

# SOUTHERN AFRICA

**CHF 9,300,000**

**Programme No. 01.43/2000**

## *Regional Context*

The ten countries which form the Southern Africa region (South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Angola, Swaziland and Malawi) are diverse in wealth and standards of living. The region was formerly seen as reasonably peaceful and stable, but this perception has changed primarily as a result of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which has spilled over into neighbouring countries and created a refugee influx into Zambia, in addition to political differences that have created considerable divisions. Internal unrest in several countries has increased, with serious economic pressures pushing more people below the poverty line.

HIV and AIDS is widespread, with over 20% of the population of some countries affected. South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe have been cited as the worst affected countries in the world. Zimbabwe will have



600,000 orphans from AIDS victims by the end of this century. While care for HIV/AIDS victims is overwhelming health institutions, the full impact on the economy of the loss of so many from the most productive age group is yet to be felt.

The lack of adequate health services, safe water, high unemployment, high population growth rates and the consequence of continued population drift from rural areas to overcrowded towns are all increasing the vulnerability of the region's population. The region is also highly drought prone and some countries repeatedly suffer from serious outbreaks of cholera. The governments' capacities to meet the needs of the population are increasingly stretched.

Red Cross programmes and activities are promoted through the Southern Africa Partnership of Red Cross Societies (SAPRCS) which has been in existence since 1997 and addresses regional partnership and jointly establishes priorities for regional support.

## ***Regional Assistance Strategy***

The Federation will make a difference in the region by working with communities to reduce vulnerabilities through health education and services at a primary level, building disaster preparedness capacity and promoting humanitarian values. The African Red Cross and Red Crescent Health Initiative (ARCHI) will continue to target health programmes.

The areas of common focus are the need for institutional development and for building stronger domestic income bases, disaster preparedness, community based health programmes including, for most, a water and sanitation programme. All National Societies have a commitment to disaster response activities. Furthermore, the National Societies recognise the need to strengthen their involvement with youth and to work in a way that is gender sensitive, especially in programme design.

The Regional Delegation in Harare provides the following:

- Supports, advises and guides the SAPRCS which is responsible to establish regional priorities and regular reviews;
- Mobilises resources for regional and country specific disaster response and capacity building activities and ensures accountability;
- Organizes and maintains expertise focal points within the Regional Delegation to support National Societies in priority areas as established by the Regional Partnership;
- Plans and implements regional and country specific support programmes as prioritized by the Partnership. These priorities include supporting the regional process, disaster response and preparedness, strengthening capacity in public health services by using ARCHI as a methodology;
- Encourages and supports the co-ordination of bilateral relations between PNSs and ONSs by promoting and organising regional meetings, supporting and participating in country donor meetings, advising and involving in cooperation agreements and overseeing implementation;
- Organises and supports reviews of programmes and structures, evaluations and audits, and follows up on implementing findings and recommendations.

## ***Programme Objectives***

Regional programmes to address the assistance priorities consist of institutional and resource development; information systems management; disaster preparedness; health; and water and sanitation activities. These programme activities will not be stand alone but are rather mutually reinforcing. The management systems information programme is partly designed to strengthen disaster preparedness and response capacities. Disaster

preparedness activities will be linked to other activities to assure relevance and to sustain interest. The health and water and sanitation activities will pursue community based approaches to combat the main health threats in the region, including diarrhoea, HIV/AIDS, malaria and cholera outbreaks.

### ***Disaster Response***

An influx of refugees from the Great Lakes Region and Angola, particularly into Zambia, is currently taking place and could substantially increase. Zambia Red Cross have responsibilities for monitoring refugee entry points and providing assistance to some 20,000 refugees either accommodated in the refugee camp site or spontaneously settled in the villages in the north east of the country. Maintaining preparedness in the Zambia Red Cross is an ongoing process to assist a refugee population which could rise to 50,000 in the next two years. This could decline but prudence would dictate that a similar refugee population may also remain for the third and fourth year.

The Namibian refugee population in Botswana is declining from an early 1999 peak of around 2,500. This refugee problem may soon be resolved but it serves to highlight the potential in the region for population movements and the readiness that must be maintained for assisting National Societies to meet refugee humanitarian needs, supporting the institutional strengthening needed for such operations.

Epidemic diseases, including cholera and malaria, are prevalent in several countries. Continued assistance from the Federation is needed to combat the spread of these diseases. National Societies require assistance to build preventive measures into their ongoing health programmes but will also need extra resources when epidemics exceed the scope of normal control and when special measures are called for.

The region is hit frequently by annual cyclical droughts and floods. In a move from ad hoc relief responses to disaster mitigation the Federation is placing considerable importance on effective interventions by the Red Cross National Societies. The Regional Delegation will continue to support the National Societies in strengthening their response capacities and in mobilizing resources both locally and externally for responding to natural disasters. Efforts will be made to design this capacity building, as far as possible, in a sustainable way and to try to make for smoother and more rapid reorientation of the National Societies following major disasters.

### ***Disaster Preparedness***

The region is highly drought prone and it can be expected that assistance will be required in meeting problems of food security. It is foreseen that the Federation will increasingly link assistance to drought mitigation efforts. Climatic conditions also create frequent localised flooding that results, not only in relocation of people, but also in loss of food crops. A study to explore more innovative approaches to addressing food security problems is to be completed in 1999, providing a framework for assessment and response to future food security problems.

Better use of early warning systems is needed to plan for and respond to emergencies. This calls for training in National Societies down to the branch level and the development of more appropriate information management systems, making use of up to date communication technology and community based information.

To remain prepared for possible civil disturbances in the region, measures will be taken to prepare for election violence in South Africa and Malawi through the training of Red Cross Action Teams.

To address these varied needs, National Societies need disaster preparedness policies and relevant plans, supported by trained staff and volunteers. The Federation will assist in strengthening this capacity in National Societies, both at national and branch level, by sharing and exchanging technical expertise that exists within the region. Data bases of skilled personnel who can be called on at short notice to assist within the region will be maintained, as well as basic stocks of emergency relief and medical supplies, plus equipment for establishing basic water and sanitation facilities for up to 10,000 people.

## ***Health***

The capacity of National Societies will be re-enforced to enable them to better tackle the needs related to the health and well being of the most vulnerable. Activities will focus on community based approaches and the Federation will support prevention and education and a strengthening of National Societies' health delivery systems.

The ARCHI process will help to define target areas, specifically to reduce HIV/AIDS transmission risks and reinforce sustainable home based care for the terminally ill. It is planned during 1999 to initiate support in several countries, in collaboration with WHO, in combatting malaria.

Community first aid components will be integrated into both capacity building and disaster preparedness and response programmes. Commercial first aid will be encouraged and supported and assistance will be given to help National Societies to conduct courses in a way that costs are covered and, when possible, income is generated.

Support will be given to National Societies to have integrated approaches to blood donor recruitment and retention programmes.

Lack of access to safe water supplies, as well as inadequate sanitation and hygiene practices, are among the leading causes of illness and death in Southern Africa. The water and sanitation programme will continue to provide technical and practical advice to National Societies to improve regional disaster response capacities. Projects in eight National Societies in the region are expected to be implemented to meet the daily requirements for safe water and good hygiene for vulnerable populations. In concert with the water and sanitation programme, assistance will be given to reduce water borne diseases and to develop and implement community training in prevention and treatment of diseases, such as diarrhoea.

## ***Humanitarian Values***

Assistance within the region will focus on increasing the profile of the Red Cross and actively promoting the humanitarian values unique to the Movement. Assistance will be provided to National Societies to better orientate members and volunteers when they join the Red Cross as well as with governments and other organisations to build understanding of the Red Cross and its mandate. Special projects will be implemented in situations where there is conflict, unrest or potential conflict, with a special focus on at-risk communities. The close co-ordination with ICRC will continue where there are similar areas of interest.

## ***Capacity Building***

The Southern Africa Region has a long tradition of co-operation, including the forum of the SAPRCS. Two SAPRCS meetings will be held in 2000 to provide opportunities for training. The SAPRCS forum will be used to assure ownership of Regional Programmes to help monitor and evaluate Federation programmes. This provides an appropriate forum to consult about needs, priorities and strategies of the Region involving key partners.

The Regional Delegation will focus its assistance on strengthening National Societies' governance and management, both at headquarters and branch levels. Assistance will also be given in the development and adaptation of institutional structures, systems and procedures, including the area of strengthening financial management. Lastly, the Federation will assist in increasing the levels of sustainable income from domestic sources.

Gender awareness will be an integral part of programme design and promoted as such to National Societies, and exchanges of staff and volunteers between National Societies to share information and skills and to provide technical advice in implementing Federation assisted programmes will be encouraged.