



DISASTER
RELIEF

CASE REPORT
Mauritius – Cyclone
February 17-19, 1972

Agency for International Development
Washington, D.C. 20523

MAURITIUS

**CYCLONE HITS RODRIGUES, AN ISLAND
SOME 350 MILES EAST OF MARITIUS KILL-
ING TWO PERSONS AND INJURING 16.**

Foreign Disaster Case Reports are publications of the Office of the Foreign Disaster Relief Coordinator, Agency for International Development. This office has responsibility for coordinating U.S. Government foreign disaster relief responses and for the further coordination of such activities with those of the U.S. private and international disaster relief communities.

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Tropical cyclone "Fabienne" of intense force with gusting winds of 140 miles per hour ravaged the island of Rodrigues on February 17-19, 1972. Rodrigues, a small island off Mauritius, lies in the cyclone belt and has an estimated population of 25,000 people. Damage to roads and bridges was extensive and flooding in the capital city of Port Mathurin was caused by winds which produced massive tides over 12 feet above normal. More than 1,000 houses and public buildings were damaged or destroyed and the island's population lost its entire food crop of newly planted corn. Numerous domestic animals including cattle, pigs, and goats were killed and over 20 fishing boats were lost or damaged.

The island, having little in the way of modern infrastructure, was completely cut off from the outside world. All communications including radio were inoperative during the two days of the storm. It was necessary for the population to find shelter as best it could and wait out the termination of "Fabienne".

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF MAURITIUS:

The Mauritius Government budgeted two million rupees (approximately \$400,000) for reconstruction projects on the stricken island. The Mauritian Red Cross, private groups and Mauritian municipalities donated emergency supplies.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE U.S.

On February 23, Ambassador William D. Brewer determined that a disaster situation existed and offered \$10,000 in assistance to the Government of Mauritius (GOM). A portion of these funds were used by the GOM to purchase cement, a cement mixer, corrugated iron sheeting, lumber, other building materials, construction tools, and maize seed to replace destroyed crops. Fortunately, the U.S. Navy destroyer, USS Myles C. Fox, was in Port Smith during the time of the cyclone and was made available to transport most of this cargo expeditiously to Rodrigues. The Fox also delivered over 1,000 pounds of U.S. donated books, 1,200 pounds of food, Mauritian mail, and a substantial

consignment of currency notes badly needed to finance special assistance and reconstruction work occasioned by the cyclone. The Ambassador and visiting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Ambassador C. Robert Moore, also visited the neighboring island aboard the Fox.

Total U.S. Assistance Used \$7,609.06



ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY OTHER NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

United Kingdom

The British diverted two of their naval support vessels (from the Beira Patrol) to Rodrigues to help in reconstruction. They provided medical supplies and baked bread for the homeless. Two more British vessels participated by making voyages to the Island transporting supplies provided by the Government of Mauritius.

France

Donated corrugated iron, lumber, and food **

U.S.S.R.

Offered lumber, food, and medical supplies \$11,000

India

Offered cholera vaccine and vitamin pills **

Malagasy Republic

Sent small quantity of rice **

United Nations

Repair or replacement of damaged fishing boats \$ 4,000

** Value of assistance not given



MAURITIUS