American Red Cross

CHILE EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE UPDATE

June 2010

OVERVIEW

In February 2010, an 8.8 earthquake and tsunami hit central Chile, killing more than 480 people and affecting 1.8 million others, particularly in coastal communities. The regions of BíoBío and Maule experienced the most significant damage, with damage to hundreds of thousands of homes, as well as hospitals and schools. Total damage was estimated at $30 billion. According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the earthquake and tsunami caused $30 billion in damage and economic loss to the Chilean economy.

Red Cross staff assess damage in coastal areas.

Global Red Cross Network Response:

The Red Cross helped meet immediate needs by providing relief supplies, healthcare, and water and sanitation services for up to 90,000 people. It is also providing cash grants so families can build transitional shelters and prepare for future disasters. These activities are supported by a $12.9 million appeal launched by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

American Red Cross Support:

Total American Red Cross assistance is expected to exceed $6 million, including support for initial response and future recovery and preparedness programs.

The American Red Cross supported the initial response with people, supplies, and cash, specifically –

- Two regional staff members based in Panama. One helped assess needs and plan the response, with a focus on water and sanitation services. The other helped manage response activities in Bío-Bío.
- Relief supplies from our regional warehouse in Panama, including 5,000 jerry cans and 1,160 hygiene kits, for distribution by the Chilean Red Cross.
- $1 million to fund relief, healthcare and water and sanitation services supported by the appeal.

The American Red Cross is also reporting recovery efforts, providing $1.5 million to help improve transitional shelters for more than 8,000 vulnerable families.

Finally, the American Red Cross is working to expand a South American disaster preparedness program to include support for the Chilean Red Cross.

GENERAL OPERATIONS UPDATE

Red Cross teams provide psychosocial support in affected areas.

As of May 27, the global Red Cross network has helped meet the needs of more than 100,000 people.

This includes relief distributions of –

- food assistance,
- hygiene kits, kitchen sets, blankets,
- water and sanitation services,
- emergency tents, tarps and transitional shelters.

This also includes health services in which –

- More than 5,000 persons received psychosocial support;
- Two basic healthcare units were installed in Hualané and Parral; and
- A hospital with 50 beds and two operating tables was installed in Pitrufquén.

Finally, the International Committee of the Red Cross helped reconnect families.

- An ICRC web page helped facilitate the process of reuniting family members, ultimately resolving more than 200 cases.
- The ICRC also provided satellite phones to enable residents in affected areas to communicate with their families.

TRANSITIONAL SHELTERS WTIH TARJETA RED

As of May 21, the government of Chile had installed more than 50,000 temporary shelters. These shelters are small wooden structures that measure approximately 18 square meters. Despite the positive pace of construction, the government of Chile has acknowledged that these shelters are not sufficiently durable.

To help improve the quality of the shelters, the Chilean Red Cross and the global Red Cross network have developed the *Tarjeta Red* program, an initiative designed to help residents improve their transitional shelters. Approximately 8,400 families in the most vulnerable communities in the regions of BíoBío and Maule will receive a debit card to be used at one of 40 hardware stores part of the largest network in Chile (Red MTS) to purchase materials to improve their shelters. The American Red Cross has supported this initiative with a contribution of $1.5 million, enabling the Red Cross network to nearly double the amount provided, for a total of $350 per family.

Beneficiaries will have the opportunity to spend the full amount at once or in various trips within a four month time frame. Based on assessments, families will most likely use this debit cards to purchase materials for insulation; expand the size; build a shower/bathroom; install plastic or aluminum siding and windows to protect from wind & rain; install stoves to improve heat; or paint/stain shelters.

INCREASING RESILIENCE AND CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO FUTURE DISASTERS

The American Red Cross is working with the Chilean Red Cross to establish a program to support community-based disaster risk reduction and build the capacity of the Chilean Red Cross to respond to future disasters. Many of these activities will be supported through a regional American Red Cross program, which actively seeks to improve disaster preparedness in numerous countries throughout South America, including Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru and Paraguay.