

October 21, 2009

**Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)
Response to Asian Earthquakes and Flooding**

Asia Disasters Appeal

Recent typhoons and earthquakes and flooding have killed thousands and left more than 1.5 million people displaced. The earthquakes in Indonesia caused buildings to collapse and trapped thousands under the rubble. Typhoon Ketsana wreaked havoc elsewhere in Southeast Asia as heavy rainfall caused widespread flooding and mudslides. Last week MCC increased its planned response to these disasters to \$250,000 (from an initial \$100,000) and issued an appeal for support to constituents. This week, MCC committed an additional \$500,000 from its account with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. The total response will meet needs in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and India. (News release on the updated appeal.)

“The destruction, particularly in Indonesia and India, is enormous and for the most part has not been picked up by the media in Canada and the United States,” said Ron Flaming, director of MCC’s International Programs Department. “MCC has an opportunity to support our sister Anabaptist churches and make a difference in these contexts as they offer assistance in the name of Christ.”

Financial contributions may be made to any MCC office, online at donate.mcc.org or by telephoning toll free: 1-888-563-4676. Gifts should be designated for MCC’s “Asia Disasters.”

Indonesian Earthquakes

Two earthquakes struck the island of Sumatra in Indonesia, the first on Wednesday, Sept. 30, and the second on Thursday, Oct. 1. The earthquakes caused buildings to collapse and trapped thousands under rubble. MCC Representatives Dan and Jeanne Jantzi reported from the village of Guci that 242 of 282 homes in the village were destroyed. The United Nations has reported that more than 1,100 people have died. In Indonesia, the Mennonite Diakonial Service has sent an assessment team to the earthquake area. The Jantzis have also visited the affected area October 6-8 and sent several sobering reports as well as stories of how the Mennonite Diakonial Service is already responding:

Oct. 6 - On site: MCC reps view Indonesian earthquake damage, talk to survivors

Oct. 7 Part 1 - On site: Teachers, volunteers help Indonesian students start to heal from earthquake trauma

Oct. 7 Part 2 - On site: Relief underway in Indonesian village where 95 percent of houses destroyed

Oct. 8 Part 1 - On site: MCC reps learn that entire Indonesian villages are declared mass graves

Oct. 8 Part 2 - On site: Church fears for its Sunday school building, members’ homes and jobs

Oct. 8 Part 3 - On site: Figuring out the challenges of disaster response in Indonesia

Oct. 8 Part 4 - On site: MCC reps bid farewell, return home to request long-term aid

In Indonesia, MCC will rebuild homes in the village of Guci, where about 95 percent of the homes were destroyed, and in the city of Padang. MCC's partner, Mennonite Diakonial Service, the disaster response arm of the Muria Mennonite Synod, is providing health care, trauma healing exercises and locally purchased relief packets of food and other necessities.

Typhoon Ketsana

In late September, Typhoon Ketsana wreaked havoc in Southeast Asia as heavy rainfall caused widespread flooding and mudslides. Hundreds of people have died and at least 500,000 were displaced. Ketsana prompted the worst flooding in the northern Philippines in 40 years when it struck Saturday, Sept. 26, and then continued its deadly path across Southeast Asia. It battered central Vietnam with powerful winds and heavy rain and then weakened as it moved into Cambodia and Laos.

In the Philippines, MCC worker Bruce Glick, of Millersburg, Ohio, is in conversation with Integrated Mennonite Churches to determine the best way to provide short-term relief.

In Vietnam, MCC workers are assessing the need as they communicate with the Social Work Committee of the Vietnam Mennonite Church. MCC anticipates the need for recovery funds to help affected communities rebuild once the initial crisis passes.

In Cambodia the storm killed more than 40 people and destroyed tens of thousands of rice paddies. MCC representatives in Southeast Asia are working with potential partner organizations to determine the best way to help flooding victims recover.

MCC continues to monitor needs in Laos, but initial reports indicate that other organizations are managing the needs there.

India Flooding

In India, heavy rains in late September caused flooding in the Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka districts, killing at least 226 people and leaving about 1 million people homeless, according to Church's Auxiliary for Social Action (CASA), an MCC partner. Indian news sources also reported extensive destruction of crops and some livestock in these farming communities.

Although a few major news organizations reported on the flooding, the emergency has largely gone unnoticed outside of India.

MCC also will work through its partner, Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India, a service and fellowship organization of the six Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in India. The exact means of assistance is still being determined.

What You Can Do

As folks with experience walking alongside people throughout Asia, your voice is an important one in your congregations, families and communities. I ask you to share the information in this e-mail and in the attached resources with people in your networks and to respond as you feel individually led as well. Please encourage people to respond through prayer and financial support.

