

Plan 2010-2011

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Asia Pacific Zone

Executive summary

The Asia Pacific region is home to more than half of the world's population, the majority of whom are poor and among the most disadvantaged in the world. Some 600 million women, men and children in the region live below the USD 1 a day poverty line, while 1.8 billion survive on less than USD 2 a day. Compounding the situation, the region is also highly disaster-prone. The diversity, scale and frequency of natural disasters across the region are daunting. Set along numerous fault lines, many countries in the region are often hit by major earthquakes and by seasonal typhoons and floods, which kill thousands of people and cause severe hardship to millions of people each year. Public health is also a major issue with the continued prevalence of tuberculosis, malaria, dengue fever, cholera, HIV and by newer emerging infectious diseases, such



Philippines National Red Cross Society (PNRCS) volunteers share knowledge and laughter at a health and care nutrition event in Laguna, Philippines. Photo credit: International Federation/Rob Few

as avian and human influenza. The effects of climate change are having a marked impact on the scale and unpredictability of many of these disasters, and the whole situation is expected to worsen in the coming years.

It is within this context that the 37 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in Asia Pacific work to help the most vulnerable groups in their respective countries who are most affected by disasters and socio-economic and health crises. With their widespread network of grassroots members and volunteers, they seek to address the needs of the most vulnerable people in disaster and non-disaster situations.

The main tasks of the International Federation are to assist the national societies in the region to deliver timely and effective services to the populations in most need and to coordinate international assistance to achieve this. The Asia Pacific zone comprises the zone office in Kuala Lumpur, four regional offices and 15 country offices, adopting a "best-positioned" strategy to support these tasks.

The International Federation's work in Asia Pacific is guided by the International Federation's newly adopted Strategy 2020, and the priorities in the coming two years are to:

- **Build safer and more resilient communities** through services to member national societies that increase the reach and impact of their programmes;

- **Strengthen Red Cross Red Crescent networks** to enhance collective performance and build capacity and knowledge sharing;
- **Influence changes in humanitarian policies and practices** through improved cooperation with governments and key institutions;
- **Diversify financial and human resources** for the benefit of programmes at the national level; and
- **Lead and coordinate planning, performance and accountability mechanisms** to increase Red Cross Red Crescent effectiveness and efficiency.

As part of the International Federation's decentralised headquarters management structure, the Asia Pacific zone office directs the work of the regional and country offices. This zone plan 2010-2011 includes programme and membership services for the national societies of Asia Pacific, and seeks support for the programming part of these activities, specifically in the areas of disaster management, health and care, organizational development, principles and values and humanitarian diplomacy.

The total budget to cover this work is CHF 3,624,597 (USD 3.51 million or EUR 2.38 million) for 2010, and CHF 3,114,102 (USD 3.01 million or EUR 2.04 million) for 2011. The zone is supported by CHF 4.325 million from core secretariat funds, which is sufficient to cover all core staff positions and the running costs of the zone office, as well as part of the costs of the four regional offices.

[Click to go directly to the attached budget summary of the plan](#)

Zone Context

Socio-economic

The Asia Pacific region, home to more than half of the world's population, is a region of great socio-economic contrasts as well as cultural and political diversity. While parts of the region have witnessed significant improvements in achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals, others have performed poorly. Some 600 million women, men and children in the region live below the USD 1 per day poverty line, while 1.8 billion survive on less than USD 2 per day. This poverty is found not only in poorer under-developed countries, but also in significant segments of the emerging middle-income countries.

All the South Asian countries are generally poor performers in the rankings of the UN Human Development Index. The region suffers from some of the highest levels of poverty in the world, and of the 1.5 billion people in the region, approximately 400 million live below the average poverty line¹. About 15 per cent of the region's population does not survive beyond the age of 40.

In East and Southeast Asia, a wide disparity in economic wealth exists between and within countries. While Japan and South Korea are listed among the OECD countries, the World Bank estimates that 552 million of the world's 1.1 billion poor are living in East Asia. For China, a fast emerging economy with an economic growth rate of over 10 percent per year in the last decade, at least 16 percent of the population still live on less than USD 1 per day. In Cambodia 34 percent of people are living on less than USD 1 per day, while in Mongolia the figure is 27 percent.

With the exception of Australia and New Zealand, the Pacific region is mostly made up of countries with poor socio-economic development. Most efforts to raise standards of living and achieve balanced growth are complicated by their isolation created by huge distances as a result of their location. These pose major challenges for the island states of the Pacific to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

A number of countries in the Asia Pacific region, particularly in South Asia, are also faced with wide socio-political tensions and armed insurgencies. In parts of the wider region, some groups still experience systematic discrimination based on their gender, ethnicity, or religious beliefs, perpetuating their chronic poverty and exclusion. In such situations, there is a need to implement programmes to promote tolerance, respect for diversity and the reduction of discrimination.

Disasters

The Asia Pacific region is also the most disaster-prone region on earth, accounting for over 40 per cent of the world's disasters and 65 per cent of the people affected. The diversity, scale and frequency of natural disasters

¹ World Bank: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOUTHASIAEXT/Resources/South_Asia_growth_June_2006.pdf

