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## **DISASTER EMERGENCY BULLETIN**

### **SIERRA LEONE/WEST AFRICA, FLOODS UPDATE 19 AUGUST 2009**

#### **IN BRIEF**

This forms part of the national society's plan to increase the flow of communication between its partners, regional offices and donors. The National Society is seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation; also, any form of medical intervention and distribution of non-food items can be useful for people affected by these flash floods. This bulletin reflects information on severe flooding in three regions of the country (Western Area-Freetown, South-Moyamba, Pujehun, Bo and North-Kambia,) that may lead to outbreak of water borne diseases, which may lead to serious cases of frequent stool and vomiting (Cholera epidemic). Some initial laboratory tests conducted on a series of specimen collected from the cases seen in some public clinics in Freetown and its environs six weeks ago showed growth of the pathogens which cause diarrhoea.

#### **The Situation analysis**

For many years in Sierra Leone heavy rains have brought serious flooding to many low lands and river communities, leading to contamination of streams and wells by these flooding waters that erode rubbish and uncollected sewage, this has exacerbated the incident of water borne diseases every year particularly during the rainy season. According to the Freetown Meteorological department, we will be experiencing sustained rain fall for the next couple of weeks due to inter –tropical convergences in the West African Rain Forest. Sources from the Office of National Security Disaster Management Unit disclosed also that according to a survey they carried out this year, the ocean has eroded about 100 meters of the Gbondapi shores in Pujehun and 10 meters into the shores of Lakka beach over the past 10 years. Since 27 July 2009, most parts of Sierra Leone including the city, Freetown have been experiencing very heavy down pour of rains that has led to so many flash floods particularly around wharfs and slum areas of Freetown and other parts of the country. including the Island and swamp rice areas of Yeliboya and Balansera, Rochenlol, Rochenbana, Tombo Wala, Rokupr, Kasiri, Mpotolon and Kychom in the Samu chiefdom, Pintgili, Tawuya, Yenkanonko, Rogberay and Maseba in the Gbinleh Dixinn and Tonkolimba chiefdoms,

Kambia district, Northern Sierra Leone and the river areas in 17 villages in five chiefdoms in the Gbondapi chiefdom of Pujehun; and Shell Mingo, Janga Street in Bo all of the Southern province where 166 houses were flooded and 275 people displaced in all. A total of 257 dwelling houses in nine villages in Kambia and Pujehun were destroyed and more than 47 community farms were destroyed in all of the mentioned districts in the provinces. These coupled with the poverty circle has caused so much suffering and severe loss of lives.

In summary, approximately 450 houses were reported destroyed and nearly 700 people forced to leave their habitats in the affected areas of Freetown and the provincial districts.

**Below is a breakdown of statistical data of the situation**

Locations	Injuries		Displaced		Death		Houses affected	Plantations/ farms destroyed
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Freetown (Western Area)	10	16	122	303	2	8	193	0
Kambia District (North)	7	47	137	197	17	23	105	22
Pujehun District (South)	47	76	102	149	14	29	103	25
Bo District (South)	2	5	100	145	3	7	49	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>47</b>

The available medical services cannot adequately take care of the situation and the only available community clinic at Kroo Bay was also reportedly over flooded and all the drugs inside destroyed in the afternoon of 19 August 2009.

## **SLRCS Action**

A total of 26 SLRCS Disaster Management Action Teams and 386 volunteers in all have been teaming up at group levels in all affected communities, collaborating with partners like the Office of National Security and the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and other partners in order to mobilize all necessary support to bring the situation under control in the Western Area. In the affected districts, at least 17 youth and adult members took part in the monitoring, assessment, rescue and evacuation of casualties to the government hospitals. Meanwhile some of our hygiene promoters and volunteers of the SLRCS in the affected communities in the various Red Cross operational areas who were trained on Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation and Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Response who also received training on Cholera preparedness and the use of Oral Rehydration Salt and other hygiene practices have been going into these communities to help in the mitigation of the damages being inflicted by the floods. These volunteers also shared their knowledge on proper hygiene and sanitation ways with the communities thereby increasing the hygiene awareness and ensuring that they are able to demonstrate their ability to use these preventive skills particularly at a time like this when there is a likelihood of outbreak of water borne disease.

The only difficulty facing the SLRCS operations in this direction is limited stock of non-food items in our Ware houses, inadequate Cholera kits to meet most of the affected population and means of mobility to swiftly respond to all the cases particularly considering communities that are far away from our First Aid Posts.

For further information on this please contact:

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