

MONGOLIA

CHF 614,000

Programme No. 01.61/2000

National Context

For Mongolia, the 1990s have been a period of transition from a command economy and communist rule to democracy and market economy. The results, despite a growth in the economy and prosperity for some, have been increased unemployment and poverty, with the gap between rich and poor becoming more apparent.

Lack of funding has brought a deterioration in the quality of public services – water systems, basic health care, and the school system – and left the state struggling to pay the already very low salaries for teachers, doctors and nurses, let alone pensioners' pensions. Poverty is visible in the presence of street children, increased alcoholism and suicides, and growing crime.

Although effective immunisation has successfully combated many childhood diseases, one out of four children are undernourished, according to the latest official figures, and non-communicable diseases such as cardio-vascular illnesses and cancer are on the rise.

With its extreme climate, vast steppes and fragile soil, Mongolia is one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world. Areas of the country are regularly affected by natural disasters, including heavy snowfall during its harsh winters, drought, strong winds and dust storms, floods, and steppe and forest fires. Earthquakes are common.: 80% of Mongolia and 70% of its urban areas are located in active seismic zones.

Country Assistance Strategy

The Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) has 25 Branches covering each of the country's 21 provinces and its metropolitan areas. In 1999 it embarked on its second three-year-Development Programme (1999 - 2001) prioritising financial sustainability and organisational decentralisation, disease and accident prevention, social welfare and youth programmes, and the upgrading of its disaster preparedness programme.

The Federation, in co-operation with Participating National Societies, will continue its support to the Mongolian Red Cross Society over the next three years. It will do this through support and assistance provided by the Federation Representative as well as by the Regional Delegation in Kuala Lumpur and the Regional Office in Beijing, once established. The Federation presence will remain until 2001 after which support will be provided through the Regional Office.

The main Federation aims are to assist in building the management capacity and enhancing the self-reliance of the Mongolian Red Cross Society, and to support the Society in the development of service programmes which are more responsive to, and focused on, the needs of the most vulnerable – who include female heads of household, the elderly, the unemployed, the disabled and the very poor.

The Federation will continue to promote liaison between embassies, international organisations, NGOs and the MRCS, in order to facilitate a more diversified financial and material support for the Society.

Programme Objectives

Disaster Response

There is no ongoing programme at present, but Federation assistance will be provided as a matter of course in the event of a major disaster.

Disaster Preparedness

The Federation's chief objective will be to support the MRCS in strengthening its Disaster Preparedness (DP) capacity and improving the management of its DP activities. Assistance will be given in improving the management of regional disaster preparedness centres and enhancing the training programme in disaster preparedness, including establishing systems to assess the performance of trained volunteers. Better links will be developed with State agencies and NGOs for purposes of exchanging information, training and fund-raising approaches.

Health

The Federation will support the National Society in the planned expansion of its health and first aid services for vulnerable groups. Assistance will cover an assessment of current health and first aid activities, further guidance and training for volunteer trainers, the promotion of blood donor recruitment and publicising of the Society's STD / AIDS awareness campaign.

Humanitarian Values

The MRCS's Development Programme and various relief operations helped distinguish the Society from the Government and have changed its public image significantly. The Federation will support the National Society in its efforts to further strengthen its position and image, by familiarising the authorities and the general public with the activities of the Red Cross / Red Crescent Movement. It will also provide it with the necessary assistance for its plans to increase the number of Red Cross Youth members, volunteers and member organisations, enlarge the number of Junior and Youth Clubs nation-wide and improve and expand the activities of Red Cross Youth.

Capacity Building

Reinforcing managerial ability, training volunteers, attracting large numbers of young people, taking service delivery closer to those in need through decentralisation, and winning public support – the prime elements of the Society's Development Plan – are designed, in combination, to contribute to a substantial increase in the Society's overall capacity to respond to community needs.

To assist the National Society with its two priorities of financial sustainability and decentralisation, the Federation will assist with strengthening its human resources and capacities, improving its financial management and reporting, developing activities aimed at income generation and fund-raising. It will also help the Society with drafting its Red Cross Law.

Branch development support, linked to decentralisation, will include the establishment and running of Humanitarian Centres serving the most vulnerable groups in the capital city, and ensuring the sustainability of these Centres.