



RED CROSS SOCIETY OF CHINA

Floods struck with brutality
Humanity offered true love

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In summer this year, China was hit by the biggest flood disaster ever seen in a century. The terrifying force of the floods, the vastness of the areas affected and the tremendousness of the losses were unprecedented in history. 24 out of 30 provinces in China were stricken by the floods, among them, the two provinces of Anhui and Jiangsu suffered most. 19,000,000 people were stranded by flood water. 2,628 people died and another 53,000 were injured in the floods. 25,300,000 hectares of crops were damaged and 3,080,000 houses and buildings collapsed. The total loss amounts to US\$ 13.4 billion.

The floods inundated villages, townships, factories, mines, schools, etc. and washed away everything that people lived on. This sad news shocked all the Chinese people and caught the great attention of the international community as well. The Chinese government and the people immediately threw themselves into the fight against floods and disaster relief work, altogether over 60,000,000 person/times recorded in this large scale operation. Friends all over the world, especially our sister national societies of the world Red Cross family held out their humanitarian helping hands. The governments, the Red Cross/Red Crescent societies and other organizations in over 30 countries contributed to the Chinese Red Cross Society all kinds of relief items, medicaments, etc. to a value of over CHF 10,000,000. Our compatriots in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, with brotherly affection towards the flood victims on the mainland, donated US\$ 42,360,000 together with a huge quantity of grain, foods, medicines, vehicles, tents, etc. All these assistance was a source of great encouragement to the people in their fight against the flood and to rebuild their homes and start a normal life.

The national headquarters of the Chinese Red Cross Society, at learning the first news of the flood disaster, sent out an urgent appeal, calling on the Red Cross organizations at all levels across the country to get mobilized and to spare no effort to carry out disaster relief. At the same time, medicaments and other relief materials badly needed by the flood

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victims were dispatched by the national headquarters to the disaster stricken areas. Over 18,400 medical teams and epidemic disease prevention groups with 90,182 people participating in them were organized and dispatched by the Red Cross organizations at different levels. With noble passionate feelings, the vast numbers of Red Cross staff and volunteers whole heartedly threw themselves into the service for the victims. Their conduct and performance was a silent publicity of the loftiness and the greatness of the Red Cross humanitarian cause. In the mean time, an urgent appeal for aid and assistance was sent out by the Chinese Red Cross Society through the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In the afternoon on the same day when our appeal arrived at the League, The League's No 31 appeal in 1971 was jointly signed by Secretary General Mr. Stenback and Under Secretary General Mr. Davey which transmitted to all member national societies the disaster information in China. Soon afterwards, a mission team constituted by Mr. Kilde from the Norwegian Red Cross, Mr. Hori from the Japanese Red Cross and Dr. Kneller from the American Red Cross was dispatched to China to conduct an on-the-spot assessment of the disaster situation in the affected regions. A valuable report was prepared by the team for the League. In August, Dr. Gutzart from the German Red Cross and Mr. Stuart representing the League came to China to respectively take part in the distribution of 4,700 tons of rice donated by the German government and of 2,266 tents funded by the EEC in the two provinces of Anhui and Jiangsu. These aid coming at a time of urgent need helped to relieve the sufferings of the victims. At the request of the Chinese Red Cross Society, the League launched another appeal to sister national societies on September 13th, 1971 and at the end of same month, the Asia and Pacific Department of the League sent to China its representative to follow up the relief activities. Up to now, we have received from the League US\$ 3,330,000, including the US\$ 1,260,000 from the German Red Cross and another sum of US\$ 250,000 from the Korean Red Cross. The humanitarian assistance mentioned above played an important part in the rehabilitation and disease prevention and treatment programmes. The Chinese people were deeply touched by the humanitarian support offered by so many countries and by people of different races and colours. This tested friendship will surely be always remembered by the Chinese people. The impact of both the international Red Cross and the national Red Cross had already taken roots in the soil of disaster affected region as well as the whole of China. The afore-said assistance was timely distributed to the victims of flood areas by the Red Cross workers. It also helped to strengthen the capability of the local Red Cross organizations to react and to coordinate in times of emergency, to set up a more perfect auditing system and to promote development of Red Cross movement in China.

Our compatriots living in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan as well as the overseas Chinese, extremely worried about the disasters haunting the mainland of their motherland, used various methods and channels to unfold one after another mass campaigns to collect relief funds and, within a short period of time, contributions both in cash and in kind were pouring into the

Chinese Red Cross Society. Examples of such a sincere patriotic conduct were just too many to be mentioned one by one. HK\$ 130,000,000 (US\$ 1,647,400) was collected by the Hong Kong Red Cross and 903,900,000 Taiwan currency (US\$ 33,370,000) raised by the Taiwan Red Cross. These money was and will be spent in the interest of the victims; it will be remembered by the people all over the country.

The assistance given by the international community was not only a huge financial support, but also an invaluable spiritual wealth which encouraged the people in the flood affected areas in their fight to conquer the disaster, to overcome the difficulties and to rebuild their homes.

At present, under the leadership of the government, the Chinese people have already won a decisive victory in their fight against flood disaster. The people in the flood affected areas are well settled and the social order is stable. Their basic needs are guaranteed. What is most significant is that, thanks to the hard work by the medical workers and Red Cross personnel, a possible widespread outbreak of epidemic diseases have been prevented in a year of big natural calamities. I must stress to say that we owe this also to the tremendous support from the friends and sister Red Cross societies the world over as well as from our compatriots and overseas Chinese. The Chinese people and the Chinese Red Cross Society will cherish forever this humanitarian assistance coming in time of difficulty and are grateful for this lofty love of humanity.

So far as we know from the information collected recently, the health, medical and public health care networks in the affected regions suffered serious damages in the floods. A lot of township hospitals, village clinics and health stations simply disappeared in the flood water. Many health centres which survived the floods are in a badly need for medicines and equipments in order to render adequate services for the local population. To help quickly restore the medical and preventive capability of these medical centres, we hope the international community and friends will offer further assistance in this respect.

The Chinese government and the Chinese Red Cross Society would like to express heartfelt thanks to the governments and the Red Cross/Red Crescent societies the world over for their generous assistance and support. We would continue to work together with other sister societies in all aspects, to learn from their experience and to make our own contributions to the humanitarian cause of the international Red Cross. Natural calamities are cruel, but history has recorded that mankind is always the winner in the fight against natural disasters, thus pushing human history progressing towards a brighter future. Once more our sincerest thanks for your kind support and generous assistance.

Delegation of the Chinese Red Cross Society