COMMISSION DECISION
of
on the financing of emergency humanitarian operations from the general budget of the European Communities in
the Solomon Islands

THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,
Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid[1] , and in particular Article 13 thereof,

Whereas:

(1) An underwater earthquake of magnitude 8.1 caused a tsunami of several meters to hit the Solomon Islands on 1 April 2007 at 20:40 GMT (2 April at 07:40 local time);

(2) There were 18 aftershocks with magnitude higher than 5.0, causing further damage, particularly to structures already damaged from the initial shock;

(3) An estimated 9,000 people were affected by the earthquake and tsunami, with 6,000 displaced and over 4,000 severely affected;

(4) The Government of the Solomon Islands declared a State of Emergency on 3 April 2007 for Western and Choiseul Provinces and the northern part of Isabel province;

(5) Serious damage was caused to homes, schools, crops, water supplies, boats and hospitals;

(6) Humanitarian aid operations financed by this Decision should be for a maximum duration of 6 months;

(7) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 550,000 from budget line 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Communities is necessary to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to over 4,000 people affected by the earthquake and tsunami, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors;

(8) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002[2], Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002[3], and Article 15 of the Internal Rules on the Implementation of the general budget of the European Communities[4];

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

[1] OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1-6
[2] OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p. 1
[3] OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1248/2006, OJ L 227, 19.8.2006, p. 3.
[4] Commission Decision of 21.2.2007, C/2007/513

Article 1

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 550,000 for emergency humanitarian aid operations to provide the necessary assistance and relief to earthquake and tsunami victims in the Solomon Islands by using line 23 02 01 of the 2007 general budget of the European Communities.

2. In accordance with Article 2(a) of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the humanitarian operations shall be implemented in pursuance of the following specific objective:

- To provide multi-sectoral emergency relief and recovery assistance to earthquake and tsunami victims

The total amount of this decision is allocated to this objective.

Article 2

1. The implementation of humanitarian aid operations funded by this Decision shall have a maximum duration of 6 months from their starting date.

2. Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 02 April 2007.

3. If the operations envisaged in this Decision are suspended owing to *force majeure* or comparable circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Article 3

1. The Commission shall implement the budget by direct centralised management.

2. The actions supported by this decision will be implemented by humanitarian aid organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) or the EC/UN Financial Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA).

3. Taking account the specificities of humanitarian aid, the nature of the activities to be undertaken, the specific location constraints and the level of urgency, the activities covered by this decision may be financed in full in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. This means that in case of co-financing, the possible rate of co-financing can go up to 99% if needed.

Article 4

1. This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Commission

Member of the Commission

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID - ECHO

Emergency Humanitarian Aid Decision

23 02 01

Title: Emergency humanitarian aid for people affected by the earthquake and tsunami in the Solomon Islands

Location of operation: Solomon Islands

Amount of Decision: EUR 550,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/SLB/BUD/2007/01000

Explanatory Memorandum

1 - Rationale, needs and target population.

1.1. - Rationale :

On Sunday 1 April 2007 at 20:40 GMT (Monday 2 April at 07:40 local time), an underwater earthquake of magnitude 8.1 caused a tsunami of several meters to hit the Solomon Islands. The tsunami reached the shore within 3 minutes. The waves crashed into some of the western islands, and disaster warnings were issued across the Pacific region. There were 18 aftershocks with magnitude higher than 5.0. Whilst only the initial shock was strong enough to generate a significant tsunami, the other earthquakes caused further damage, particularly to structures that were already damaged from the initial shock.

The Government of the Solomon Islands (GoSI) puts the death toll at 43, with more people missing. 9,000 people have been affected, of whom some 6,000 have lost their homes and are displaced, with 1,500 people in 12 spontaneous camps in the hills above Gizo town on Gizo Island, requiring urgent assistance. Many people are staying away from their villages, fearing further shocks and awaiting reassurance about this. However, assessment of all affected islands has not been completed, and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) estimates that up to 50,000 people may be affected out of a total population of 100,000 in Western and Choiseul Provinces. Solomon Islands consist of over 990 islands with an estimated total population (in 2006) of 552,438.

The National Disaster Council (NDC) carried out an assessment mission in Western Province on 2 April 2007. The assessment team included representatives of the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Government ministries, the police department, the Red Cross, New Zealand Aid (NZ Aid) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Early relief supplies were provided by Solomon Islands Red Cross, supported by the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), consisting of Australian and New Zealand military and police forces. On 3 April 2007 the GoSI declared a State of Emergency for Western and Choiseul Provinces and the northern part of Isabel province. The European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid, DG ECHO, deployed the Rapid Response Co-ordinator from ECHO-Bangkok office, who arrived in the Solomon Islands for an assessment mission on 4 April 2007, the same day as the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) officer and the day before the UN Disaster and Assessment Co-ordination (UNDAC) team, which was requested by the GoSI. The information in this funding decision is based on the ECHO Co-ordinator's report, together with those of OCHA, UNDAC, NDMO and the Delegations of the European Commission in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

1.2. - Identified needs :

Assessments indicate needs in the following sectors:

- Shelter
- Water
- Sanitation
- Health
- Emergency education
- Non-food items
- Co-ordination, logistics and transport
- Food

1.3. - Target population and regions concerned :

This funding decision aims to provide assistance to people affected by the earthquake and tsunami in Western Province, Choiseul Province and Shortland Islands of the Solomon Islands.

It is estimated that 9,000 people have been affected, of whom some 6,000 have lost their homes and are displaced, with 1,500 people in 12 spontaneous camps. It is likely that 4,000-5,000 people are severely affected.

1.4. - Risk assessment and possible constraints :

The following risks and constraints should be considered:

- Further aftershocks across the region, which could cause another tsunami, jeopardising the humanitarian assistance operation
- Access problems, given that the Solomon Islands consist of over 990 islands in the South Pacific Ocean
- Possibility of civil unrest, linked to regional tensions

2 - Objectives and components of the humanitarian intervention proposed:

2.1. - Objectives :

Principal objective: To save and preserve lives during the emergency caused by earthquake and tsunami in the Solomon Islands

Specific objectives:
- To provide multi-sectoral emergency relief and recovery assistance to earthquake and tsunami victims

2.2. - Components :

- Shelter:- plastic sheeting and tents (in view of current heavy rain) for temporary shelter, plus tools and materials to rebuild homes
- Water:- provision of drinking water, including bottled water and small-scale rehabilitation of water systems; water containers, tanks, filters and purification tablets
- Sanitation:- hygiene promotion, hygiene kits and latrines, especially for those displaced and living in make-shift camps
- Health:- medical care and supplies, in context of outbreaks of diarrhoea, respiratory infections and malaria
- Emergency education:- this should include support to traumatised children, via the "school-in-a-box" programme
- Non-food items:- kitchen sets, essential household items, clothes, mosquito nets and tools to rebuild boats for fishing and communication/access

N.B. Transport and logistics will be of importance to all operations, as will capacity-building for local bodies e.g. the Solomon Islands Red Cross, a key organisation in the humanitarian response, ready for extra support.

There are additional needs being covered by other donors, such as food.

The European Commission will not set up a DG ECHO support office in the Solomon Islands, but DG ECHO's Bangkok office will provide technical assistance to appraise project proposals and to monitor humanitarian operations financed by the Commission.

3 - Duration expected for actions in the proposed Decision:

The duration of humanitarian aid operations shall be for 6 months maximum.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 02 April 2007.

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to *force majeure* or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid operations.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian

organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

4 - Previous interventions/Decisions of the Commission within the context of the current crisis

DG ECHO has not previously been involved in the Solomon Islands, but responded to this crisis in a timely fashion via its office in Bangkok, with assistance from the Delegations of the European Commission in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

5 - Overview of donors' contributions

Donors in Solomon Islands the last 12 months					
1. EU Members States (*)		2. European Commission		3. Others	
	EUR		EUR		EUR
Austria		DG ECHO	0		
Belgium		Other services			
Bulgaria					
Cyprus					
Czech republic					
Denmark					
Estonia					
Finland					
France					
Germany					
Greece					
Hungary					
Ireland					
Italy					
Latvia					
Lithuania					
Luxemburg					
Malta					
Netherlands					
Poland					
Portugal					
Romania					
Slovakia					
Slovenie					
Spain					
Sweden					
United kingdom					
Subtotal	0	Subtotal	0	Subtotal	0
		Grand total	0		

Dated : 12 April 2007
(*) Source : DG ECHO 14 Points reporting for Members States. https://hac.ec.europa.eu
Empty cells means either no information is available or no contribution.

Many donors are responding to the current crisis, but their response is not yet recorded in this database. Australia and New Zealand were mentioned in the context of RAMSI (Paragraph 1.1.). France is another key donor, and is a partner to Australia and New Zealand under the FRANZ Joint Statement on Disaster Relief Co-operation in the South Pacific, signed in 1992. Other donors include Japan, Taiwan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

6 - Amount of decision and distribution by specific objective:

6.1. - Total amount of the decision: EUR 550,000

6.2. - Budget breakdown by specific objective

Principal objective: *To save and preserve lives during the emergency caused by earthquake and tsunami in the Solomon Islands*			
Specific objective	**Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)**	**Geographical area of operation**	**Potential partners**[5]
Specific objective 1: To provide multi-sectoral emergency relief and recovery assistance to earthquake and tsunami victims	550,000	Western Province, Choiseul Province and Shortland Islands of the Solomon Islands	- CRF - IFRC-FICR - SC(UK)
	TOTAL:550,000		

[5] CROIX-ROUGE FRANCAISE, INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES, THE SAVE THE CHILDREN FUND (GBR)

7 - Budget Impact article 23 02 01

-	EC (EUR)
Initial Available Appropriations for 2007	485,000,000.00
Supplementary Budgets	-
Transfers Commission	-
Total Available Appropriations	**485,000,000.00**
Total executed to date (by 16 April 2007)	332,605,694.95
Available remaining	152,394,305.05
Total amount of the Decision	**550,000.00**

8 - Management Issues

Humanitarian aid actions funded by the Commission are implemented by NGOs, Specialised Agencies of the Member States, and the Red Cross organisations on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) and by United Nations agencies based on the EC/UN Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA) in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. These Framework agreements define the criteria for attributing grant agreements and financing agreements in accordance with Article 90 of the Implementing Rules and may be found at http://ec.europa.eu/echo/partners/index_en.htm.

Individual grants are awarded on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, and results of previous interventions.