

SWAZILAND - Cyclone

Date: January 28-31, 1984

Location: Entire country

No. Dead: 53, with 12 missing

No. Affected: Total population, estimated at 632,000 (1983); 300-500 homeless

Damage: Infrastructure damage, including transportation, communications, and power systems, was estimated at over \$50 million. The private sector sugar, fruit, and tobacco industries suffered approximately \$2.5 million in damages; small-scale irrigation works, \$1.4 million; and rural water systems, \$252,000. Houses and other buildings sustained extensive damage.

The Disaster

Cyclone Domolna struck Swaziland on the evening of January 28 after devastating large areas of Madagascar and Mozambique. The torrential rains, as much as 50 cm in 36 hours, was the heaviest ever recorded. Flooding rivers, several of which rose 30 meters within a few hours, rushed down mountains and hills into already inundated lowlands, washing out roads and bridges and causing extensive property damage. High winds knocked out communication and power lines and ripped trees from the ground.

The almost total breakdown of communications and transportation systems made initial assessment of the situation exceedingly difficult. Over 100 bridges, 39 of them major, were damaged or destroyed, while flood waters cut gaping holes (15-18 meters deep) into many hardtop roads and rock-slides rendered many other roads impassable. Two major rail lines were severed and telephone, telex, and power services were cut in rural areas.

Damage to food crops was minimal, but at least 10,000 citrus trees were destroyed and sugar and tobacco fields suffered from waterlogging. Many small dams and irrigation works sustained heavy damage as did water pumping and treatment equipment. Though exact figures are unknown, many Swazi homes, traditionally constructed of mud and rock, suffered partial or total destruction. Schools and rural health clinics were also heavily damaged by the high winds and flood waters.

Action Taken by the Government of Swaziland (GOS) and Local Voluntary Groups

On January 31, the Prime Minister declared a state of emergency and issued a request for international assistance to resident bilateral and multi-lateral donors and PVOs. The GOS then convened a disaster relief committee headed by the Minister of Interior and consisting of the ministers of Works, Power and Communications; Natural Resources; Defense; Health; and Agriculture. In the days immediately following the cyclone, committee members conducted a series of aerial surveys to assess the damage and determine rehabilitation and reconstruction measures.

The Ministry of Works, Power and Communications mobilized crews to make emergency repairs and open as many routes as possible. Crews also worked to restore downed power lines and communications systems.

A number of voluntary organizations and church and service groups provided emergency assistance in the form of temporary shelter, blankets, food, and clothing. The Swaziland Red Cross (SRC) led the effort, coordinating the activities of other groups and distributing many tons of food and other supplies.

A disaster fund committee was established by several service clubs (Rotary Club, Round Table, International Voluntary Services) to raise funds for the Swaziland Workcamps Association, a group of several hundred Swazi students who volunteer their labor on small works projects. In this case, they helped families rebuild their homes.

The Council of Swaziland Churches (CSC) also used volunteer students to carry out disaster assessments and distribute construction materials purchased by CSC as well as clothes and food donated by the students themselves. The construction materials provided by CSC were valued at \$17,000.

Assistance Provided by the United States Government

On January 30, 1984, in response to the Swazi appeal for assistance, the U.S. Charge issued a disaster declaration and announced the donation of \$25,000 to the Swaziland Red Cross for tents, blankets, and other immediate relief needs.

The USAID Mission in Swaziland reallocated resources from the regular development program for the cyclone relief effort. A mobile radio network funded through an AID project was made available to GOS agencies, local relief organizations, and donors to facilitate disaster-related communications. USAID engineers worked with personnel from the GOS ministries of Public Works and Agriculture and Cooperatives to assess infrastructure damage and help restore basic services. Heavy equipment, purchased under an AID loan for use in rural development areas, was employed to clear roads and construct detours. Because this assistance was provided under the regular AID program, the value cannot be itemized.

In response to a GOS Ministry of Health request, OFDA authorized two grants for the repair and rehabilitation of rural health clinics. One grant, in the amount of \$20,000, was given to the Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital for the repair of eleven rural clinics under its jurisdiction. The second grant, totaling \$115,000, was made to the GOS to rehabilitate seven health clinic water supply systems (\$95,000); repair structural damage at five clinics (\$5,000); and purchase a mobile generator to restore electrical service at several clinics (\$15,000).

TOTAL \$160,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

CRS - provided 60 bales of clothing valued at \$9,000.

Oral Roberts University - donated \$36,000 worth of drugs.

TOTAL \$45,000

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

EEC - \$80,510 for the local purchase of tents, food, blankets and other relief supplies.

FAO - authorized \$250,000 for agricultural rehabilitation.

LORCS - issued an appeal to its national societies for \$22,300 to meet emergency needs; another appeal for \$212,500 was later issued for supplies, warehousing, transport, and support services.

UNDP - the Resident Representative coordinated relief efforts of international donors in-country and established an emergency center to collect and disseminate information about the disaster; provided \$40,000 to defray costs of helicopters used to distribute SRC relief supplies.

UNDRO - gave \$20,000 to cover the costs of air-dropping relief supplies, including those provided by the SRC.

UNICEF - sent two disaster specialists to help the Ministry of Health assess health needs; gave \$40,000 worth of medicines.

World Bank - sent a reconnaissance team of engineers to assess damages and make recommendations for long-term reconstruction.

Governments

Australia - \$45,045 through UNDRO.

Belgium - \$54,775 through Belgium Socialist Solidarity.

Canada - \$25,000 through LORCS and \$40,323 through UNDRO for six local PVOs. CIDA - provided \$50,000 in relief funds.

China, Peoples Rep. - donated \$40,000 to the GOS.

Denmark - gave \$94,581 through LORCS and LWF.

Germany, Fed. Rep. - \$35,714 in cash to the GOS.

Israel - provided drugs to support the regular GOS supply program and to assist cyclone victims; \$10,000 in cash for the local purchase of relief items.

Italy - gave medicines valued at \$125,000 including airfreight.

Japan - \$70,000 in cash.

Netherlands - \$68,965 in cash through LORCS.

Norway - \$60,000 through the Norwegian Red Cross.

South Africa - sent a 64-person military unit with 20 vehicles to assess damage to infrastructure and begin emergency repairs; two helicopters to aid in rescue and transport GOS officials conducting aerial surveys; and 60 large tents.

United Kingdom - sent a civil engineer to assist in road and bridge repair.

Voluntary Agencies

Bahai International - \$2,500 through UNICEF.

LWF - \$40,000 in cash; 300 blankets and 90 tents valued at \$18,900; 50 bags of milk powder (value unknown); and four generators (\$7,000).

Norway Red Cross - provided a delegate to assist the SRC with damage and needs assessments.

South Africa Red Cross - provided tents to the SRC.

Switzerland Red Cross - \$22,321 in cash.

World Vision International - \$10,000 in cash for the purchase of 500 blankets, 35 rolls of plastic sheeting, and construction materials. Also provided two shallow-draft jet boats, fuel, and spare parts worth \$10,000.

Zimbabwe Red Cross - donated tents to the SRC with air transport provided free by the Swazi national airline.

TOTAL \$1,495,434