

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

PAPUA NEW GUINEA DROUGHT AND FROST

14/01/2003

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- *This bulletin is for information only. The Federation is not seeking any funding or other assistance from donors for this operation at this time.*

The Situation

The effects of El Nino are common in Papua New Guinea (PNG). El Nino reappears every 2-10 years. In early 2002 drought was forecast to affect PNG. This current El Nino condition has already caused mild drought and isolated frost, especially in higher areas. Numerous reports have already been documented on the current El Nino event, which has been blamed for causing food and water shortages in these affected parts of the country. The more severe impacts exist along regions within the boundary of Savannah grassland in both high and low altitude areas.

On 30 October 2002, a technical assessment on the impact of El Nino was conducted by the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI), AUSAID, Australian National University and National Disaster Management Office (NDMO). According to the technical team report the areas, that are currently experiencing the severe El Nino related drought events, are Telefomin District of Sandaun Province and the middle and south areas of Western Province. The other areas of high altitude region that experience El Nino related frost and drought events are Kandep and Sirunki areas of Enga Province, upper Mendi areas of Southern Highlands and Tambul areas of the Western Highlands Province.

The current prolonged drought in these regions have had a large impact on the agricultural sector. The impact of drought has caused food insecurity in the affected areas. Garden food and cash crops in these areas die as a result of heat and low moisture content in the soil. The impact also caused water shortage, which is seen as another major problem. It was observed, that the rivers and creeks have gone dry or reduced in volume causing people living along rivers and creeks to migrate to other areas.

On 23 December 2002, the Director of NDMO called all stakeholders for a meeting, at which he presented some reports on the situation. He emphasised that the drought has severely affected people in Highlands and Gulf provinces. The drought has become a main concern of the Government. At the moment all NDMO effort will be directed to the drought affected Provinces. He appealed to the international NGOs, local NGOs as well as donors to give priority to the drought.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Action

PNG Red Cross Society (PNGRCS) and the Federation Delegation are in close contact with NDMO. PNGRCS initiated to have an interagency assessment. The Secretary General of PNGRCS had advised the branches in the drought affected areas to reactivate the emergency committees at their level and to collate and update information on the situation. PNGRCS Disaster Assessment and Relief Team members are also being mobilised. The DP officer and DP delegate are co-ordinating with all partners involved in the joint assessment.

For a full description of the National Society profile, see www.ifrc.org

For further details please contact :

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All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.

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