

BURUNDI

CHF 5,883,000

Programme No. 01.15/2000

National Context

Six years after the start of a brutal civil war, Burundi continues to suffer the consequences of what is generally referred to as the “crisis”. Politically, the internal and external peace process continues, but the Arusha peace negotiations have not yet concluded in agreement or signature between the Government and the opposition forces. Meanwhile, insecurity throughout much of the countryside and around Bujumbura has increased. Some 560,000 persons, or 9% of the total population, have been displaced, to 309 sites spread throughout the country. According to UNHCR, another 491,000 persons have sought assistance and protection in neighbouring countries, the majority in Tanzania.

The political, economic, and social factors which will dictate Red Cross action in Burundi in 2000 are:

- signature of a peace accord in Arusha between the opposing parties.
- assurances of safety for humanitarian workers living and working in the country.
- an improving economy due to the lifting of the internationally-imposed embargo in January, 1999.

Given the insecurity which persists in Burundi, it will remain difficult or impossible for the displaced persons to return to their areas of origin. And given the fact that a majority of the population originate from a rural background, self-sufficiency and the development of survival coping mechanisms are dependent on a voluntary return and reintegration of the displaced, as well as refugees, in conditions of safety.

Country Assistance Strategy

The Federation strategy and priorities have been established taking into account the conditions of the most vulnerable groups and their capacity to cope. The civil war and the resulting socioeconomic situation have increased the size of the vulnerable groups. To respond, the Burundi Red Cross (BRC) will receive support to become actively involved in the rehabilitation and resettlement programmes. The following priorities will therefore be established: setting up BRC structures in the 16 provinces and their zones and communes, as well as in Bujumbura; the development of human resource and financial structures; increasing Red Cross membership and the volunteer base; implementation of the African Red Cross Red Crescent Health Initiative (ARCHI); and immediate first aid and rehabilitation assistance to the most vulnerable.

Programme Objectives

Disaster Response

An emergency stock of nonfood items will be maintained for 2 years to respond to potential humanitarian crises. Assistance will be provided to the BRC to improve response capacities by forming emergency brigades in coordination with the Government's emergency plan.

Disaster Preparedness

This activity, at present focused on emergency distributions of nonfood items to the displaced, will be reoriented next year to assist vulnerable groups in their resettlement and reintegration efforts. To this end, humanitarian assistance will be provided to the most vulnerable. The BRC will develop community efforts in the construction of houses and the rehabilitation of schools, and will extend the Rutana Water and Sanitation projects which will permit the BRC to develop expertise in this area.

Health

In view of the precarious health situation and the fact that a large part of the population has no access to basic health care, the BRC will focus on hygiene, sanitation, and community health interventions. The BRC will receive support to: respond in cases of epidemics; reduce the incidence of water borne diseases by rehabilitating potable water systems in Rutana province; implement a health cost recovery system; and initiate the ARCHI programme.

Humanitarian Values

With the objective of reinforcing the fundamental values of the Movement, groups of women trained by the BRC and secondary school students will participate in humanitarian values information activities.

Capacity Building

The two priorities for 2000 are the creation of a viable Red Cross branch structure throughout the country as well as the development of human resource and revenue generation systems which will enable the Red Cross to cover 20% of its own costs by 2001. An evaluation will be undertaken to ensure that the BRC is capable of responding to its basic responsibilities, reinforcing the principle of good governance at the central and local levels, and reinforcing its institutional and operational capacities.