

Date

December 1987 -
May 1988

Location

Atacora Province,
particularly
Tangueta, Coby,
and Materi districts

No. Dead

41

No. Affected

Total unknown, at
least 347 cases

The Disaster

The Atacora Province, one of the least developed areas of Benin, experienced outbreaks of types A and C meningitis that began in December 1987 and continued into the next year. About 85% of the cases occurred in the Tangueta, Coby, and Materi districts. While the total number of infected remained unknown, there were at least 41 deaths and 347 hospitalized. Crowded living conditions, poor hygiene, and reluctance or difficulties in seeking medical attention contributed to the spread of the disease.

was experiencing an emergency shortfall in medicine and supplies. OFDA approved \$26,642 for the local purchase of antibiotics, quinine, quinimax, valium, apegic, penicillin, totapen, and gardenal.

TOTAL \$46,642

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

None reported

Action Taken by the Government of the People's Republic of Benin (GPRB)

On Feb. 26, after determining local resources were insufficient to meet the problem, the Ministry of Health (MOH) officially appealed for assistance from WHO, which communicated the request to UNICEF. Concurrently, an educational campaign was mounted on radio and through health and social centers to persuade local people to seek vaccination. The Minister of Health, accompanied by the provincial governor, made two trips to the area to monitor progress and to further publicize the vaccination campaign.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

UNICEF - contributed antibiotics and syringes and paid for transportation and internal distribution costs of U.S.-donated vaccine at a total cost of \$15,000.

WHO - monitored the distribution of U.S.-donated vaccine

TOTAL \$15,000

Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government

Following a UNICEF request for 100,000 doses of vaccine, U.S. Ambassador Walter Stadler made a declaration of disaster on March 21. OFDA provided \$20,000 to UNICEF to purchase the vaccine from the Merieux Institute in Lyon, France. The shipment arrived in Cotonou on March 26. UNICEF funded transport and handled delivery to the MOH. MOH officials began vaccinations in the affected area the week of April 4. By the end of May, health workers had administered 39,750 doses in Atacora while transferring another 20,000 doses to replenish depleted stocks in Borgou Province.

The USG also responded to a March 12 appeal from the USAID/Cotonou for drugs to the National University Hospital's Pediatric Center. The medical facility, located in the Beninois capital of Cotonou,

Date

September 1988

Location

Karimama and Malanville districts in Borgou Province and Zagnanado, Ouinhi, and Savalou districts in Zou Province

No. Dead

None reported

No. Affected

68,000 people affected, of whom 16,000 were homeless

Damage

Cattle, at least 30,000 ha. of crops, and 25,000 MT of grain were lost while houses and roads were destroyed or sustained damage.

The Disaster

Unusually heavy rain caused flooding of the Niger River on Benin's northern border and the Zou and Oueme rivers in the country's interior. Official estimates indicated that 22,000 people were affected in the northern districts of Malanville and Karimama with another 46,000 victims in the central districts of Ouinhi, Savalou, and Zagnanado. Some flooding also occurred in the city of Parakou and in low-lying areas of Atlantique Province, including parts of the capital of Cotonou.

Although cresting waters isolated some villages and rendered 16,000 homeless, there appeared to be little loss of life. The inundations damaged or destroyed housing, roads, livestock, 25,000 MT of grain stocks, and 30,000 ha. of cropland. The most seriously affected population included fishermen and market gardeners who could not get their goods to market due to impassable secondary roads. It was expected that reduced supplies from crop damage and disruption of transportation would increase corn prices in the areas of Cotonou, Porto Novo, and Abomey.

The flooding produced serious secondary health effects. Health authorities reported increased rates of malaria, dysentery, and respiratory disease in the stricken zones. By Sept. 20, over 900 people had sought medical treatment from the emergency at a temporary field hospital in Zagnanado. However, epidemics did not occur and the number of cases subsided soon thereafter to seasonal norms.

Action Taken by the Government of the People's Republic of Benin (GPRB) and Non-Governmental Organizations

As news of the disaster became known, national and local authorities combined forces with donor groups to obtain more precise information and make long-term assessments. The GPRB declared the rural districts of Malanville, Karimama, Ouinhi, Savalou, and Zagnanado disaster areas on Sept. 7 and charged concerned ministries with taking action. The National Committee for Civil Protection, under the Interior Ministry, coordinated the GPRB response. Army units established emergency headquarters at Bohicon in Zou

Province and at Kandi in Borgou Province to assist in relief efforts. Health workers established treatment centers and labored at getting medical supplies to the flooded zones.

Disaster items furnished by the GPRB included vehicles, tents, mobile kitchens, mattresses, blankets, first-aid supplies, and food from emergency stocks. Zagnanado, Ouinhi, Karimama, and Malanville districts received initial distributions. The country's business community aided with extensive donations of goods and cash. Nevertheless, an insufficiency of supplies led the GPRB to convoke a meeting of foreign missions and relief agency representatives on Sept. 13 and request international assistance. Two days later, government officials arranged a visit for donors to view the damage in Zagnanado District.

Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government

Because of the heavy rain and flooding, U.S. Ambassador Walter E. Stadler issued a disaster declaration for Benin on Sept. 16. USAID/Cotonou used \$25,000 in emergency funds to donate antibiotics and treatment solutions for malaria and respiratory and diarrheal disease. The medicine was purchased from two local manufacturers--Bio-Benin Laboratoire Pharmaceutique and Pharmaquick Industrie Pharmaceutique--and was delivered to the National Committee for Civil Protection on Sept. 27 and Oct. 3. USAID/Cotonou also released 700 MT of corn from the Section 416 feeding program for emergency use at a cost of \$130,000.

Total OFDA	\$25,000
Total FFP	\$130,000

TOTAL	\$155,000
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Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

CRS - contributed 3,000 sacks of CSM and 1,000 containers of vegoil.

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

FAO - funded rehabilitation projects for peasant farmers, valued at \$10,000, and provided onion and potato seed to farmers in Kanmama District

UNDP/UNDRO - furnished medicine and logistical support, valued at \$20,000.

UNICEF - gave medicine, tents, and blankets, worth \$26,000.

WFP - donated 450 MT of food.

WHO - contributed 20 emergency health kits.

Governments

France - donated medicine, clothing, and blankets, valued at \$16,666

Germany, Fed. Rep - furnished mattresses, blankets, and medicine, worth \$27,777.

Italy - contributed 2,500 MT of corn flour.

Nigeria - provided food, valued at \$238,095.

Togo - gave \$250,000

Non-Governmental Organizations

Fonds Africain de Garantie Commercial et Economique - donated medicine and food, worth \$6,666.

Fed Rep. of Germany Red Cross - provided tents and blankets to the Beninois Red Cross.

France Red Cross - provided tents and blankets to the Beninois Red Cross

Swiss Cooperation - contributed mattresses, blankets, and tents, valued at \$146,666.

TOTAL \$741,870

Floods

Burkina Faso

Date

August - September
1988

Location

14 of 30 provinces

No. Dead

14

No. Affected

About 15 000 people,
of whom 10,000
were homeless

Damage

Floods caused
considerable damage
to houses, roads,
crops, and grain
storage facilities

The Disaster

Heavier rains than normal in August and September caused flooding in 14 out of 30 provinces, most of which had already been affected by drought. High waters isolated more than 100 villages, drowned cattle, destroyed homes and grain storage facilities, and rendered roads impassable. Fourteen people were killed and more than 15,000 affected, of whom 10,000 were made homeless. The flooding exacerbated already prevalent food shortfalls in the north, especially in Seno, Soum, Oudalan, Bam, and Namentenga provinces. Some crop damage was reported in the southern and eastern parts of Burkina.

Action Taken by the Government of Burkina (GOB)

The GOB appealed for international contributions and established an emergency unit under the National Drought Commission to mobilize and deliver assistance, coordinate the donor response, and collect and analyze flood data. Aircraft from the Burkinabe Army and trucks from the National Drought Commission were made available to assess the situation and dispatch supplies. The GOB released food from government stocks for free distribution and used schools and other public buildings to shelter the homeless.

Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government

U.S. Ambassador Leonardo Neher declared the situation a disaster on Sept. 9, 1988. Emergency funds of \$25,000 were granted to the National Drought Commission and provincial drought commissions for the local purchase of mats, blankets, and management support.

TOTAL \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

SCF/US - donated \$6,500 for medicine

TOTAL \$6,500

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

EC - gave \$160,000 from counterpart funds.

UNDP - donated blankets, mats, and \$3,200 for disaster management assistance.

UNICEF - contributed blankets, soap, and medical kits

WHO - provided medical kits.

Governments

Algeria - provided a C-130 aircraft.

France - made available a helicopter from the locust campaign and funded survival materials at \$16,000

Libya - supplied 25 MT of food

Togo - contributed a helicopter

TOTAL \$179,200

Date

Aug. 14, 1988

Location

Maranga and Ntega, northern provinces of Burundi

No. Dead

5,000

No. Affected

100,000 persons displaced, 50,000 refugees

Damage

About 1,042 houses were destroyed.

The Disaster

Civil strife once again threatened the fragile existence of Burundi in the summer of 1988. On Aug. 28 this landlocked African nation suffered another ethnic clash. The violence took place in the hills of Maranga and Ntega, about 85 km. north of the Burundian capital of Bujumbura. The bloodshed lasted 10 days, killing 5,000 people and leaving 100,000 homeless. In addition, 50,000 fled to neighboring Rwanda for refuge. According to survivors, it was one of the worst calamities that any human being could witness. For 10 consecutive days, the two dominant tribes of Burundi, the Hutus and the Tutsis, attacked each other with immeasurable brutality.

This fratricidal bloodshed is not new to Burundi. The last major clash took place in 1972, when 100,000 people were brutally killed. The violent behavior is the result of resentments which are caused by the notion that one tribe has affluence and power while the other tribe suffers. This inequity has its roots in the traditional dominance of the Tutsis over the Hutus and was exacerbated by a colonial legacy which favored the Tutsis, which are a minority tribe. This situation also obtained in the area covered by present-day Rwanda. The colonial system established by Belgium promoted and encouraged the Tutsis to educate themselves, and at the same time favored a more servile role for the Hutus. The Tutsis were educated to become lawyers, medical doctors, administrators and civil servants while farming was the only occupation to which Hutus could aspire. This inequitable and systematic way of favoring one group over the other is at the forefront of this emotionally and violently contested national problem.

Burundi is no longer a Belgian colony, but the scars of the colonial days are still very much in evidence. The country gained its independence from Belgium in 1962 and for a period of three years was governed by King Mwambutsa. In 1966, he was overthrown by the Tutsi-dominated army. The Tutsis, once at the helm of Burundi, moved quickly and ensured that the rival Hutus were contained. The latter saw their position weakened and a national policy which

systematically gave Tutsis a greater share of national resources. Meanwhile, in independent Rwanda, Hutus gained control over the government.

This recent violence can also be blamed on the current economic and social situation in the country. Burundi has a population of 5 million people, of which 85% are Hutus and 14% are Tutsis. The Tutsis have almost 90% of all the civil service jobs, in a country where the government is the principal employer. The lack of trust and deeply embedded fears keep these two intertwined Burundian brothers at odds with each other. These tensions have been exacerbated by events which have taken place since the country gained its independence from Belgium in 1962. For instance, the coup d'etat attempt initiated by the Hutus in 1969, and the massacre of 100,000 Hutus by the Tutsis in 1972, are undeniable variables in this civil madness.

The exact cause of this latest bloodshed has not yet been determined. According to western analysts, Burundian army activities in the weeks prior to the massacre may have precipitated the event which led to the ethnic violence. Recent clashes in northern Burundi with Hutu exiles from the Rwandan border prompted the all Tutsi-army to round up educated Hutus in the northern hills of Maranga and Ntega. The Hutus, fearing that a new wave of persecution was occurring, this time struck first. With anger and charged aggression, they went on a rampage killing every Tutsi they encountered, even children and pregnant women did not escape their wrath. When news of the violence reached the capital, the Burundian national army, dominated by Tutsis, was sent to put down the rebellion. This move led many to believe that the army took advantage of the situation to kill Hutus.

Action Taken by the Government of the Republic of Burundi (GRB)

The GRB, faced by international pressure and concerns for its survival, moved quickly and established order. The Tutsi-dominated army was ordered to cease its acts of intimidation in the

northern section of the country. To pacify and neutralize tensions, President Pierre Buyoya in a national speech made it known to all Burundians that this recent violent behavior was not in the country's national interest. He invited Tutsis and Hutus to reconcile their differences and work toward national unity. President Buyoya also pressed for reforms and appointed a consultative commission with 12 Hutu and 12 Tutsi members to investigate the bloodshed. His interventions paid off and some of the refugees returned to their abandoned homes. He succeeded in avoiding potential chaos; however, much remains to be done to establish an equitable system which can provide long-term political stability.

Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government

On Sept. 2, 1988, U.S. Ambassador James Daniel Phillips determined that a disaster existed in Burundi and committed his \$25,000 disaster assistance authority to the work of UNICEF. The objective of the grant was to help meet immediate emergency relief needs for the victims of the civil strife. The UNICEF grant was used to purchase emergency medicines, blankets, cooking utensils, and logistical support (transport, fuel, personnel). The State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs allocated additional funds for UNICEF's work in Rwanda in support of the Burundian refugees who fled to that country.

TOTAL \$25,000

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

CWS - donated \$5,000 in support of the relief effort conducted by the churches of Rwanda and appealed for an additional \$85,000 to assist the Burundians in the Rwandan refugee camps.

CRS - contributed \$40,000 in support of the resettlement of the Burundian refugees and \$30,000 for the Burundians in the Rwandan refugee camps.

TOTAL \$75,000

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

EC - gave \$390,000.

UNDRO - contributed \$1,000,000.

Governments

Belgium - provided \$262,000.

Canada - furnished \$21,000.

France - contributed \$48,300 for medical care.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Belgo-Burundi Friendship Society and local Lions chapter donated kerosene for lamps, and clothing.

A Swiss NGO - offered \$6,500 in assistance to orphans.

TOTAL \$1,727,800

Epidemic

Guinea-Bissau

Date

Sept. 21 - Nov. 19, 1987

Location

The capital of Bissau and nearby coastal villages and islands

No. Dead

68

No. Affected

6,000 cases reported, of which 1,300 required hospitalization

The Disaster

On Sept. 25, 1987, the National Radio of Guinea-Bissau announced that cholera had broken out in the capital of Bissau, with three deaths and 57 people requiring hospitalization. By the end of the first week of October, 292 cases with 13 fatalities had been reported in Bissau alone, and over 80 cases in nearby villages and islands, with eight fatalities. Health officials suspected that the cholera had come from oysters and smoked fish and had spread outside the capital through public contact during funerals

The disease raged throughout October but the situation showed signs of stabilizing by the end of the month when the number of hospital cases had declined to 25-30 per day from a high of 40. Mortality rates, however, were low due to the quick and generally effective health measures undertaken by Guinea-Bissau and international health authorities. By Nov. 19, when the epidemic had run its course, cholera had claimed 168 lives out of a total of approximately 6,000 reported cases, 1,300 of which had required hospitalization.

Altogether in Bissau, 1,388 people--1% of the urban population--were hospitalized with moderate to severe diarrhea between Sept. 25 and Nov. 19; the death rate of hospitalized cases was 1%. Men and women were affected equally, while the age-specific attack rate varied from 4 per 1,000 (0.4%) for people under 20 years old to 20 per 1,000 (2%) for those over 60.

Assistance Provided by the Government of Guinea-Bissau (GOGB) and Non-Governmental Organizations

GOGB health officials quickly recognized the cholera outbreak and immediately took action to contain it. They organized a cholera ward in the national hospital and established temporary infirmaries and treatment centers in affected rural areas. Patients were treated with rehydration therapy (both Ringer's lactate and ORS were used) and oral tetracycline cholera vaccine was not used. Red Cross volunteers helped public health nurses in an extensive effort to treat family contacts with

prophylactic tetracycline. By the second week of the outbreak, basic principles of triage, treatment, sanitation, and laboratory surveillance were established in accordance with WHO guidelines. Public service advisories on health precautions were broadcast repeatedly. In order to arrest the spread of the disease, the GOGB closed several markets and banned funeral services.

In addition, the GOGB Ministry of Health (MOH) made an urgent appeal to the international community for assistance in combatting the epidemic, specifically requesting Ringer's lactate serum administered by IV plus epicranial and size 20 needles and other medical supplies

Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government

In response to the GOGB appeal, U.S. Ambassador John Dale Blacken declared a disaster on Oct. 8, 1987, and requested that OFDA provide IV solution, supplies of which were being rapidly depleted. OFDA Medical Officer Jack Slusser immediately ordered 128 cartons of Ringer's lactate solution, needles, and syringes from UNICEF's warehouses in Copenhagen. The supplies were flown to Dakar and transshipped overland to Bissau. The medicine and supplies cost \$9,683, the air freight was \$17,066, and overland transport cost \$2,000. When the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) received word of the cholera epidemic, it offered to send a Portuguese-speaking epidemiologist to help the MOH fight the disaster. The GOGB gladly assented and Dr. Nathan Shaffer arrived in Bissau on Oct. 17. He integrated himself with the international medical team and stayed nearly four weeks. Dr. Shaffer worked on the relief effort and organized an urban and rural risk factor/transmission study.

TOTAL **\$28,749**

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

None reported

Assistance Provided by the International Community

Belgium - sent a medical team.

Cuba - provided unspecified assistance.

France - supplied 10 MT of medicine and a medical team.

MSF/France - helped plan a national vaccination campaign with WHO.

Portugal - provided a 7-person medical team and 20 MT of medicine.

Sweden - provided unspecified assistance.

WHO - played a major role in the epidemic control campaign, advised the GOGB, and helped plan a national vaccination program.

Date

October 1987

Location

Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka, Qacha's Nek, and Quthing districts

No. Dead

18

No. Affected

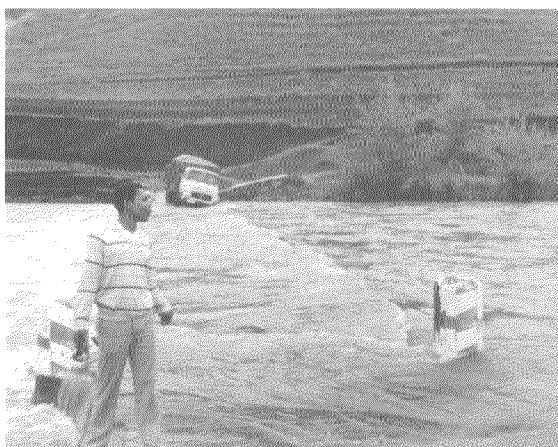
100,000

Damage

Thousands of livestock perished and agricultural production suffered. Flooding destroyed infrastructure and isolated remote villages

The Disaster

During late September and early October 1987, heavy snow and rain fell on the mountainous areas of Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka, Qacha's Nek, and Quthing districts. The freak snowstorm, followed by heavy rain, caused avalanches and flooding that destroyed much of the region's infrastructure. Many roads and bridges washed away, thereby cutting off remote mountain villages from the rest of the country. Nine herdsmen were found dead due to exposure to the extreme cold and another nine people drowned trying to cross flood-swollen rivers. Hundreds of people suffered from frostbite and snow-blindness and several cases of typhoid were reported in Thaba Tseka District. The Government of Lesotho reported that as many as 100,000 people were affected and in need of food, shelter, fuel, and clothing.



Man, trucks attempt to cross washed-out bridge

Photos Courtesy of the American Red Cross

Flooding also destroyed most of the region's agricultural production. Approximately 100,000 head of cattle, sheep, and goats died from exposure to the extreme cold, starvation, or drowning. This presented a serious economic hardship to farmers in the area, who rely heavily on the sale of beet, wool and mohair. In addition, many farmers planted cereal and vegetable seeds before the arrival of the snow and most of these crops were completely lost. Villagers in remote mountain areas went without food for several days. Some farmers ate their seed reserves to stave off

starvation. Officials estimated that it would take several years before Lesotho could return to its normal agricultural productivity.

Action Taken by the Government of Lesotho (GOL) and Non-Governmental Organizations

On Oct. 7, the Government of Lesotho declared Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Quthing, and Qacha's Nek as disaster areas and appealed to the local business community and international donors to provide assistance. Local businesses, civic organizations, and government offices contributed to the National Disaster Relief Fund. On Oct. 15, the National Disaster Relief Committee was formed with officials from the Lesotho Defense Force and various government ministries. The Republic of South Africa (RSA) provided transport planes, helicopters, bulldozers, and personnel to assist in the GOL relief effort. The helicopters were used to ferry relief supplies to isolated villages and evacuate the injured. Bulldozers removed debris from blocked roads, so trucks could deliver relief supplies. By Oct. 17 the RSA withdrew its assistance and the National Disaster Relief Committee decided to concentrate its relief activities in Thaba Tseka and Qacha's Nek districts.

Meanwhile, the Lesotho Red Cross (LRC) targeted its relief activities in Mokhotlong District, the area hardest hit by the disaster. The LRC and League of Red Cross Societies rented helicopters to gain access to isolated villages. LRC field workers conducted assessments in these affected areas. The LRC distributed food rations, cooking oil, paraffin, blankets, and clothing to approximately 40,000 people in 234 villages. In late November, the LRC discontinued its general relief program and began providing special assistance to vulnerable groups, such as the disabled, the elderly and widowed families.

As relief efforts phased down, the Government of Lesotho turned its attention to agricultural rehabilitation activities. The GOL's Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) distributed approximately 178

MT of wheat, oat, potato, and vegetable seeds to over 3,200 households in 96 villages. In addition, the MOA provided livestock fodder and concentrated feed for plow oxen. The fodder was brought in by truck and helicopter and distributed to farmers by village chiefs. By the end of 1987, approximately 90% of all arable land in the four affected districts was under cultivation.

Assistance Provided by the U.S. Government

On Oct. 9, Ambassador Robert M. Smalley responded to the GOL's appeal and donated \$25,000 to the National Disaster Relief Committee. The donation was used to finance the GOL's transportation of relief supplies. Colonel Blyth Ntsohi, chairman of Lesotho's National Disaster Relief Committee, sent a letter of gratitude to Ambassador Smalley, expressing appreciation to the people of the United States for this contribution. Following an appeal from the GOL, Ambassador Smalley requested that OFDA contribute to the Ministry of Agriculture's rehabilitation program. OFDA allocated \$531,010 from its Special Supplemental Appropriation for SADCC countries to the MOA. Funds were used to purchase seeds and livestock fodder for distribution to affected farmers. OFDA also contributed \$100,081 to the Lesotho Red Cross for its emergency feeding program.

Summary of USG Assistance

Grant to the Lesotho government for transport	\$25,000
Grant to the Ministry of Agriculture (from SADCC Supplemental)	\$531,011
Grant to the LRC feeding program (SADCC Supplemental)	\$100,081
TOTAL	\$656,091

Assistance Provided by U.S. Voluntary Agencies

ANRC - contributed \$26,470 to the LRC.

CRS - provided 20 bales of clothing.

SCF/US - gave \$3,000 to Save the Children/Lesotho.

TOTAL \$29,470

Assistance Provided by the International Community

International Organizations

EC - donated \$49,261 to the GOL.

LRCS - launched an appeal on behalf of the LRC and sent delegates to assist LRC efforts.

UNDP - contributed \$50,000 for the purchase of 1,000 blankets and 2,000 liters of aviation fuel.

UNDRO - provided \$10,000 to charter aircraft.

Governments

Canada - donated \$24,630 for transport of relief supplies.

China, People's Rep. - contributed \$10,000 to the GOL.

Germany, Fed. Rep. - gave \$10,989 for transportation of relief supplies.

South Africa - provided helicopters, aircraft, bulldozers, and personnel to assist GOL relief activities.

United Kingdom - gave \$1,000 for blankets.

Non-Governmental Organizations

Caritas/Fed. Rep. of Germany - provided \$27,473 through Caritas/Lesotho.

The following national Red Cross societies
contributed to the LRCS/LRC appeal:

Canada - \$6,544
Denmark - \$15,808
Finland - \$24,780
Germany - \$3,676
Iceland - \$3,676
Japan - \$68,529
Netherlands - \$13,455
Norway - \$18,014
Sweden - \$67,426

TOTAL \$405,261



Basutos distribute donated grain to flood victims.