms, with seven to ten becoming hurricanes, of which three to five could become major hurricanes of Category 3 strength or higher. With the start of the hurricane season upon us, NOAA recommends those in hurricane-prone regions to begin their preparation plans.

The annual pre-hurricane meeting organized by PADRU took place from 14 to 17 May 2007 in Panama with the participation of external partners in the region and with representatives of National Societies from countries prone to hurricanes within the Americas. The meeting aimed at strengthening the Red Cross regional network prior to the onset of the 2007 hurricane season. Resulting from the preparation of the hurricane contingency planning the National Societies in Central America and the Caribbean now have a clearer understanding of regional resources and response capacities. The Federation will also continue with pre-positioning specialized personnel prior to the hurricane season, as part of the preparedness and response strategy to disasters of the International Federation.

Final financial report below;

[click here to return to the title page or contact information](#)

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

MDR42001 - Padru - Hurricane Season Preparedness

Final Financial Report

Selected Parameters	
Reporting Timeframe	2006/1-2007/12
Budget Timeframe	2006/1-2007/12
Appeal	MDR42001
Budget	APPEAL

All figures are in Swiss Francs (CHF)

I. Consolidated Response to Appeal

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
A. Budget		0				0
B. Opening Balance		0				0
Income						
<u>Cash contributions</u>						
<i>DREF</i>		59,114				59,114
<i>Spanish Red Cross (SEE NOTE 1)</i>		2,418				2,418
<i>C1. Cash contributions</i>		61,532				61,532
<u>Inkind Personnel</u>						
<i>Spanish Red Cross (SEE NOTE 1)</i>		37,200				37,200
<i>C4. Inkind Personnel</i>		37,200				37,200
C. Total Income = SUM(C1..C5)		98,732				98,732
D. Total Funding = B +C		98,732				98,732
Appeal Coverage		0%				0%

II. Balance of Funds

	Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation	TOTAL
B. Opening Balance		0				0
C. Income		98,732				98,732
E. Expenditure		-98,732				-98,732
F. Closing Balance = (B + C + E)		0				0

NOTE 1: Included as income in-kind Personnel is reporting delegate from The Spanish Red Cross for the period July-December 2006.

III. Budget Analysis / Breakdown of Expenditure

Account Groups	Budget	Expenditure					TOTAL	Variance
		Health & Care	Disaster Management	Humanitarian Values	Organisational Development	Coordination & Implementation		
A							B	A - B
BUDGET (C)		0					0	
Transport & Storage								
Transport & Vehicle Costs			2,504				2,504	-2,504
Total Transport & Storage			2,504				2,504	-2,504
Personnel								
International Staff Payroll Benefits			76,802				76,802	-76,802
Regionally Deployed Staff			1,430				1,430	-1,430
National Staff			1,750				1,750	-1,750
National Society Staff			1,705				1,705	-1,705
Total Personnel			81,687				81,687	-81,687
Workshops & Training								
Workshops & Training			31				31	-31
Total Workshops & Training			31				31	-31
General Expenditure								
Travel			271				271	-271
Information & Public Relation			60				60	-60
Communications			899				899	-899
Professional Fees			6,590				6,590	-6,590
Financial Charges			310				310	-310
Other General Expenses			117				117	-117
Total General Expenditure			8,249				8,249	-8,249
Programme Support								
Program Support			6,260				6,260	-6,260
Total Programme Support			6,260				6,260	-6,260
TOTAL EXPENDITURE (D)			98,732				98,732	-98,732
VARIANCE (C - D)			-98,732				-98,732	